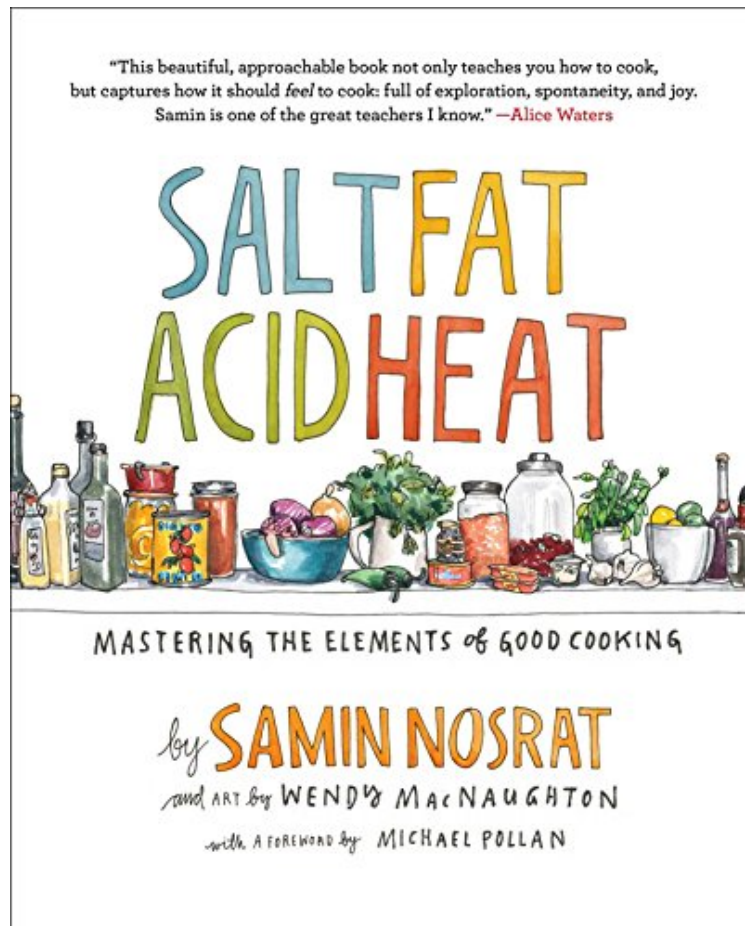


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# Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking

*Samin Nosrat*

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**Samin Nosrat : Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking:

93 of 96 people found the following review helpful. Best text about cooking I've ever read By Pamela Best text about cooking I've ever read. It's both logical and fun so the lessons will stick. I'd call it perfectly balanced, like a great meal. After reading the first several pages, I went poking around, only to discover that I was invited back to the beginning (XO). You see, the book is about the "journey, not the destination." It's clever, witty, helpful, intuitive, and altogether a pleasure to read. 108 of 115 people found the following review helpful. A must have for your library By peppermint I just read this cover to cover and felt compelled to write a review. This is really an essential book to everyone's library. I love to cook and have a beautiful collection of cookbooks, but this one is truly special. Samin is a lovely writer. She exudes warmth and humor in her stories and it flows in such a way that you forget you are reading a combo of a cookbook/science textbook. Samin breaks down the importance of salt, fat, acid and heat. It's not just recipes but what,

why and how. She does not talk down to her readers. She is straightforward, enthusiastic and fun. I've always loved the "why" in cooking and baking (like the Cooks Illustrated approach and The Food Lab: Better Home Cooking Through Science) - but I love that she narrows it down to four basic elements. I personally like referring to recipes, especially for dishes I don't cook on a weekly basis. But this books and others, like Ratio: The Simple Codes Behind the Craft of Everyday Cooking are important because they give you the tools to innovate and recipes become starting points. I wish I had this book 20 years ago when I started seriously cooking. It is like a breath of fresh air and incredibly inspiring. So grateful for this addition to my home library and can't wait to cook dinner tomorrow! 84 of 89 people found the following review helpful. Why we want to be better cooks AND how to do that By Susan J. Ryhanen This is a book you'll want to sit down and read....not peruse...but read straight through. Not only are the forward and introduction inspiring, but Part One on SALT had me totally hooked. I knew that salt was important in cooking, but now I understand so much more about what it does to make food taste delicious. So much more than a collection of recipes, it gets to the heart of cooking. Why we want to be better cooks AND how to do that. I love the fold out on p. 193 "what should I cook" that advises to go back and read the book through before you practice...a brilliant observation that the book is about "the journey, not the destination" as are so many things we pursue and experience. Samin is a wonderful storyteller and Wendy's illustrations add another layer to this important book. You'll keep this book on your bedside table first...then move it to your kitchen as a reference you'll use for years to come. Don't let this one get away!

