

## GOURMET RECIPES

**You Got WHAT for Christmas?**

So many new small appliances on the market, and most are priced right and make great gifts! You might have gotten one or more, and are now looking at it thinking, "What now?"

Well, immediately on the heels of these pint-sized wonders came the cookbooks, telling so much more than you dreamed! Read on...

Enter the spiralizer, and we think it's a great idea for introducing more vegetables into your diet while reducing carbohydrates. But after doing a few too many zucchinis we got bored. Not a moment too soon came *Inspiralized* by Ali Maffucci, whose inherent Italian-American love for pasta with her commitment to a healthy lifestyle launched the blog [Inspiralized.com](http://Inspiralized.com). You won't run out of ideas here; Maffucci tells us how to transform more than 20 vegetables and fruits into delicious meals that look and taste just like your favorite indulgent originals. The recipes start with breakfasts, and go on through soups, salads and much more, even desserts!

But wait, there's indeed more...

To double your collection of spiralizer recipes, also pick up *150 Best Spiralizer Recipes* by Marilyn Haugen and Jennifer Williams. Like all good appliance books, this one also includes spiralizing basics, what you need in your pantry and a creative collection that includes



gluten-free, paleo, vegetarian and vegan recipes plus info on raw food basics! We especially like the photograph showing vegetables prepped for the spiralizer and lesser-known vegetables and fruits for the spiralizer!



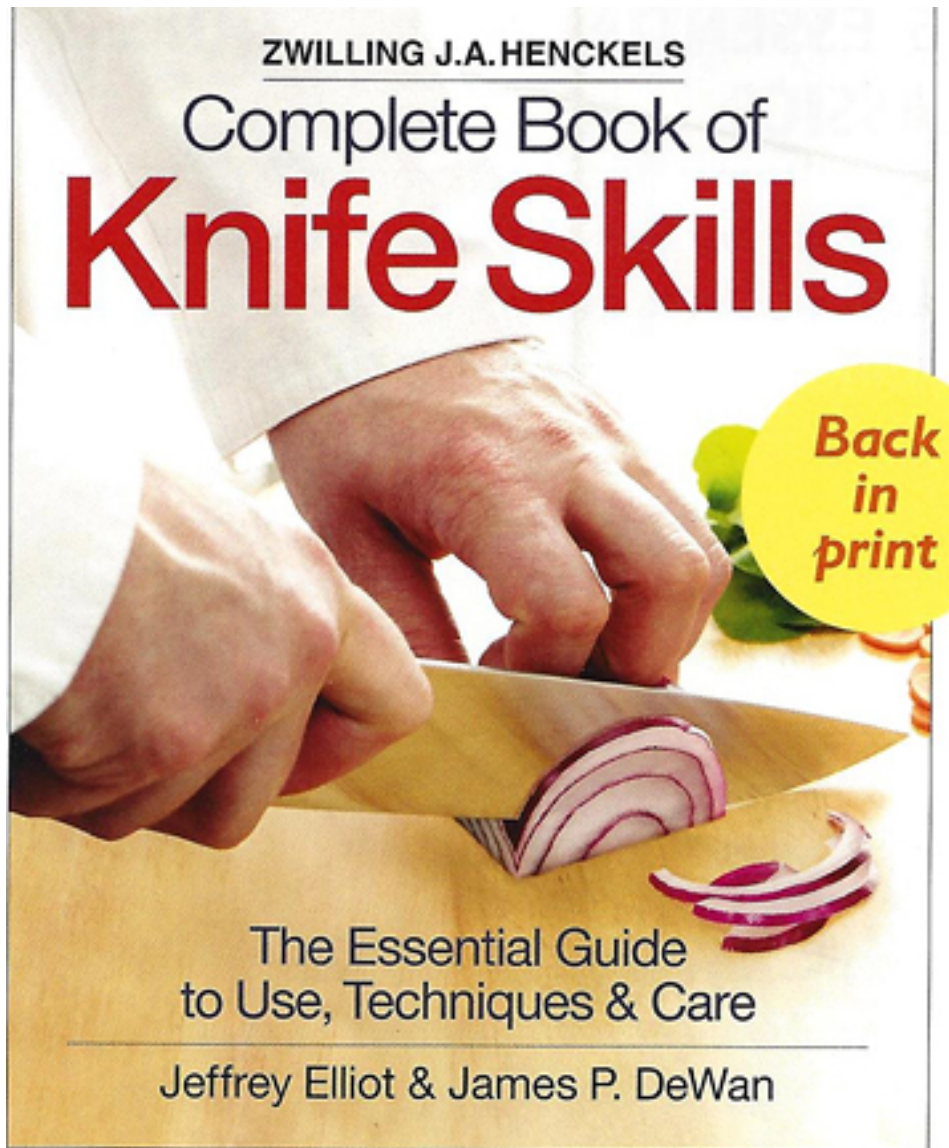
Author Jennifer Williams (yes, that Jennifer Williams!) never intended to write a book of breakfast sandwich recipes; she said "I wasn't a recipe developer or a cookbook author or a food writer... just a mother who was getting my daughter ready to go off to her first year of college!" Being a mother, Williams worried about making sure her daughter ate nutritious meals; in looking for equipment for her shared college kitchen discovered a breakfast sandwich maker, a compact appliance that promised to cook breakfast in 5 minutes! They began to test ingredient combinations with the happy result: *150 Best Breakfast Sandwich Maker Recipes*. From kid-friendly to gourmet, there's something here for every taste, including gluten-free and vegan options. A must-have, as we know this convenient little appliance won't be banned to the thrift shops!

