



Twenty-Dollar, Twenty-Minute Meals*

Caroline Wright

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Twenty-Dollar, Twenty-Minute Meals has it all: A bold and irresistible promise make fresh, delicious meals for four for \$20 or less, and that take twenty minutes or less to prepare. A dynamic young author with serious fans. And the singular point of view that pulls it all together, from the narrative recipe style to the author's unerring sense of the ingredient-forward way people want to cook and eat today.

Twenty-Dollar, Twenty-Minute Meals is for millennials on a budget and young moms and dads who want to make the kind of food they eat in restaurants or read about on blogs for anyone who likes to cook and entertain but doesn't always have a lot of time (or money). It's quick and easy with a modern twist: Steak with Herb Sauce and Buttered Radishes. Seared Salmon with Orange Rosemary Lentils. Merguez Burger with Cucumber Dressing. Sage Pork Chops with Grilled Peaches and Onion. Orzo Risotto with Pancetta and Radicchio. And, of course, there's dessert.

It's the Wright way to cook: 20 minutes + \$20 = a fabulous meal for 4.

Twenty-Dollar, Twenty-Minute Meals* Details

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Author : Caroline Wright

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From Reader Review Twenty-Dollar, Twenty-Minute Meals* for online ebook

Deborah Blanchard says

Just not my kind of cookbook. I liked that the meals were easy, just not to my taste. I am a meat and potatoes Irish girl and this book has too much goat cheese and healthy stuff for me. Might me good for you that are health conscious and love kale also.

Carla says

I am quite pleased with this cookbook, and I am a stay-at-home wife and a mom of three, so I know good recipes when I see them! I love the way the author designed each recipe, with the instructions laid out like a story and the ingredients highlighted throughout in yellow. The directions are very easy to understand and explained in detail so that even the home cook can master difficult steps like a pro. The author has given a new spin on some traditional comfort foods and in several cases (grilled cheese comes to mind), she offers multiple variations that will spice up dinner so that you aren't serving the same meal over and over. I am also thrilled that she included so many vegetarian choices, and overall, I'd say most of the dishes look healthy with a balance of ingredients that will satisfy even the most picky eaters in your family. There is truly something for everyone in this book!

Alyssa says

3.5 stars! Complimentary copy received at Book Expo America.*

If you're strictly a meat-and-potatoes sort of person, this may not be the cookbook for you. A lot of the food in here is to the tastes of the new guard of cooking, popularized by prominent cooking blogs and such—kale, goat cheese, broccoli rabe, things like that. Yuppie food, some might call it. I'm all for this sort of thing (the more interesting ingredients, the merrier!), but it's probably not the sort of thing most grandmothers would go for. Unless you have a really hip grandmother.

It's got all the hallmarks of modern home blog cooking—beautiful photography, interesting ingredients in unique combinations, and a friendly, informal voice. (The one hallmark it seems to be missing is the personal story-ish header notes that often introduce recipes in the cookbook-coffee-table-photography-book-personal-food-writings-all-in-one type of cookbooks very popular on the market today. This makes sense, though, as its goals are for delicious, but also speedy meals). So let's move on to...

The Positives

As I mentioned before, the photography is gorgeous. That, combined with the recipe titles, resulted in a Pavlovian drool response to just about everything in the book. Even foods I don't normally like (like the evil eggplant) looked good!

Another good thing is the range of recipes. If you want to make some awesome cakes you'll probably buy a book specifically about cakes with only cake recipes CAKE CAKE CAKE, but if you're looking to make quick, inexpensive family meals, you're going to want some options. And this book has got a little of

everything—salads, soup, sammiches, pasta, pizza (!), eggs, meats, vegetarian, and desserts. And let's talk about those desserts for a moment...burnt caramel pudding with toasted almonds? Toasted brioche with lemon curd and black peppered berries? Dark chocolate gelato buttermilk milkshakes? Yes, PLEASE.

Another thing I really like is that below most recipes, there are suggestions for another version of a recipe, substituting slightly different main ingredients. For example, for the recipe for tomatillo huevos rancheros, the author suggests also trying it with plum tomatoes (filling in for tomatillos), pinto beans (subbed in for black beans), and cheddar cheese (instead of pepper jack). Sure, one could probably invent variations like that on their own, but it's a nice time saver to have some already thought up and written out for you, too.

And lastly, the ingredients themselves are a big positive, for me at least. I love kinda weird and unique ingredients, and am lucky enough to live in a big city where I can usually locate them without too much trouble. If you're into more standard, less adventurous food, or live in a place where it's hard to come by more unusual ingredients, this might not be a positive for you. And that's okay! I do think this book contains a lot of recipes that could appeal to that sector of the eating populace, and also ones that are just different enough that it could push less adventurous eaters in the direction of trying some different kinds of food, but the recipes might not appeal to everyone. I mean, there aren't any chicken feet or animal innards recipes, but there is a lot beyond your standard fare in here.