New York Times Bestseller A visionary new master class in cooking that distills decades of professional experience into just four simple elements, from the woman declared America's next great cooking teacher by Alice Waters. In the tradition of The Joy of Cooking and How to Cook Everything comes Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat, an ambitious new approach to cooking by a major new culinary voice. Chef and writer Samin Nosrat has taught everyone from professional chefs to middle school kids to author Michael Pollan to cook using her revolutionary, yet simple, philosophy. Master the use of just four elements: Salt, which enhances flavor; Fat, which delivers flavor and generates texture; Acid, which balances flavor; and Heat, which ultimately determines the texture of food and anything you cook will be delicious. By explaining the hows and whys of good cooking, Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat will teach and inspire a new generation of cooks how to confidently make better decisions in the kitchen and cook delicious meals with any ingredients, anywhere, at any time. Echoing Samin's own journey from culinary novice to award-winning chef, Salt, Fat Acid, Heat immediately bridges the gap between home and professional kitchens. With charming narrative, illustrated walkthroughs, and a lighthearted approach to kitchen science, Samin demystifies the four elements of good cooking for everyone. Refer to the canon of 100 essential recipes and dozens of variations to put the lessons into practice and make bright, balanced vinaigrettes, perfectly caramelized roast vegetables, tender braised meats, and light, flaky pastry doughs. Featuring 150 illustrations and infographics that reveal an atlas to the world of flavor by renowned illustrator Wendy MacNaughton, Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat will be your compass in the kitchen. Destined to be a classic, it just might be the last cookbook you'll ever need. With a foreword by Michael Pollan.

"Just reading Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat will make you a better cook, adept at seasoning, balancing, understanding what it really is you're doing and why... Make room on the bedside table and the countertop." (Bon Appetit) "My favorite metacookbook... [Nosrat] offers a beautifully simple checklist for ensuring a dish ends up in a good place... This is the book of cooking grammar that so many novices would benefit from... Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat is written smoothly and casually, and kept breezy via charming watercolors by the perceptive Bay Area artist Wendy MacNaughton... Nosrat's book would be of value both to people who don't consider themselves cooks and to people actively striving to become better ones." (Atlantic) "Inventively illustrated... ambitious... [Nosrat is] a talented explainer." (Wall Street Journal) "A cookbook that will make you a better cook... with helpful, charming illustrations from artist Wendy MacNaughton." (Boston Globe) "An exhaustively researched treatise on the four pillars of successful cooking." (New York Times Book Review) "Hundreds of cookbooks are published each year. Some are good. Others are exceptional. A few are essential. Samin Nosrat just published Salt Fat Acid Heat Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking and I daresay this one is essential... That's the fabulous thing about this book it teaches readers about cooking, how to employ various techniques, and how to grasp that any subtle variations in technique can have significant impacts upon our end results. It is possible to learn how to cook great food... This book is bound to become an indispensable addition to cookbook shelves throughout America." (Dayton Daily News) "Nosrat's beautiful, approachable book demonstrates how these four are the only elements necessary to make delicious meals anywhere, any time." (Rapid City Journal) "Provides the cook with far more tools for branching out and exploring their own creative potential - and that makes it a standout." (Midwest Book Review) "An excellent cookbook and culinary resource that pares down the idea that it only takes four ingredients to make food taste amazing." (Belleville News-Democrat) "The kind of cookbook that will certainly make anyone who reads and absorbs all of her shared food tidbits a better cook and, perhaps, an engaging conversationalist." (Chicago Daily Herald) "By mastering the four notes of the culinary scale, Nosrat enthusiastically guarantees that you can become not only a good cook, but a great one. Playful illustrations by Wendy MacNaughton transform what might

