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Nathan Myhrvold, Maxime Bilet
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#12292 in Books Nathan Myhrvold 2012-10-08 2012-10-08 Format: Large Print Original
language:English PDF # 1 13.70 x 2.60 x 11.10l, 10.35 #File Name: 0982761015456 pages Modernist
Cuisine at Home | File size: 15.Mb

Nathan Myhrvold, Maxime Bilet : Modernist Cuisine at Home before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Modernist Cuisine at Home:

862 of 877 people found the following review helpful. The Holy Grail of the Foodie-at-Home-Chef By Seth A. Ratner For those of you that don't want to read the silly-long review I wrote, scroll down to "BOTTOM LINE" for the important stuff. I'll start with a disclaimer: Do not buy this book until you are familiar with the original "Modernist Cuisine." By that I do not mean you need to own that set first (quite the opposite, this is the stepping stone to the full set), but you should understand that it encompasses a style of cooking that can be crudely summarized as "cooking for scientists" or "how to make dinner in a laboratory." Once you know what you're getting into, decide if it's worth around \$140 of your hard-earned cash. Now, on to the good stuff. For those of you who salivated for a year, wishing you could justify buying "Modernist Cuisine" but knowing you wouldn't be able to use it to its full potential (like me), your prayers have been answered! "Modernist Cuisine" made headlines (in the Food and Travel section) for: 1. Deconstructing the science of cooking rather than just listing recipes 2. Focusing on modern methods of preparing foods using tools such as combi ovens, sous vide setups, emulsifiers, etc 3. Including some rather stunning photography of the equipment and ingredients within I am happy to say that all three are present in the "at Home" version. First, "Modernist Cuisine at Home" (MCAH hereafter) introduces a consolidated set of kitchen tools and gadgets that the home chef can reasonably afford. Don't have the funds for the laboratory-grade centrifuge featured in

