

LIFE

Feast your eyes on these books for cooks

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There are so many opportunities to build community around food, whether it's shopping the farmers' market, attending a fireman's barbecue, or preparing a holiday dinner at home or family and friends. Our food traditions provide an important link to our past, and we can always use some inspiration to blend fresh ideas and techniques, whether kitchen novice or experienced chef.

Spending time with all of these books — cooking from their well-tested recipes, perusing the beautiful photos, and having some great night-time reading — there's always something to learn, adding to your culinary repertoire and better understanding food science. In some cases, a good cookbook, like a good novel, has the ability to transport the reader to another place and time while offering compelling reasons to create, cook and find joy in community.

“The Meatball Shop Cookbook” by Daniel Holzman and Michael Chernow with Lauren Deen (Ballantine, \$28). Known as a New York City dining destination, you can now make these tasty treats in the comfort of your own kitchen. An easy and quick meal (they also can be made a day ahead and refrigerated), the veggie-based and fish varieties are just as tasty as the beef, pork and poultry versions. With an arsenal of sauces, recipes for salads and sides as well as sweet treats, “Meatball Monday” may be a new celebration.