read like a culinary-school textbook into a fun and approachable guide." (San Francisco Chronicle) With 100 tempting recipes and vibrant illustrations by Wendy MacNaughton, this textbook offers insight, encouragement, and a new path to culinary mastery. (Real Simple) "The book amounts to an incredibly engaging master class that helps free you from recipes so you can improvise like a pro. Nosrats approach is foundational yet innovative: distilling the essence of cooking into four main concerns. With a full understanding of how each element effects flavor and texture, a home cook can easily extrapolate and apply these principles to unfamiliar ingredients or dishes and still cook with confidence... The curious cook will eventually find her copy of this book stained and dog-eared, as she consults its essential kitchen wisdom for years to come." (Cooking Light) "[This book] will be valuable for either a beginner or a seasoned cook. Unlike similar manuals, Nosrats volume has hit upon a theory not only easy to remember, but also fun to learn in practice. Even more fun: the accompanying art by Wendy MacNaughton, which illustrates flavor wheels and pairing matrices." (Eater) "In the days after reading Samin Nosrat's new book, Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat, eating felt like a new adventure... And when it came time to cook simple meals, the raw carrots and greens in my fridge looked less intimidating: I had new tools to tame them... Inspiring this sense of culinary liberation was precisely Nosrat's goal with her cookbook, which eschews formulaic recipes in favor of heartfelt stories, bits and pieces of science, and time-tested nuggets of kitchen wisdom (not to mention gorgeous and witty watercolors by the prolific Wendy MacNaughton)... boy, does Nosrat deliver." (Mother Jones) "Most cookbooks are filled with recipes, with or without a central theme. That's what a cookbook is for, right? A recent batch of cookbooks... have turned this notion on its ear, aiming, instead, to better prepare home cooks to build weekly menus and avoid food waste... the best book to come out of this new trend is, to my mind, Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking by chef Samin Nosrat, with whimsical illustrations by Wendy MacNaughton. The book tackles each topic in its title in turn, showing how they contribute to great cooking, then offers experiments, recipes, and other ways to apply your new knowledge. It's not just a good cookbook; it's a good book, period." (Vox.com) "All you need to master the kitchen are the four elements laid out in this Joyfully illustrated book's title. Nosrat, who's been called 'America's next great cooking teacher' by Alice Waters and taught Michael Pollan how to cook, is a more than trustworthy instructor." (Tasting Table) "If there's one cookbook that will make dad want to march into the kitchen and start cooking you amazing meals, it's this one." (Wired.com) "Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat is a refreshing break from [the] contemporary formula. Instantly recognizable as a reference book, Samin Nosrat's definitive technique-driven tome defies convention. This is partly because Nosrat's method of teaching via the book's four main pillars (salt, fat, acid, and heat) is a rarity... But what makes Nosrat's method so effective was her insistence that the book be illustrated. (Saveur.com) "A gorgeously illustrated guide that will make you much more confident in the kitchen." (Edible Manhattan) "California chef Samin Nosrat explains how these four elements affect everything we cook and eat, then rewards faithful science students with recipes for a perfectly balanced Caesar salad, a flaky pie crust, and fall-off-the-bone braised beef." (Modern Farmer) "Rarely does a cookbook make you feel like its author is right there in the kitchen with you, teaching you not how to make recipes but how to actually cook." (Heathlyish) "NPR once called Nosrat 'the next Julia Child.' Based on her first cookbook, we can see why. The Chez Panisse alum uses a simple philosophy: balancing salt, fat, acid and heat (temperature, not spice) to create a perfect finished product. But recipes aside, the illustrations alone are worth the price." (PureWow) "You will become a vastly better cook. Learn to balance sweet and acid, choose between different types of fats, understand proteins and heat, etc. It's all there for the curious, determined cook. (Milk Street Magazine) "In the Bay Area, writer and chef Samin Nosrat has cult followings both for her pop-up dinners at Tartine Bakery in San Francisco and her cooking classes, which friends swear have changed their time in