



## **Small Victories: Recipes, Advice + Hundreds of Ideas for Home Cooking Triumphs**

*Julia Turshen , Gently & Hyers (Photographs) , Ina Garten (Foreword)*

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"I can't wait to cook my way through this amazing new book," Ina Garten writes in the foreword to this cookbook of more than 400 recipes and variations from Julia Turshen, writer, go-to recipe developer, co-author for best-selling cookbooks such as Gwyneth Paltrow's *It's All Good*, Mario Batali's *Spain...on the Road Again*, and Dana Cowin's *Mastering My Mistakes in the Kitchen*. The process of truly great home cooking is demystified via more than a hundred lessons called out as "small victories" in the funny, encouraging headnotes; these are lessons learned by Julia through a lifetime of cooking thousands of meals. This beautifully curated, deeply personal collection of what Chef April Bloomfield calls "simple, achievable recipes" emphasizes bold-flavored, honest food for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert. More than 160 mouth-watering photographs from acclaimed photographers Gently + Hyers provide beautiful instruction and inspiration elevate this entertaining and essential kitchen resource for both beginners and accomplished home cooks.

## Small Victories: Recipes, Advice + Hundreds of Ideas for Home Cooking Triumphs Details

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## From Reader Review Small Victories: Recipes, Advice + Hundreds of Ideas for Home Cooking Triumphs for online ebook

### jeanmarie says

This book is very non fussy for those who are 'smitten kitchen inclined' -- if that makes any sense. Julia offers recipes that are delicious, not overly complicated, and that turn out great! I've only made a few so far, but have done a variety (beet salad, tea cake, and one entree i'm blanking on) and they were all really good! I'm debating buying this one after checking it out, and renewing it twice!, from the library.

I like that she has helpful tips, like putting a little water and then the pan lid over your over-easy eggs to perfectly cook them without flipping them! These small victories are largely not gimmicky although sometimes they feel a little stretched. This would be a great gift for anyone who likes cooking as there's something to learn at all skill levels!

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### Juli Anna says

There is a lot to like about this book, and for those who are newer to cooking I would recommend this book whole-heartedly. It's also great inspiration for effortless, casual entertaining. I think that Turshen's chops as a chef and recipe developer are really on display here--she is good at what she does, and the recipes are all exciting and relatively low-maintenance. I love how often she suggests turning what many people would consider throwaways into viable, tasty food items (I can't wait to make a batch of fromage fort with my cheese drawer scraps!). While somewhat basic, the recipes are well thought out and elegant in their simplicity.

However, there was something contrived and irritating about the way the "small victories" theme was carried throughout the book that made me roll my eyes at times. The recipes, indeed the whole cookbook, really speaks for itself; it doesn't need the gimmick.

As a more advanced home cook, I only gleaned a few tips and techniques from this book that were new to me, and this isn't a book I feel I need to add to my shelves. However, there are plenty of younger cooks to whom I would happily gift this book, and I really think that Thursten is a bit of a rockstar when it comes to recipe development.

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### Nicole Gulotta says

This is a wonderful collection of recipes for new home cooks, but kitchen veterans find something to love, too. Many recipes are perfect for quick weeknight cooking (something I'm in need of right now), and Julia's stories and headnotes make the book feel personal and approachable. I've been cooking from it the past few weeks, and have added several recipes to my permanent rotation.

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### Patsy Shepherd says

## Some GREAT Ideas

I don't cook, and, at 75, I'm not sure I've got time to learn. But this book sure inspires me to maybe give it a try. I bought it on a whim, to try to learn to fry eggs better than I currently do. But there are few recipes in here that I'm not inspired to try. That, in itself, is a large victory for me. Meanwhile, the book is chock-a-block full of small victories that could (even at this late date) change my life. What a great collection of ideas--with spin-offs for each one. Good job!

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## Elaine - says

This book is full of beautifully simple recipes and photos. I'm super excited to try several of the recipes. Although there are a few ingredients you may not be able to get at your local grocer the recipes themselves are simple to make.

Ina Garten wrote the foreword for this book. I suppose you know you've arrived in the cookbook/cooking world when you are friends with Ina Garten and can ask her to write a foreword for you!

"Julia's love of two things come together in this book -- her total delight in great food and she adores cooking for people she loves."

Julia's introduction to her book tells the story of how she began cooking at a young age with the support of her family. She was dicing celery and perfecting her flipping skills while the rest of us were playing with our dolls. She has an impressive resume from being a personal chef to authoring cookbooks with some of my personal cooking heroes (Mario Batali and Gwyneth Paltrow).

"Which brings us to this very personal collection of recipes and advice, the goal of which is to demonstrate that cooking doesn't have to be complicated to be satisfying, or over-the-top to be impressive."

In her Some Things to Keep in Mind section, Julia breaks down the equipment and some of the food items needed in this book. There is a paragraph for each telling us what it is and how she uses it.

