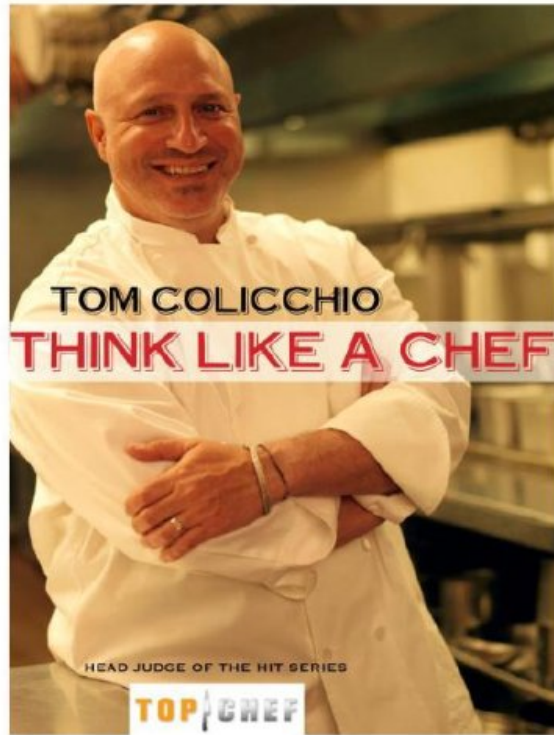
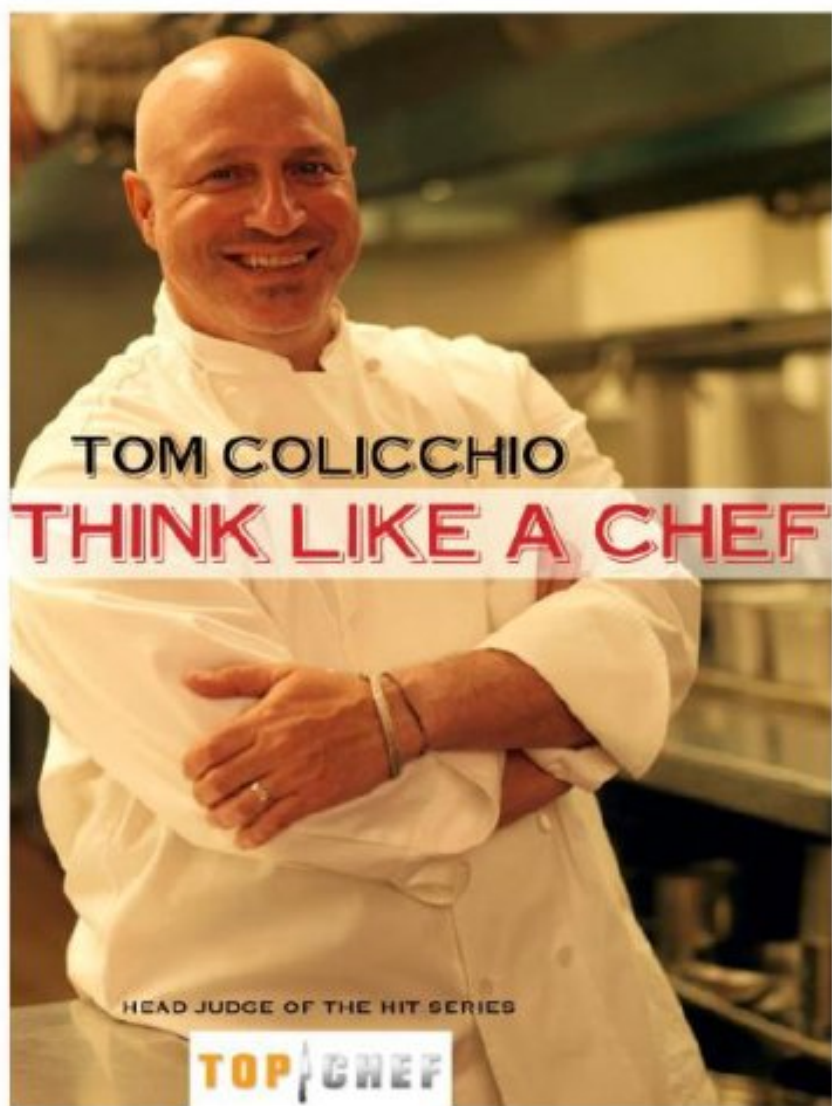


THINK LIKE A CHEF BY TOM COLICCHIO



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Amazon.com Review

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With *Think Like a Chef*, Tom Colicchio has created a new kind of cookbook. Rather than list a series of restaurant recipes, he uses simple steps to deconstruct a chef's creative process, making it easily available to any home cook.

He starts with techniques: What's roasting, for example, and how do you do it in the oven or on top of the stove? He also gets you comfortable with braising, sautéing, and making stocks and sauces. Next he introduces simple "ingredients" -- roasted tomatoes, say, or braised artichokes -- and tells you how to use them in a variety of ways. So those easy roasted tomatoes may be turned into anything from a vinaigrette to a caramelized tomato tart, with many delicious options in between.

