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Make It Ahead: A Barefoot Contessa Cookbook



Synopsis

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLERFor the first time, trusted and beloved cookbook author Ina Garten, the Barefoot Contessa, answers the number one question she receives from cooks: Can I make it ahead?If you've ever found yourself stuck in front of the stove at your own party, scrambling to get everything to the table at just the right moment, Ina is here to let you in on her secrets! Thanks to twenty years of running a specialty food store and fifteen years writing cookbooks, she has learned exactly which dishes you can prep, assemble, or cook ahead of time. Whether you're hosting a party or simply making dinner on a hectic weeknight, Ina gives you lots of amazing recipes that taste just as good or even better when they're made in advance.In Make It Ahead, each recipe includes clear instructions for what you can do ahead of time, and how far in advance, so you can cook with confidence and eliminate last-minute surprises. Make a pitcher of Summer Rosé Sangria filled with red berries, let it chill overnight for the flavors to develop, and you have a delicious drink to offer your friends the minute they arrive. Simmer a pot of Wild Mushroom & Farro Soup, enjoy a bowl for lunch, and freeze the rest for a chilly evening. You can prep the kale, Brussels sprouts, and lemon vinaigrette for Winter Slaw ahead of time and simply toss them together before serving. Assemble French Chicken Pot Pies filled with artichokes and fresh tarragon a day in advance and then pop them in the oven half an hour before dinner. And for dessert, everyone needs the recipe for Ina's Decadent (gluten-free!) Chocolate Cake topped with Make-Ahead Whipped Cream. Ina also includes recipes for the biggest cooking day of the year • Thanksgiving! Her Ultimate Make-Ahead Roast Turkey and Gravy with Onions & Sage may just change your life.With beautiful photographs and hundreds of invaluable make-ahead tips, this is your new go-to guide for preparing meals that are stress-free yet filled with those fabulously satisfying flavors that you have come to expect from the Barefoot Contessa.

Book Information

Series: A Barefoot Contessa Cookbook

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Clarkson Potter; 1st edition (October 28, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307464881

ISBN-13: 978-0307464880

Product Dimensions: 7.7 x 0.8 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 1,000 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #6,036 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Entertaining & Holidays](#) #44 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > U.S. Regional](#) #44 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Methods > Quick & Easy](#)

Customer Reviews

Featured Recipes from Make It Ahead Download the recipe for French Green Bean Salad with Warm Goat Cheese Download the recipe for Roast Chicken with Bread & Arugula Salad

INA GARTEN is the host of the Emmy Award-winning Barefoot Contessa television show on Food Network and a New York Times bestselling author. She lives in East Hampton, New York, with her husband, Jeffrey. This is her ninth book. Visit Ina at www.BarefootContessa.com.

As Ina Garten points out, "there is ahead of time and there is WAY ahead of time." That's why she's included recipes that cover a wide range of "make ahead" schedules. Some of them, especially soups (one example is Zucchini Basil Soup) and gravy (Make Ahead Turkey Gravy with Onions and Sage) can be completely cooked and frozen for months. Others can only be made a few hours - or perhaps a few days- ahead of time. This includes Thanksgiving turkey. Although it seems obvious now that she's suggested it, I like the idea of cooking and slicing the turkey well before guests arrive....just have to make sure it stays warm. I bought this book primarily to streamline our Thanksgiving and other holiday menus - especially since we have both meat lovers and vegetarians in the family. UPDATE: I tested two recipes on October 30th. See info below. I plan to make Roasted Vegetable Lasagna for the vegetarian option, and freeze it and that solves the main course situation. There are also some side dishes and desserts in here that I'll be contemplating, perhaps the Cauliflower and Carrot Puree (can be prepped ahead of time but not frozen). UPDATE: I tested both and they're delicious. I've made an extra lasagne for the freezer, following the freezer instructions, and plan to defrost and test how it works after being in the freezer. Will update again then. I don't like to use any untested recipes although Ina's are reliable. The majority of these recipes are NOT frozen ahead of time so if you're looking for a freezer cookbook this isn't the one. You might want to keep this in mind but it didn't bother me. I'm happy to simply save time and not be a frazzled host. The main sections are cocktails, To Start (primarily appetizers), Lunch, Dinner,