"Modernist Cuisine?" No problem. Not only does MCAH omit the prohibitively expensive tools from its recipes, but many of them are the same recipes found in the original, redone for the home cook. MCAH even goes as far as offering several options at varying price ranges for the equipment used within. The same goes for the ingredients. MCAH mostly does away with the laundry list of exotic spices and chemicals featured in many "modernist" cookbooks and instead relies on ingredients you can find either at the local grocery store, or in reasonable quantities online. For the ingredients you are probably less familiar with (malic acid? agar agar?) there is a two-page spread detailing what each does, where it comes from, and what it costs. In many cases, the recipes will list alternatives if you choose not to add their recommendations to your shopping list. Much like Modernist Cuisine, MCAH explains some of the science behind the various cooking techniques, but at a beginner's level. Each recipe includes a blurb about what's going on inside the pot (so to speak), and almost all of them include multiple variations at the end, allowing for a wide variety of options. This is especially useful for people new to the idea of sous vide cooking, as MCAH does a great job explaining exactly how it works, and how to make it work for you. How has it taken me this long to get to the photography? Stunning, just as in "Modernist Cuisine". I don't know how they did it, but every picture is suitable for framing. Equipment has been dissected to yield amazing looking cross-sections used in explaining how the various tools function. And get this: included in the back are four prints from MCAH you can frame. I had no idea until they fell out while I was reading, but they are every bit as beautiful as the photos inside, and I dare say will look better on the walls of a kitchen than the usual crap paintings of grapes or farms or cows that people seem obligated to put up these days. If it seems like I'm gushing, it's because I am. Any home cook who has jumped into sous vide cooking has probably experienced the frustration I have with cookbooks dedicated to the style. You have Douglas Baldwin's "Sous Vide for the Home Chef," which, while great for its temperature charts (and the fact it came out before anything else was available) is too simple for anyone looking to expand their horizons into restaurant-quality preparations (French Laundry, anyone?). And on the other end of the spectrum is Thomas Keller's "Under Pressure," which, while exquisite in creativity and detail, is geared completely towards the restaurant chef (which he warns in the forward), both in scale and complexity. Even the original "Modernist Cuisine", while featuring more accessible recipes than "Under Pressure", still excluded the home cook from about half of its contents due to equipment or ingredient limitations. MCAH is the first book that features sous vide in a way that the home cook can learn and excel at, while also creating dishes that will blow the guests away. Seriously, the stuff you can make from this book looks like it belongs on the set of Iron Chef. **BOTTOM LINE:** This is a "modern" (or Modernist) cookbook, so the recipes inside are going to be closer to what you'd find in a restaurant that uses an obscure adjective for its title rather than what you'd see in your grandmother's kitchen. If the idea of cooking a beautiful cut of salmon in a Ziploc bag seems blasphemous, or using a digital scale instead of an elephant-shaped measuring cup is akin to high treason, you may not be ready to make the jump. But if you want to learn how modern cooking styles can produce amazing taste and presentation in your kitchen (while removing much of the uncertainty and variation that traditional high-heat methods entail), this is the book for you. **PROS:-** Currently the best book available for home sous vide setups- Delicious recipes using accessible ingredients for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert. Meat, Poultry, Fish and Veggies. Even has a few vegan options inside.- Teaches the "why" of cooking, not just the "how"- Stunning photography, and great step-by-step images for most of the recipes- Comes with a separate water-resistant "kitchen manual" with every recipe inside so you can keep the gorgeous main-book away from the messiness of the kitchen.- Comes with 4 prints you can frame in your home. Or not.- Even though the recipes are designed using ingredient weights, approximate volume measurements are included- Well constructed. You could easily beat an intruder to death with this book if you caught him stealing your sous vide setup- Even has the bookmark ribbon you see in bibles, which fits, since this has become my new kitchen bible. **CONS:-** Though it says "at Home" in the title, your average kitchen will most likely lack some of the basic tools used in many of the recipes. At a minimum, you will need a digital scale, Sous Vide setup, a pressure cooker, and a whipped cream siphon. MCAH will help you in your quest to acquire those tools, but you should commit to expanding your kitchen arsenal if you plan to use this book to its full potential.- There are no calorie counts on these recipes, and in some cases if there were, it would take scientific notation to fit on the page. This is not a diet book, this is a book dedicated purely to creating the most delicious food possible at home. When you get to the page about deep-frying a hamburger, you'll understand what I mean.- \$140 (or whatever they charge now) isn't chump change, and for most people the new equipment will add to the cost.- The sandwich on the cover does not actually levitate when you make it at home.- Does not mow the lawn while you aren't using it. Feel free to ask any questions in the comments. I am in no way affiliated with the producers of this book, though I would consider trading my first-born for a chance to work in their kitchen. Your Mileage May Vary. **EDIT - 6 Oct 2015:** Three years later and I still love this book. I not own the full-fledged Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking, but I'm always going back to this one. Take the leap! 199 of 205 people found the following review helpful. The Joy of Cooking has found its successor! **By AnonymousFirst:** A disclaimer. I have no connection with the authors of this book or the publishers. As a matter of full disclosure, I have been a cook for over thirty years, and I majored in Biology, so scientific terms don't scare me. My motto is: if someone else can do it, so can I. Now for the review: The problem with most cookbooks is they do not provide the cook with a reasonable starting point from which to make excellent cuisine. I remember the days when I