Next there is an Unusual Ingredients section that contains 10 ingredients that may not be available at your local grocery store. She explains each of these items with a vivid descriptions of its taste and where you might find it. For a few of the ingredients she gives secondary options that may be easier to find or more likely that you have them already.

Recipe Sections:

Breakfast

Soups + Salads

Vegetables

Grains, Beans + Pasta

Meat + Poultry

Shellfish + Fish

Desserts

A Few Drinks + Some Things to Keep on Hand

Each recipe in all the sections has Spin-offs. These are tips on how to change the recipe slightly to have a whole different meal. It means that each recipe can be altered slightly from Julia's instructions. So really, you are getting three or four recipes from each in this book.

The next section is Seven Lists. These are seven lists with seven things each. For example: Seven Easy-but-Memorable Bites to Have with Drinks. Each list consists of super simple ideas for quick, easy food. I love this idea! I wish more cookbooks would do this.

Julia gives two pages of menu suggestions. From "A Low-key Breakfast for a Group on Sunday" to "Dinner for Your Health-conscious Friends". These are ideas for recipes to pair to have a complete meal from this book.

Julia finishes this book with a Give Back section. She gives suggestions of places that you could donate to for those less fortunate. These two pages made me so happy. So often I don't stop to think about how fortunate I am. That I have this book and the means to purchase the ingredients and make these recipes is a luxury in this world. So many don't have that luxury!

"This cookbook, like most cookbooks, assumes that whoever is reading it has access to food and not only the desire, but also the time, energy, and means to cook. How great would it be if that were the case for everyone? I firmly believe that if you have the privilege of eating however much you want whenever you want, you should spend some time ensuring that others have the same opportunity."

Such powerful, unexpected words at the end of a cookbook!

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### **Sue says**

This cookbook is wonderful; I want to make so many of her recipes! I plan to purchase this book.

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### **Susie says**

Love cookbooks to read, Julia's comments are great!

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### **Jenifer Jacobs says**

I requested this book from the library after hearing the author interviewed on NPR and just loving the way she spoke about food and cooking. Now that I have read the book (and tried several recipes with great outcomes!!) I am ordering a copy to keep. Somehow, I have had a "fixed mindset" regarding cooking (along the lines of "I'm just not a gifted cook like my mom or sister") but this book managed to open my mind to the idea that inspired cooks got that way through practice (duh). And not being afraid to fail. The recipes and pictures are amazing, but more than that, the writing is clear and makes cooking seem fun and less intimidating than I'd made it up to be.

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### **Trudie says**

Well, I have never reviewed a cookbook before even though I own a decent number of them. I decided if I was to review a new cookbook I needed to spend a decent chunk of time actually cooking from it. And so over the last three months I have gone through selecting out recipes from each section of this book and I have made several happy discoveries or rather "small victories" in the process. This is really just my sort of cookbook very down-to-earth and unfussy, with results that don't rely heavily on some complicated ingredients or skills. In addition Turshen's accompanying text is reassuring and gives you so many options to make the recipe into something of your own.

Some personal highlights for me from this cookbook were : Sour Cream Pancakes with Roasted Blueberries, Roasted Red Pepper and Pear soup, Orecchiette with Spicy Sausage, Turkey and Ricotta Meatballs, Chicken and Pea Skillet Pie and the Feel-Better-Soon Cookies.

However, I have earmarked several more recipes to try. So far I think this is the most well traversed cookbook in my collection.

( Also eggs ! the author is crazy about eggs but having tasted those deviled eggs I can understand why )

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### **Sarah says**

Beautiful cookbook, but nothing really earth-shattering... great for a new cook who is just learning how to improvise and make changes based on what's in his/her pantry.

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### **Susie says**

I've never reviewed a cookbook before, but it just occurred to me to do so! I love this book. I don't think every recipe is perfect; she says I need a cup and a half of braising liquid, I might actually need more like 2 1/2 -- and as some have said, none of these recipes is challenging for a kitchen veteran. But even for decent cooks like me, there just seems to be something to love on every page -- like, does making meatballs have to be as complicated as we thought? Am I really ambitious enough to try making an entire clambake in a pot?! When I first dug into this book, I found a few of the recipes hit or miss. I surprised myself by not actually liking her famous chicken soup at all, for example, and neither did my family. But somehow since then I've been choosing the ones to try a little better, and there have just been many many hits. Besides, Julia Turshen is so charming, I could just read her all day long.

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### **Alex Can Read says**

*This review was originally published on my blog <https://alexcanread.wordpress.com/201...>*

It's no secret in my family and social circles that I love food. My family nickname is "Food" even. I love to eat, I love to scope out new restaurants, love to cook (but hate the cleanup) and naturally, because I love books, I adore cookbooks.

It's no secret in my family and social circles that I love food. My family nickname is "Food" even. I love to eat, I love to scope out new restaurants, love to cook (but hate the cleanup) and naturally, because I love books, I adore cookbooks.

Unfortunately, I have a small house and a small budget for books, so I've gotten into the habit of checking out cookbooks I'm interested in from the library before I decide whether or not to take the plunge and make the purchase and commit to making space for another cookbook in my little kitchen.