At last. You finally got *the* classic Kitchen Aid stand mixer, and it's certainly not like the mixer your granny owned. This one can knead dough, grind meat, slice vegetables, make pasta dough, whip egg whites and make ice cream and much more with its 16+ attachments! It's perhaps the most integral piece of culinary equipment you can own. Now you'll want *The Mixer Bible* by Meredith Deeds and Carla Snyder to make sure you're getting full use out of your new kitchen assistant! Still looking to get one yourself? Check out the rainbow selection of colours... we just love that red one!

Ah, the indoor grill has expanded your cooking tools, but another hamburger or grilled cheese is just not turning your crank!

Ilana Simon's *125 Best Indoor Grill Recipes* is just what you need to use this more-versatile-than-you-realized appliance. She takes you through Indoor Grilling 101 and covers both types of grill, the two-sided or contact grill and the one-sided or hibachi-style grill. Recipes go from Appetizers through Salads and Side Dishes and Mains to Desserts. And yes, kabobs are here and alongside Thai Shrimp, Orange Rosemary Turkey Thighs and much, much more.

If you're realllllly good this year you might get some major pieces of cooking equipment, perhaps a great set of knives, or that sous vide appliance that you've been lusting after!

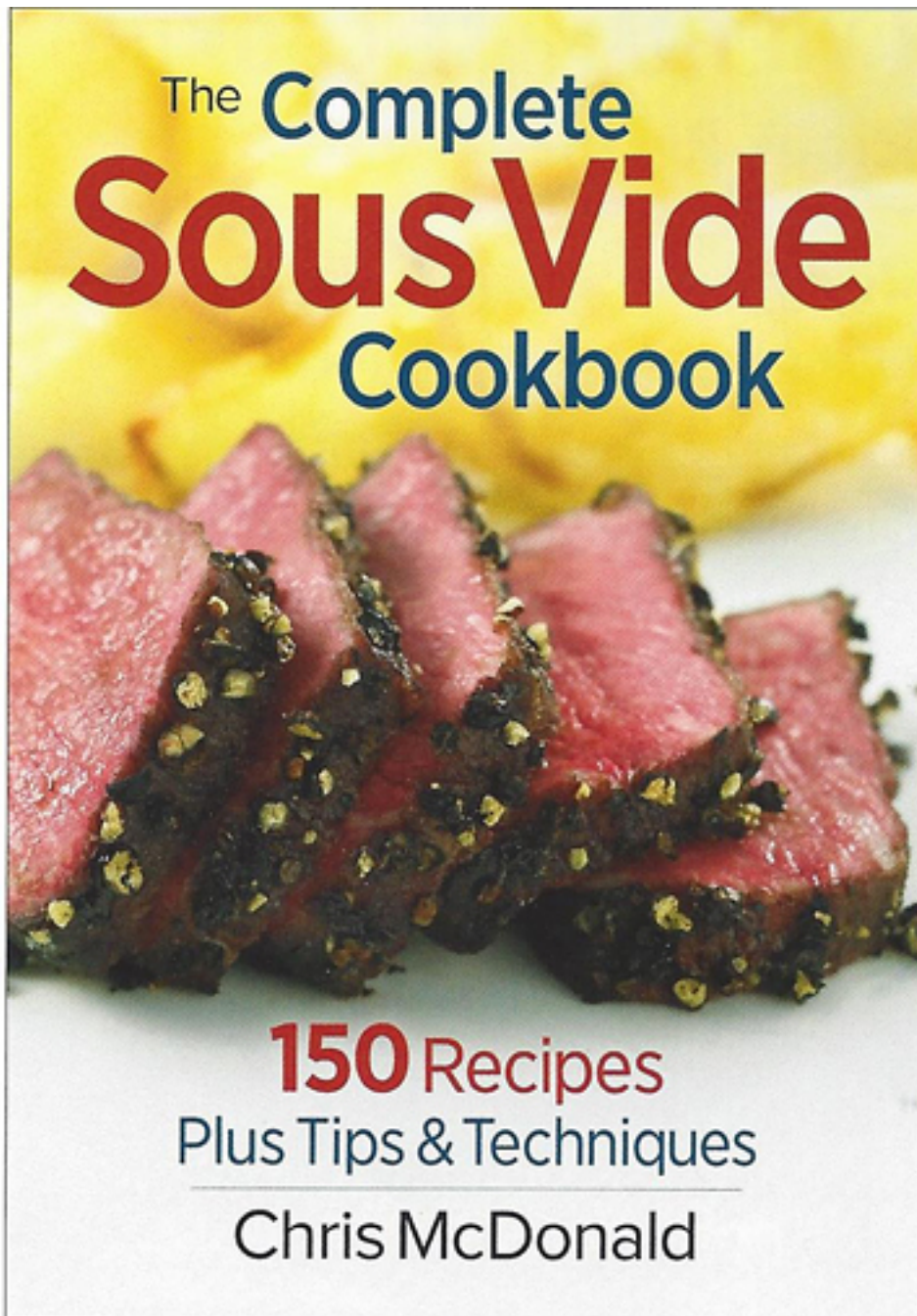


The *Zwilling J.A. Henckels Complete Book of Knife Skills* is a Cordon Bleu professional level tome, and worth it for any one genuinely serious about preparing food, as you will certainly know about knives.

Learning how to hold and use a knife correctly will not only help you work more safely, but will also enable you to work faster and more efficiently in the kitchen. Hundreds of techniques are included and all feature concise and detailed instructions with photos for every step. The book also has a history of knives, plus proper maintenance; in other words, everything you need to know about knives can be found in this incredibly comprehensive reference from one of the world's leading knife suppliers!

Now go bone that chicken and make some tomato roses!

And coming soon:



***The Complete Sous Vide Cookbook*** by acclaimed chef, cooking instructor and former Toronto restaurant owner Chris McDonald. McDonald has long used sous vide cooking to create sublime dishes, and now brings this expertise to the home cook. Remember that perfect roast beef you enjoyed out? It was probably done sous vide, where food is sealed in plastic bags and submerged in hot (but not boiling) water for long and slow cooking, resulting in food that is juicy and incredibly tender. The hot water also intensifies flavors, and the resulting texture of the food is perfect. Get the book, then get the appliance!

*On today's menu:*