the kitchen... This is a new kind of book. Lots of words to live by before you get to her kitchen basics and, finally, recipes more than halfway through. Wendy MacNaughton's delightful illustrations capture Nosrat's infectious joy for the subject. Just reading Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat will make you a better cook, adept at seasoning, balancing, understanding what it really is you're doing and why." (BonAppetit.com) "Readers learn the nitty-gritty science behind best practices, like how to correctly layer salt and how heat affects texture. Enhance your cooking while learning why it's improving. (Popular Science) "Simplicity and knowledge and beautiful drawings. This book is approachable and inspiring and lays a strong, strong foundation (Joy The Baker) "Wonderfully illustrated by Wendy MacNaughton, author Samin Nosrat's exuberant-but-exacting cooking style comes through and is shared generously... It will instruct, cajole, delight, encourage, inspire, and motivate anyone who is even slightly interested in cooking. And it will make better cooks of those of us who are already spend a decent amount of time in the kitchen. (The Kitchn) "Beautifully illustrated and super informative." (Mic.com) "Nosrat's lighthearted approach and whimsical illustrations in Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking will teach you how to make delicious food anywhere with any ingredients, even without a recipe." (Verily) "Part textbook (in the best way possible), part master recipe guideline and inspiration. And filled with Wendy MacNaughton's cheeky hand drawn illustrations. The entire first half of the book is Samin being Samin an incredible teacher and guide, with infectious enthusiasm for food, good cooking, and good eating. While I consider myself an adept cook, each section was filled with new easy ways to think about cooking written in a manner that would teach and inspire novice and expert alike. How she \*actually\* manages to pull this off, I have no idea this is so hard to do and it's brilliant." (Second Lunch) "Ever wish an acclaimed, professional chef would reveal the building blocks of great

cooking? Well, here you have it. Chef and writer Samin Nosrat got her culinary start at Chez Panisse restaurant and has schooled scores of people, including author Michael Pollan, on how to cook. Now she's distilling her approach for us all." (EyeSwoon)"Want to be not just a good cook, but a great one? Then this groundbreaking book from Samin Nosrat will help you master the four notes of the culinary scale giving you a whole new perspective on how you structure and create a dish." (Fine Dining Lovers)This beautiful, approachable book not only teaches you how to cook, but captures how it should feel to cook: full of exploration, spontaneity and joy. Samin is one of the great teachers I know, and wins people over to cooking with real foodorganic, seasonal, and alive with her irrepressible enthusiasm and curiosity. (Alice Waters, New York Times bestselling author of *The Art of Simple Food*)Everyone was impressed when Michael Pollan managed to summarize the huge and complex subject of what we should be eating in just seven words: Eat food, not too much, mostly plants. Samin Nosrat has managed to summarize the huge and complex subject of how we should be cooking in just four words: Salt, fat, acid, heat. Everyone will be hugely impressed. (Yotam Ottolenghi, New York Times bestselling author of *Jerusalem*)Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat is a must for anyone wanting to be a better cook. Samin Nosrat, along with Wendy MacNaughton's fun illustrations, teaches the fundamentals of cooking and dives into the four elements that make food taste great. So do yourself a favor and buy this book. I promise you won't regret it. (April Bloomfield, James Beard award-winning chef and author of *A Girl and Her Pig*)Like the amazing meals that come out of Samin Nosrat's kitchen, Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat is the perfect mixture of highest-quality ingredients: beautiful storytelling, clear science, an infectious love of food, and Wendy MacNaughton's powerful art. Nosrat's prose combined with MacNaughton's beautiful illustrations are a perfect guide to employing the science of cooking for maximum deliciousness. Rebecca Skloot, New York Times bestselling author of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Rebecca Skloot, New York Times bestselling author of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*)Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat is a very important book not because it contains many excellent