I also try to participate in Food52's Cookbook Club Facebook group, where each month the group cooks from a pre-chosen book. A few months ago, just as I joined, the club was cooking from Julia Turshen's Small Victories. I requested it from the library right away but discovered, much to my chagrin, the waiting list was very long.

Finally, finally, finally, it landed in my hands...just as some Life Stuff happened and it wasn't until the day before it was due back to the library that I finally, finally, finally made some time to peruse the book.

As I paged through the Small Victories, it quickly became clear to me that this was a book I had to buy.

Why? What makes this book worth making space on my tiny shelf for?

Small Victories is magical. That's why. Small Victories is accessible, beautiful, inspirational, and beginner friendly.

Turshen's book is beautifully and simply laid out. Definitely easy on the eyes and the photos are so gorgeous and inspirational.

But as gorgeous as it is, that's not the magic. The magic is in Turshen's writing and her celebration of "small victories" – the little lessons sprinkled throughout the recipes. Her recipes and stories are not only easy to follow, but she doesn't condescend. It's almost as if she's standing in your kitchen with you, not holding your hand, but sitting at the bar cheering you on as you work your way through one of the recipes.

Then, once you've mastered the recipe, she adds another layer of magic and suggests ways to riff off the recipe you just made to make it into something new. Avocado Toast with Kimchi becomes a fancy salad with just a couple of small tweaks and some champagne on the side. (This is just the first recipe in the book, folks! She does it for every recipe in the book throughout.)

My personal favorite, which I made immediately upon reading it, is waaaay at the back of the book in her Drinks section. She amps up a gin and tonic (my favorite at-home cocktail) by adding a sprinkle of fresh-cracked pepper and a thin slice of cucumber. I'll never make a G&T without pepper or cucumber again! The cucumber adds a new fresh brightness and the pepper adds just another layer of depth, without tasting peppery or spicy. Heaven.

5 Stars, without a doubt. Turshen's approach makes Small Victories into a cookbook that melds inspiration with the confidence-building of a cooking for beginners book and something any cook will enjoy.

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## **Samantha Shen says**

### **More than great recipes**

So many things I like about this book-  
- the concept of "small victories" is well-developed and applies to more than just the actual food but your approach to cooking, learning to cook, and giving back to the community.

- Recipes are diverse, simple to follow, have lots of spin-offs that you can customize to your taste or morph into something else.

-Beautiful photography and layout

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## **Tina says**

I'm obsessed with this cookbook! Turshen takes us through so many different flavor profiles with such ease & simplicity & with the encouragement of attainable culinary "small victories". Beautifully photographed/styled with mouth-wateringly delicious recipe suggestions, this one is a definite "for purchase" to be placed on the increasingly weight-sagging cookbook shelves in my kitchen!

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## **Douglas Welch says**

When reading a cookbook I don't tend to make grand proclamations that this book is good and that book is bad. Cookbooks are all about what you take away from the book and one person's favorite is another's failure. For me, my like or dislike of a cookbook directly relates to how well it works for me. Does its message resonate? Are the recipes actually something I would consider making? Can I put my new found knowledge to immediate use? With those criteria in mind, Small Victories certainly worked for me on a variety of levels.

First, even though I am a bit of a fussy eater, I found many recipes I want to try out as soon as possible. Each recipe is well described and also includes several variations you might want to try.

Turshen includes old standards like her take on biscuits (Everything Biscuits), roast chicken (Roast Chicken with Fennel, Rosemary + Lemon) and desserts (Berry + Buttermilk Cobbler) while also exploring further afield with Roasted Salmon with Maple + Soy, Jennie's Chicken Pelau, and Crisply Hominy + Cheddar Fritters.

In Small Victories, you'll find sections dedicated to Breakfast, Soups + Salads, Vegetables, (maybe even a few that I would eat) (LAUGH), Grains, Beans + Pasta, Meat + Poultry, Shellfish + Fish, Desserts, A Few Drinks + Some Things To Keep On Hand and Seven Lists — which gives some great ideas on small bites to serve with drinks, 7 Things To Do With Pizza Dough, Leftover Roast Chicken and more.

Another reason I found Small Victories so enjoyable are the excellent stories attached to each recipe. Even when I wasn't particularly interested in a recipe, I still made a point of reading each of these descriptions almost like I would read a regular book. These descriptions also contain the "Small Victories" which are the namesake of the book. These are small tips and hints are a great addition to the cookbook and provide yet another level of value.

As Turshen writes, "Think of small victories as the corners of the puzzle, the pieces that help us become inspired, relax cooks who know how to fill in the rest."

I found my copy of Small Victories at my local library and you might find it there, too. It's always a great place to start when looking for new books in your life. However you get your hands on Small Victories, I highly recommend you do. I think you'll find some interesting recipes, tips and maybe even the next step in your cooking adventures.

- See more at: <http://welchwrite.com/blog/2017/03/13...>

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