- [Provençal Avocado and Garlic Aioli Sandwich](#)
  - [Sweet Potato Noodle Bun](#)
  - [Blue Cheese and Walnut Mini Muffins](#)
  - [Daikon Ramen with Skirt Steak](#)
  - [Apple and Pear Ricotta Parfaits with Pistachios](#)
  - [Grilled Bananas](#)
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## Provençal Avocado and Garlic Aioli Sandwich



Missing France this winter? This scrumptious sandwich with creamy garlic aioli, bacon and more will have you feeling like you've been swept away from the weather and back to sunny Provence.

In your hands in less than 10 minutes.

From *150 Best Breakfast Sandwich Maker Recipes*.

- 1 tbsp garlic aioli\* (see below)
- 2 slices multigrain bread, cut into 4-inch (10 cm) rounds
- 1 slice Cheddar cheese
- 2 slices thick-cut bacon, cooked crisp
- 1/4 small avocado, sliced
- Non-stick cooking spray
- 1 large egg
- 1 slice red onion, separated into rings

Spread aioli on one side of one bread slice. Place bread slice, spread side up, in bottom ring of sandwich maker. Top with cheese. Break bacon into pieces that fit in the ring and add on top of the cheese. Top with avocado.

Lower the cooking plate and top ring. Lightly spray the plate with cooking spray, then crack the egg into the ring. Pierce top of egg yolk with a toothpick or plastic fork. Top with onion rings. Place the other bread slice on top of the onion rings.

Gently close the cover and cook for 4 to 5 minutes or until egg is cooked to your liking. Rotate cooking plate away from sandwich maker and lift rings. Use a plastic or nylon spatula to remove the sandwich. Serve immediately.

\*Prepared aioli can be found in the condiment section of your grocery store, or whisk together 1 clove minced garlic, pinch of kosher salt, ¼ cup mayonnaise, 1 Tbsp olive oil and 1½ tsp lemon juice to make about 1/3 cup aioli. Store in fridge for up to 1 week.

***Tony's wine recommendation:***

Unoaked Chardonnay, Chablis, Soave

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## Sweet Potato Noodle Bun



Well, we love sweet potatoes and we love sandwiches...and never dreamed you could do them together! These little gems are crunchy, tasty and gluten-free so indulge with your favourite sandwich ingredients, burgers, pulled pork, and breakfast sandwiches!