Vegetables, Dessert, and Breakfast. Here's the major pros of this cookbook:

1. Lots of vegetarian options: Warm Fig and Arugula Salad, Tomatoes and Burrata (a type of cheese), Quinoa Tabbouleh with Feta, Zucchini and Goat Cheese Tart and plenty more.
2. Minimal to no last minute prep. When guests arrive, relax and have dinner ready to serve in minutes. No messy kitchen.
3. A complete menu and a schedule for cooking and prepping Thanksgiving dinner. This includes making 2-3 dishes a day, starting on Monday with the Carrot and Cauliflower Puree, then seasoning the turkey on Tuesday and taking out the gravy base out of the freezer to defrost (or making it that day), cutting the brussels sprouts for roasting, etc. There is also a timetable for cooking everything. If you're a traditional sort when it comes to Thanksgiving, there isn't a recipe for cranberry sauce or traditional mashed potatoes in here. No pumpkin pie either. There is, however, a make ahead mashed potato recipe that - although it deviates from traditional - is yummy and stays creamy even when prepared in advance. I'm excited about trying a variation on old-fashioned mashed potatoes. And of course, pumpkin pie and cranberry sauce can be made well ahead of time. We do both at least a day ahead.

Points worth considering:

1. Many of the recipes are very heavy on cheese, especially the vegetarian options. You might want to consider this factor if you're watching your dairy consumption.
2. Make ahead does not generally mean freezer recipes in this book. Depending on your expectations, this may be a disappointment. As noted, however, this didn't bother me.
3. A fair amount of the recipes may not be kid friendly or they use relatively exotic ingredients. We've always encouraged our kids to "push the envelope" and experiment with different foods - sometimes successfully and sometimes not.

Also includes a list of Make-Ahead menus for various occasions as well as a complete recipe index.

I love Ina's books. We have them all and have given them as gifts. All of her recipes are well tested and delicious. We use these books for everyday meals and special occasions. Family and friends request that we bring food cooked from her recipes at almost every party and family gathering. We get compliments on every dish of hers that we prepare. I wish that she had continued making her frozen dinners, they were so yummy and easy. I sincerely hope that she continues her books and her show!

Who wouldn't want more time to spend with guests? These dishes can give you freedom by making them ahead of time, and it ensures you enjoy your guests' company as much as they enjoy your food.

I have had tremendous success with Ina Garten's recipes (and I have nearly all of her books). Make It Ahead is no exception. I have made the Cranberry Martinis and Butternut Squash with Bacon and Farro a few times. There are also a couple of recipes that I've been looking for and am really excited to try (Coquille St. Jacques and Chocolate Terrine). I don't have a lot of time to try recipes and make mistakes and the Barefoot Contessa cookbooks are great and results are consistently good. Ina Garten is no different than most professional chefs who believe fresh food is best. She provides tips for prep and make ahead steps that are not going to damage the integrity of a dish. This is a helpful resource for a reluctant entertainer who wants to be organized, more relaxed and doesn't want to serve a casserole from the freezer for a special occasion meal

I have many Ina Garten cookbooks but this is my favorite by far. This week I have made the Cranberry Martinis, the Fig and Arugula salad (albeit with dried figs), the make ahead turkey gravy (with Swanson's chicken broth , the carrot and cauliflower puree, and the garlic shrimp. Every recipe was a winner and I really love the idea of prepping ahead of time and not being crazy in the kitchen when guests are sitting in my living room. This is the best cookbook ever.

Ina Garten is truly a genius when it comes to making complicated recipes simple. I used this cookbook for my annual savory Christmas Bread Pudding surprise for six dinner guests. I prepared the "Leek & Artichoke Bread Pudding" on Christmas eve. I cooked it Christmas afternoon and it was absolutely delicious. Just one example of her many excellent "do ahead" recipes in this book. This is an especially excellent cookbook for very busy cooks. The idea of being able to make a dish ahead can save hours of one's time. I highly recommend this cookbook and look forward to the next one.

Who knew so many could be made ahead of time so you can enjoy your next group of dinner guests!

It isn't nearly as good as her others. I have all of her books, and have thoroughly enjoyed using them...but this one was a big disappointment. So sorry !

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