In a section called *Trilogies*, Tom takes three ingredients and puts them together to make one dish that's quick and other dishes that are increasingly more involved. As Tom says, "Juxtaposed in interesting ways, these ingredients prove that the whole can be greater than the sum of their parts," and you'll agree once you've tasted the Ragout of Asparagus, Morels, and Ramps or the Baked Free-Form "Ravioli" -- both dishes made with the same trilogy of ingredients.

The final section of the books offers simple recipes for components -- from zucchini with lemon thyme to roasted endive with whole spices to boulangerie potatoes -- that can be used in endless combinations.

Written in Tom's warm and friendly voice and illustrated with glorious photographs of finished dishes, *Think Like a Chef* will bring out the master chef in all of us.

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Features

- Clarkson Potter Publishers

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7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Very shallow insight into Colicchio's thought process

By A. Miller

A nice book with some basic recipes and technique explanations. But that's exactly the type of content that Wikipedia and Youtube are excellent at delivering. Colicchio spends a lot of pages telling his personal story in the preface and introduction sections and gets us excited to understand how Colicchio combines ingredients and cooking techniques. The actual content is disappointingly shallow in this regard.

Take for instance the braising chapter. There is a long exhortation of the beauty of braising, followed by a short explanation of the actual process. We are told that it's basically cooking something in liquid that surrounds but not covers the ingredient. Then a mouth-watering recipe of braised pork belly follows. But there are so many more steps than just cooking it in liquid! The recipe tells us to score the skin, but doesn't

explain why (crispiness). The pork is to be braised for an hour, and another cup of stock is to be added. Why, we are never told. A cup of stock might work very differently depending on the shape of the pan being used. An explanation like "add more stock so liquid comes up halfway pork belly because xyz" is way more informative and gives us the knowledge to apply concepts to another ingredient. Colicchio maintains throughout the book that the goal is to free us from following recipes and cooking times strictly through an understanding of his thinking process, but the actual recipes themselves encourage us to follow recipes and cooking times strictly. Come on. Later in the Component Cooking section there is a treatment on ramps which starts out with pickling. Wait, isn't this a technique that was totally ignored in the Techniques chapter?

If you would like basic cooking techniques, Youtube it or buy Alton Brown's book. If you want some Colicchio recipes, get this book. If you're looking for deep insight into his thought process, that content doesn't exist yet.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Think Like A Cookbook Writer

By G. Haegele

The recipe for fresh bacon (braised pork belly) and the brown chicken stock it calls for justifies the existence of this book. The pork belly emerges from the oven looking and tasting dreamy.

His comments about vegetables are sagacious. His simple technique has completely changed my thinking of how a vegetable should taste and how to get it there.

Little else in this book is compelling. It does not delve deeply into Mr. Colicchio's philosophy on food. (Yes, use what's in season. Brown first on the stovetop then roast at lower temps. Let the meat rest. Good advise: far from a philosophy.)

A few of the recipes don't work. At least not for the home cook. I seriously doubt that Mr. Colicchio ever cored, blanched and separated the leaves from enough brussel sprouts himself to make a meal--he had his prep cooks do it. (And they hate him for it.) But I did and I don't advise you try it at home. It is just not worth the effort. Likewise the artichoke recipe may well work in a restaurant kitchen, but its a huge waste of time at home. The problem seems to be that the book was not written with the home kitchen in mind and could not have been tested before hitting the press.

Though I am disappointed I'm cooking that braised pork belly for company again this weekend! And I will still play around with other recipes. I'm sure there are more hits in there, just not the treasure trove I expected.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Just what an aspiring chef needs.

By T. Kanjo

i use recipes for one reason only. To get an idea of what goes well with what, an idea of the proportions and then throw them away. Explains why I cannot bake a cookie! This book is exactly what I am looking for. Chef Colicchio explains the how and why of cooking techniques so you can create your own meals. I have been practicing on my neighbors and have made more progress in my cooking in the last 3 months than I have in 3 years. For those who need more direction, there are some great recipes in here, but I find this an invaluable resource in my kitchen. I also purchased the Top Chef book How to Cook Like a TopChef but find it disappointing.

If you are interested in learning how to cook, not what to cook, this is the book for you. The book covers techniques, how to buy ingredients, encourages experimentation, and provides a foundation from which

many delicious meals will sprout. Take the advice of the author and go to a local market and buy what looks good. I have been doing this without any idea of what I was going to end up with and have yet to be disappointed. You will learn how to roast, braise, and blanch. He covers the basics of making sauces, vinegaretttes, stock, roasted tomatoes and so on. Once you study this book, you will no longer need another cookbook. All you will need is some idea of what ingredients you want to eat and will have the ability to create incredible meals with sound techniques.

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