used to struggle to try to make recipes from Larousse Gastronomique and Joy of Cooking that were spectacular, but that end always seemed to elude me. I never felt as though I prepared a meal- ANY meal which rivaled or surpassed that of my favorite restaurants. Those cooks in the high end restaurants knew things that I didn't know, and used equipment I had never seen, let alone used. Well, that is no longer the case. I picked up the original tome (Modernist Cuisine) and extracted from it the recipes I could do in my kitchen at home, and at once realized that there was a whole world of phenomenal food out there, waiting to be tasted. I cooked chicken breast sous vide (using a Rube Goldberg contraption I have since replaced with the SousVide Supreme) and the breasts were done perfectly, with all the delicate tastes intact. Wild duck breasts that had been lying in the back of my freezer because I knew they would taste like cardboard? They were the best poultry I had ever tasted. With those two successes under my belt, it was on to fish! I live in Florida, and so am fussy about my fish. My first foray was into cobia, and that dish, on that day, was the best fish I have ever tried, let alone made. And so on. Best green beans. Best carrots. Best risotto. Best salmon. You get the idea...After getting sous vide under my belt, then I started playing with other techniques. Spherification is a blast, and I modified a technique from Thomas Keller's Under Pressure to make watermelon and mango 'egg yolk' "Steak Tartare", which was a huge hit with my guests. I just had the best carrot soup of my life, with the recipe taken from MCAH, which uses caramelization techniques well known to pros, but heretofore unknown to me (it involves a pressure cooker). Making classic sauces takes an hour or so, instead of many, many hours. This is not a book for everyone, because not everyone really, really likes food. Or likes being able to create things in their own kitchen that far surpass their local restaurants. If food is just fuel, forget about MCAH. If, on the other hand, you have a part of your mind that remembers special meals, remembers certain dishes of their past with pleasure, and likes to savor their food, rather than gulping it down so you can watch the 7:00 Seinfeld reruns, this is the book for you. It is the first book that goes beyond- far beyond- what Erma Rombauer started all those years ago with The Joy of Cooking. The new millenium put self publishing in our hands (faceBook) and video distributing (YouTube) and reporting (Twitter), and now, in this age of paradigm shifts, we have world-class cuisine in our own homes. It's crazy, but it's cool. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Almost perfect. Recipes and techniques are superb. [Updated] By Christopher P. Hubbard I love this book. The recipes are spectacular. I've made a significant number of the recipes, even making variations, they are about as good as food can get. Do I recommend this book, even at the price point? Yes, constantly. It's a far better value than almost all the other cookbooks I have. Why? I own three sous-vide rigs. I have a very good vacuum sealer. I have digital thermometers and scales. I have three pressure cookers. I was comfortable with all this gear before I bought this book. MC@H takes what I was already doing and drastically improves it. So why 4 stars instead of 5? Simple the Kitchen Manual. It is NOT waterproof (see update below). I had it sitting closed, on the counter and a glass of water spilled next to it, totally soaking the edge. I dried it as well as I could (I was in the middle of cooking for 24 people). Three days later the pages along the top are glued together. Now I have something that can be best described as a brick. It's useless. Update: I contacted the folks at modernistcuisine.com about my issue with the Kitchen Manual. According to them, it's a defect that affects some (but not all) of the editions. So, my version of the Kitchen Manual was not waterproof. The one you get will be. They offered to replace my copy free of charge (no shipping cost either). I haven't received the manual (yet), though I do have a tracking number and it's on the way! Exceptional customer service. So now what do I think? Well, assuming that the new kitchen manual is actually waterproof, then buy this book. Really. Buy this book. I can think of only one reason not to buy this book, and that's if you're planning on buying the mothership: Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking, which I'll be purchasing at some point.

What can you make for dinner? Modernist Cuisine is an interdisciplinary team in Bellevue, Washington, founded and led by Nathan Myhrvold. The group includes scientists, research and development chefs, and a full editorial team all dedicated to advancing the state of culinary art through the creative application of scientific knowledge and experimental techniques. Change the way you think about food: Modernist Cuisine at Home opens up a new world of culinary possibility and innovation for passionate and curious home cooks. In this vibrantly illustrated 456-page volume you'll learn how to stock a modern kitchen, to master Modernist techniques, and to make hundreds of stunning new recipes, including pressure-cooked caramelized carrot soup, silky smooth mac and cheese, and sous vide, braised short ribs. You'll also learn about the science behind your favorite dishes, what's really happening when you roast a chicken, and why pressure cookers are perfect for making soup.