recipes, although it does, or because it is written by a Chez Panisse alum, although it is. It is important because it gives home cooks a compass with which to navigate their own kitchens, and it places trust in them that they will be able to use that compass. Samin's easygoing, cook-by-feel approach is never condescending or elitist. It is a step towards cooking without recipes and true empowerment (and joy!) in the kitchen. (John Becker and Megan Scott, 4th generation stewards of the New York Times bestselling *Joy of Cooking*)Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat is a wildly informative, new-generation, culinary resource. Samin Nosrat's wealth of experience comes together here in a pitch perfect combination of charm, narrative, straight-talk, illustration, and inspiration. Ticking all the boxes for new and seasoned cooks alike, this book meets you wherever you are in the kitchen, in all the right ways. (Heidi Swanson, New York Times bestselling author of *Super Natural Cooking*)In this excellent, accessible cookbook, Nosrat leads readers through the cooking process. MacNaughton's whimsical illustrations, charts, and graphs add to the experience. This exceptional debut is sure to inspire greater confidence in readers and enable them to create better meals on their own. (Publishers Weekly (Starred ))"Nosrat discovered the secret behind great cooking not memorizing recipes, but knowing the balance among four key elements: salt, fat, acid, and heat. Nosrat invites readers to learn what it takes to master these components and take their cooking from good to great...MacNaughton's illustrations add a touch of whimsy to the text, highlighting the techniques and skills presented in a clever manner. A fun, educational addition to all collections." (Library Journal (Starred ))"As Nosrat understands, the elements of good cooking couldn't be simpler. Success in the kitchen depends on just four elements: salt, fat, acid, and heat...Culinary students and serious home cooks can discover from both text and drawings how to succeed through fundamentals of their craft." (Booklist (Starred ))About the Author Samin Nosrat is a writer, teacher, and chef. Called a go-to resource for matching the correct techniques with the best ingredients by *The New York Times*, and the next Julia Child by NPR's *All Things Considered*, she's been cooking professionally since 2000, when she first stumbled into the kitchen at Chez Panisse restaurant. She lives, cooks, surfs, and gardens in Berkeley, California. Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat is her first book. Wendy MacNaughton is a New York Times bestselling illustrator and graphic journalist whose books include *Meanwhile in San Francisco* (Chronicle), *Pen Ink* (Bloomsbury), *The Gutsy Girl* (Bloomsbury), and *The Essential Scratch and Sniff Guide to Becoming a Wine Expert* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). Her work appears in publications like *The New York Times*, *Lucky Peach*, *Bon Appetit*, *AFAR Magazine*, and elsewhere. She is the back page columnist for *The California Sunday Magazine*. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat Growing up, I thought salt belonged in a shaker at the table, and nowhere else. I never added it to food, or saw Maman add it to food. When my aunt Ziba, who had a well-documented taste for salt, sprinkled it onto her saffron rice at the table each night, my brothers and I giggled. We thought it was the strangest, funniest thing in the world. What on earth, I wondered, can salt do for food? I associated salt with the beach, where I spent my childhood seasoned with it. There were the endless hours in the Pacific, swallowing mouthful after mouthful of ocean water when I misjudged the waves. Tidepooling at twilight, my friends and I often fell victim to the saltwater spray while we poked at anemones. And my brothers, chasing me on the sand with giant kelp, would tickle and taunt me with its salty, otherworldly tassels whenever they caught up to me. Maman always kept our swimsuits in the back of our blue Volvo station wagon, because the beach was always where we wanted to be. She was deft with the umbrella and blankets, setting them up while she shooed the three of us into the sea. We'd stay in the water until we were starving, scanning the beach for the sun-faded coral-and-white umbrella, the only landmark that would lead us