The Less Positives

As I've said, depending on your personal tastes, this might not be the one for you. That being said, for me there were even some ingredients I'd never heard of and would have no idea where to find. I am not the foodiest of foodies, so I had no idea what ramps are, or bresaola, or Szechuan peppercorns. But in most cases where there was an ingredient I hadn't heard of, there was an arrow indicating a good, more pedestrian substitute (green onions for ramps and prosciutto for bresaola, in case you were wondering). And sometimes there are indications about where to look for certain ingredients (you can find haloumi, a kind of hard cheese, at specialty food markets, apparently). So I guess this less-positive is actually a real positive. Good work, author!

Another thing some people might not like is that there is no listing of ingredients—they just appear highlighted in yellow within the recipe itself. There is also no total cooking time or serving number/size listed, but that's probably because it is listed in the title itself—20-minute meals for 4! Which brings me to my last less-positive...

It took me much longer than 20 minutes to make the dinner recipe I tried. Granted, I am not the fastest chef in the world. I like to take my time. But still! Some of the recipes, yes, I think 20 minutes is enough time to get them done. Others? If you're not a kitchen pro with all your ingredients prepped and ready to go, I think it might be difficult to get a them done within that time frame. Also, the meals for 4 thing—these are probably the FDA-approved meal sizes we're talking about here, but in reality I think the portions might be on the small side for the hungrier of us humans.

Overall, I am happy to have this cookbook in my arsenal. It probably won't become part of my core cooking references, but it will be fun to dip into from time to time to liven things up. Especially with those fantastic sounding desserts!

*As ever, much as we are grateful for the copy, our review is uninfluenced by its source.

Originally posted on Read This / Eat That

Shelly Kittell says

Really interesting recipes that I do hope to try.

Julie Griffin says

"Recipes have the ability to affect a cook's life in a very real way, by turning strangers into teachers-" writes the cooking expert Caroline Wright, whose recipes have appeared in Rachael Ray and Martha Stewart, but are perhaps best represented by the magazine Real Simple. Her recipes are exactly that--most of them have limited ingredients, most have no complicated cooking techniques required that will intimidate beginning and amateur cooks, and almost all of them have a unique little twist that sets them apart from the usual base that begins most of these recipes. For example, kale soup with chickpeas adds a simple fried capers to distinguish it; linguini with braised swiss chard adds a poached egg; red lentil soup simply made with dried lentil and chicken broth and curry is set apart by a simple spiced butter. I can't wait to try the Shakshuka, based upon a simmering jarred marinara sauce made interesting with paprika and cumin and then formed by a wooden spoon into 8 wells into which eggs are slid and cooked, served with pita bread. The Wright way to cook, as stated on the back cover, delivers exactly what it promises--\$20 + 20 minutes = a fabulous meal for 4. The recipes for the most part should inspire beginning as well as experienced cooks. She includes a 3-way section which details simple ways to construct, for example, 3 pizzas, 3 egg sandwiches, 3 grilled cheese sandwiches--simple yet they look delicious. Quibbles with the book include the design--no ingredient list at the beginning of the recipe (she does warn the reader to gather the ingredients first before beginning) and the size of the book makes it fun to hold and read through, but I am not sure how I will keep it open to the page when using it for cooking. A few of the recipes are a little silly--especially one which calls for bread, a piece of chocolate, and a glass of red wine. I also must be in a different income bracket, because \$20 per meal is not considered a budget in my household. Overall, a fun and useful book that contains easy to follow instructions and lovely pictures.

Melinda says

Reading through this book really got me to think about how I could be more creative in the kitchen. I like the focus on using fresh and locally sourced produce. I like that in many of the dishes, there are suggestions for alternate ingredients. Also, the book is visually appealing, with great photographs of all the dishes.

There are two main issues that I have with the book, the first of which is the fact that the ingredients are highlighted in the paragraph and not listed separately; it makes it difficult if you just want an ingredient list for the supermarket. The second issue is that I wouldn't necessarily consider all of the recipes to be main dishes for a meal.

So all of that being said, I think this is a very clever book with some really good tips for making simple and delicious meals.

Katy says

I don't like how the recipes are written (in paragraph form, no list of ingredients, they're just highlighted

within the paragraph) and some of them are just plain ridiculous. Example: "French Bread, Chocolate + Red Wine." I mean, really. She actually tells you to eat a piece of chocolate on a baguette and have a glass of wine and calls that a recipe.