Modernist Cuisine at Home is destined to change the way we cook and the way we use recipes. For all of us who cook regularly, this book opens up a whole new world of possibilities. It is full of insights that encourage us to try something new, and that teach us something on every single page. --Martha Stewart Modernist Cuisine at Home offers useful techniques and solutions that expand our abilities, and it provides us with a practiced and thorough understanding of why things happen the way they do. Most importantly, it ignites a curiosity within and compels us to ask ourselves not "What should we make for dinner?"; but rather, "What can we make for dinner?" --Thomas Keller...Nathan Myhrvold and his team, responsible last year for the food-publishing triumph of the decade, the six-

volume *Modernist Cuisine*, have now scaled down and domesticated many of the advanced techniques... Of these, *sous vide* cooking is the most likely to find a place in the home kitchen, as it has in mine, and *Modernist Cuisine at Home* treats the subject in glorious detail. --Jeffrey Steingarten, *Vogue*

About the Author
Nathan Myhrvold, founder of The Cooking Lab, coauthor of *Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking* and *Modernist Cuisine at Home*, and author of *The Photography of Modernist Cuisine*, has had a passion for science, cooking, and photography since he was a boy. By the age of 13, Nathan had already cooked the family Thanksgiving feast and transformed the household bathroom into a darkroom. Myhrvold holds a doctorate in theoretical and mathematical physics as well as a master's degree in economics from Princeton University. He holds additional master's degrees in geophysics and space physics and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of California, Los Angeles. At Cambridge University, Myhrvold did postdoctoral work with Stephen Hawking in cosmology, quantum field theory in curved space-time, and quantum theories of gravitation, all before starting a software company that would be acquired by Microsoft. As his career developed, he still found time to explore the culinary world and photography. While working directly for Bill Gates as the chief technology officer at Microsoft, Nathan was part of the team that won the Memphis World Championship Barbecue contest; he worked as a stagier at Chef Thierry Rautureau's restaurant *Rover's*, in Seattle; he then took a leave of absence to earn his culinary diploma from *cole de Cuisine La Varenne*, in France. Nathan retired from Microsoft in 1999 to found *Intellectual Ventures* and pursue several lifelong interests in photography, cooking, and food science. During this time, some of his photographs were published in *America 24/7* (DK Publishing, Inc., 2003) and *Washington 24/7* (DK Publishing, Inc., 2004). Unable to find practical information about *sous vide* cooking, he decided to write the book he felt was missing; one that provided a scientific explanation of the cooking process, the history of cooking, and the techniques, equipment, and recipes involved in *Modernist* cooking. Inspired by this void in cooking literature, he decided to share the science of cooking and wonders of *Modernist* cuisine with others, hoping to pass on his own curiosity and passion for the movement. In the process of creating his first book, Nathan founded *The Cooking Lab*, hired an interdisciplinary team that included scientists, research chefs, and writers, and published the much-acclaimed six-volume, 2,438-page *Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking*, in 2011. That set was followed by *Modernist Cuisine at Home*, in 2012, which applies the insights of the original book in a format designed for home cooks. In 2013, he wrote *The Photography of Modernist Cuisine*, and *The Cooking Lab* partnered with *Inkling* to publish the *Modernist Cuisine at Home* app.

Maxime Bilet received a BA in creative writing, literature, and visual arts from Skidmore College. Bilet then graduated with highest honors from the Institute of Culinary Education in New York. He completed a stage at *Jack's Luxury Oyster Bar* and was quickly hired to the head chef position there by Jack Lamb. Moving to London, he accepted a stage with Heston Blumenthal's development team at *The Fat Duck*. Just prior to joining the culinary team as head chef for recipe research and development at *The Cooking Lab*, Bilet trained as *sous chef* to open the London branch of *Auberge de L'Ile*. In 2011, Bilet was named to *Forbes Magazine's* 30 Under 30 list in the category of Food and Wine.