back to Maman. Wiping saltwater from our eyes, we beelined to her. Somehow, Maman always knew exactly what would taste best when we emerged: Persian cucumbers topped with sheeps milk feta cheese rolled together in lavash bread. We chased the sandwiches with handfuls of ice-cold grapes or wedges of watermelon to quench our thirst. That snack, eaten while my curls dripped with seawater and salt crust formed on my skin, always tasted so good. Without a doubt, the pleasures of the beach added to the magic of the experience, but it wasn't until many years later, working at Chez Panisse, that I understood why those bites had been so perfect from a culinary point of view. While bussing tables during the first year I worked at Chez Panisse, the closest I usually got to the food was at tasters, when the cooks made each dish for the chef to critique before service. With a menu that changed daily, the chef needed tasters to ensure that his or her vision was realized. Everything had to be just right. The cooks would tinker and adjust until satisfied; then they'd hand over the dishes to the floor staff to taste. On the tiny back porch, a dozen of us would hover over the plates, passing them around until we'd all had a bite of everything. It was there that I first tasted crisp deep-fried quail, tender salmon grilled in a fig leaf, and buttermilk panna cotta with fragrant wild strawberries. Often, the powerful flavors would haunt me throughout my shift. Once I developed culinary aspirations, Chris Lee, the chef who'd eventually take me under his wing, suggested that I pay less attention to what was happening on the porch during tasters, and more to what was happening in the kitchen. The language the chefs used, how they knew when something was right—these were clues about how to become a better cook. Most often, when a dish fell flat, the answer lay in adjusting the salt. Sometimes it was in the form of salt crystals, but other times it meant a grating of cheese, some pounded anchovies, a few olives, or a sprinkling of capers. I began to see that there is no better guide in the kitchen than thoughtful tasting, and that nothing is more important to taste thoughtfully for than salt. One day the following year, as a young cook in the prep kitchen, I was tasked with cooking polenta. I'd tasted polenta only once before coming to Chez Panisse, and I wasn't a fan. Precooked and wrapped in plastic like a roll of cookie dough, it was flavorless. But I'd promised myself that I would try everything at the restaurant at least once, and when I tasted polenta for the second time, I couldn't believe that something so creamy and complex could share a name with that flavorless tube of astronaut food. Milled from an heirloom variety of corn, each bite of the polenta at Chez Panisse tasted of sweetness and earth. I couldn't wait to cook some myself. Once the chef, Cal Peternell, talked me through the steps of making the polenta, I began cooking. Consumed by the fear of scorching and ruining the entire humongous pot—a mistake I had seen other cooks make—I stirred maniacally. After an hour and a half, I'd added in butter and Parmesan, just as Cal had instructed me. I brought him a spoonful of the creamy porridge to taste. At six foot four, Cal is a gentle giant with sandy-blond hair and the driest of wits. I looked expectantly up at him with equal parts respect and terror. He said, in his signature deadpan, "It needs more salt." Dutifully, I returned to the pot and sprinkled in a few grains of salt, treating them with the preciousness I might afford, say, gold leaf. I thought it tasted pretty good, so I returned to Cal with a spoonful of my newly adjusted polenta. Again, a moment's consideration was all he needed to know the seasoning was off. But now to save himself the trouble and time, I imagine he marched me back to the pot and added not one but three enormous palmfuls of kosher salt. The perfectionist in me was horrified. I had wanted so badly to do that polenta justice! The degree to which I'd been off was exponential. Three palmfuls! Cal grabbed spoons and together we tasted. Some indescribable transformation had occurred. The corn was somehow sweeter, the butter richer. All of the flavors were more pronounced. I'd been certain Cal had ruined the pot and turned my polenta into a salt lick, but no matter how I tried, the word salty did not apply to what I tasted. All I felt was a satisfying zing! with each mouthful. It was as if I'd been struck by lightning. It'd never occurred to me that salt was anything more than peppers' sidekick. But now, having experienced the transformative power of salt for myself, I wanted to learn how to get that zing! every time I cooked. I thought about all of the foods I'd loved to eat growing up and that bite of seaside cucumber and feta, in particular. I realized then why it had tasted so good. It was properly seasoned, with salt.