Martha Stewarts Hors dOeuvres Handbook

More Than I Expected

With Martha Stewarts Hors dOeuvres Handbook, Stewart, along with Martha Stewart Living food editor Susan Spungen and photographer Dana Gallagher, has created not just a handbook but a dream book. The first 225 pages consist entirely of beautifully photographed, exquisite nibbles, tastes, and bites—and the following 270 pages give you the recipes and instructions to re-create them at home. Pink and orange ribbons bound into the book allow you to easily mark photos and recipes. Only Martha and her staff would come up with something so beautiful and practical.

You can browse the photos for inspiration, or dive right into one of the chapters, all organized by presentation, such as Layered and Stacked; Wrapped, Rolled, Filled, Folded and Stuffed; Skewered and Threaded; Bites and Pieces; and Sips and Drinks, just to name a few. Having a few friends over for cocktails before the show? How about Crispy Asparagus Straws, a delicious combo of asparagus wrapped in prosciutto and phyllo and sprinkled with Parmesan? The sophisticated flavors belie the ease of preparation. Have a little more time to prepare? The Jicama and Green Papaya Summer Rolls with Peanut Dipping Sauce are tasty and beautiful.

As gorgeous as this cookbook is, dont dismiss it as coffee-table cooking—several helpful photos show technique as well as finished product, and Marthas tips and notes are sprinkled throughout the text. For example, a lengthy sidebar on purchasing and preparing shrimp shares how to buy shrimp (the high quality of flash-frozen shrimp these days makes it perfectly acceptable), how to cook it (use kosher salt in your cooking water), and how best to peel and devein the little treasures. Similarly, reading the note on preparing phyllo will encourage even a novice cook to try her hand at Phyllo Triangles with Feta and Spinach or Curried Walnut Chicken. If youre planning a party and need fabulous finger food, you neednt look any further than Martha Stewarts Hors dOeuvres Handbook.

-Rebecca A. Staffel

My Personal Review:
For a book almost ten years old, I was surprised to find that it contains ideas for parties that remain refreshing and impressive even for the most sophisticated cocktail parties. Apart from an abundance of recipes the book is broken down into sections with helpful information which will allow you to combine recipes and create your own versions. I for one use this book regularly in my catering business and never fail to impress my customers!

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