Douglas Lord says

This is the best cookbook I've seen since David Joachim's *A Man, A Can, A Plan: 50 Great Guy Meals Even You Can Make* (Rodale, 2002). Genuinely, the only problem is that some of the names are a little frou-frou. Take "Piadini with Pulled Bresaola, Baby Kale and Parmesan" Your usual dude will say...wha?? But with this cookbook, you're going to grow up a little bit. Maybe you're tired of "heat and eat" MREs, maybe you want to impress a ladyfriend. At heart you're already yearning for knowledge[7] young Padawan, so this is the perfect title. Take "Lentils with Turkey Sausage and Fried Sage." It looks good'n'healthy and the whole recipe is 137 words long, with about six ingredients. It's all very manageable. Not every recipe in there is happening. I mean, no dude is going to make a radish, watercress and butter sandwich. But tomatillo huevos rancheros or super duper pasta primavera? YES—toNIGHT!

From August, 2013 Books For Dudes, Library Journal. Read it!

Miranda says

I really enjoyed reading through this book and can't wait to try out some of the recipes. There was such a really nice variety throughout.

Minneapolisians says

A little basic, but good for working parents and those in a rut.

Trish says

I thought this book was more of a lunch book. I liked some of the recipes but I am more of a comfort food person. I loved that every recipe had a picture. That the author sometimes gave you more ways to make the recipe.

Steven Peterson says

The focus of this book? Well stated on page ix: ". . .I wrote those recipes: real food, cooked quickly and inexpensively." A short while later, we read that (page ix) ". . .these recipes use simple cooking techniques." How well does the book live up to these criteria? Overall, fairly well.

At the outset, Caroline Wright notes several principles, among which are: be organized when cooking, use seasonal products, don't stress, keep salad greens on hand, etc. Not bad! I always try to have salad fixings on

hand. One can make a meal with these, by adding, for instance, hard boiled eggs, onions, tomatoes, and so on.

The cookbook, like many others, is divided into fairly logical categories, including salads, soups, sandwiches, pasta, pizza, eggs, meat (including poultry and fish), vegetarian, and desserts. Examples of interesting soups: asparagus soup with dill oil and carrot-ginger soup. The salads seem a bit exotic to me and I am interested in only a few of these.

Sandwiches? I like the grilled cheese three ways. These include grilled cheddar and arugula, grilled havarti with pepperoncini, and grilled fontina, prosciutto, and apricot. All seem quite makeable and represent interesting takes on a classic sandwich. Pasta? One interesting take is linguini with fresh garlic sauce. Some of the recipes, though, seem to be more complex than needed. An egg dish that intrigued me was omelets with asparagus and goat cheese. Some others were, again, a bit exotic.

And on it goes. For the most part, I enjoyed this volume. There are quite a few imaginative recipes. But others left me saying--I just don't want to try that.

Darren says

Feed a family of four a good, fresh and healthy main meal for less than 20 dollars? And what is more with it taking less than 20 minutes to prepare. Can that be easily done? This book seems to think so and sets out to get you doing it, not just reading about it.

For less than the cost of a typical takeout you can soon, thanks to this book's help, get cooking and maybe have a little left over for a lunch or snack. What's more, you might even enjoy it and start saving a little money too. This book can lead to bigger and greater things.

Starting with a good, jargon-free overview to this cooking lark and some of the basic store cupboard ingredients, the book then drops you straight into cooking. The recipes are split into key sections of salads; soups; sandwiches; pasta; pizza; eggs; meat, poultry and fish, vegetarian and desserts so you can quickly navigate your way around, yet there is no chapter mini-index. This book purportedly has an index at the end but this review copy did not feature this so no opinion can be extended to its efficiency. One can hope it is comprehensive and accessible, but...

Within this book the recipes are presented in a rather different style. Written just like a school text book certain key elements of the recipe are highlighted but to quickly ascertain if you have all the ingredients to hand you need to read the entire recipe instead of possibly browsing just the title and the ingredients list. Whilst this reviewer liked the highlighted style of presentation, a quick break-out box showing the ingredients and other key information really should also be there. Culinary jargon has been kept to a minimum and one feels that this book could really help and inspire someone who perhaps didn't really want to be cooking in the first place.

For a beginner or a nervous cook this book could be a little goldmine. It certainly is less intimidating and burdensome than many of its peers. The more experienced cook might just find its purposely over-simplistic, involved formula just a step too far. It is difficult to say. Certainly this reviewer found it less "browser friendly" just because one has to read the entire recipe to know if one has the ingredients to hand. Sometimes the smallest of things can have the biggest impact. Yet the book does meet and surpass its aims, at least in this reviewer's eyes.

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Anne says

Love all the ideas: also love that the book is affordable and set up like a paperback. Just a fun and excellent format.