We're thinking what a great combo with leftover turkey, or with some of the yummy variations (see below), just served hot and eaten out of hand!  
From *150 Best Spiralizer Recipes*.

*Makes 2 bun halves*

You'll need two 3/4-cup ramekins, sprayed with nonstick cooking spray, and plan ahead.

- 1 sweet potato, peeled and ends cut flat
- 2 tsp olive oil, divided

- 1 large egg
- Pinch kosher salt
- Pinch freshly ground black pepper

Using a spiralizer, cut sweet potato into thin strands.

In a large skillet, heat 1/2 tsp oil over medium heat. Add sweet potato and cook, stirring for 5 to 7 minutes or until softened. Let cool to room temperature about 15 minutes.

In a medium bowl, whisk egg. Stir in sweet potato, salt and pepper. Divide between prepared ramekins, filling each about halfway and pressing the sweet potato down into the ramekins. Cover with plastic wrap and place a heavy can or jar on top of the wrap to weigh down the sweet potato. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Lightly coat a skillet with the remaining oil and heat over medium-high heat. Remove plastic wrap and invert ramekins to slide noodle buns onto skillet. Cook, turning once, for 3 to 5 minutes per side or until golden brown on both sides and hot in the center.

**Variations!** Add seasonings to the whisked egg before you add the sweet potato. The authors suggest 2 tsp chopped chives, a pinch of ground allspice, cinnamon and ginger; 1 tsp each ground coriander and lime juice; 1 tsp each chopped pecans and pure maple syrup; seasoning salt or garlic powder.

***Tony's wine recommendation:***

Off-dry Riesling (German Kabinett)

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## Blue Cheese and Walnut Mini Muffins



*The Mixer Bible* has 300 wonderful recipes plus 175 step-by-step photos covering techniques on all the attachments; it was just too much to try and cover, so we've given you a yummy straight flat beater recipe perfect for afternoon tea on a cold winter day!

*Makes 36 mini muffins*

Flat beater

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C)

- 1 cup + 2 Tbsp unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup cornmeal
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 4 oz. crumbled blue cheese (about 1 cup)
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 2 eggs

- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1 cup walnut halves, toasted

In a medium bowl, combine flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt and pepper. Set aside.

Place cheese and butter in the mixer bowl. Attach the flat beater and mixer bowl in the mixer. Set to Speed 2 and beat until combined. Add eggs and beat for 2 minutes, stopping once to scrape down bowl. Decrease speed to Stir and mix in flour mixture alternately with milk, making 3 additions of dry and 2 of wet. Add walnuts and mix until just combined.

Spoon into prepared muffin cups and bake in middle of preheated oven until a tester inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean, about 10 minutes. Remove muffins from tins and let cool on a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Note:** Store tightly wrapped in foil in the freezer for up to 2 weeks.

***Tony's wine recommendation:***

Off-dry Vouvray; dry Oloroso sherry

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## Daikon Ramen with Skirt Steak



Dying for your favorite noodle dish, but oops, the scale screamed "NO" this morning? This dish has the consistency and profile of ramen noodles without, as author Ali Maffucci says "the ramen." Those instant noodles are addictive but are the nutritional equivalent of wet cardboard, while the daikon is rich in vitamin C, low in calories and, when twinned with vegetables and thin slices of steak, give you a healthy feast! From *Inspiralized* by Ali Maffucci.

*Makes 2 servings*

- 1 bunch bok choy
- 4 ounces boneless skirt steak
- 1 Tbsp hoisin sauce
- Salt and Pepper

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1/2 tsp minced fresh ginger
- 1/3 cup sliced scallions, green and white parts
- 1 cup shiitake mushrooms
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup water
- 2 tsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 medium daikon radish peeled, spiralized with Blade C
- 2 hard boiled eggs, halved

Slice the thick white stems off the bok choy and then chop the green leaves in half.

Coat the steak with hoisin sauce and generously season with salt and pepper. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil. When the oil is shimmering, add the steak and cook 2 to 3 minutes on each side, or until it reaches your desired doneness; keep in mind that the steak will cook slightly more once it is removed from the heat. Set the steak on a cutting board.

Place a large pot over medium heat and add the vegetable oil. When the oil is shimmering, add the garlic, ginger and scallions. Cook for 30 seconds, until fragrant, then add the mushrooms and the bok choy. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the mushrooms are softened.

Add the broth, water and soy sauce. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, and add the daikon noodles. Cook for 2 minutes, or until the noodles are al dente.

Thinly slice the flank steak against the grain. Serve the ramen in portions topped with steak slices and the egg halves.

***Tony's wine recommendation:***

Zinfandel, Valpolicella Ripasso

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## Apple and Pear Ricotta Parfaits with Pistachios



We couldn't resist revisiting one more delicious recipe from *Inspiralized* by Ali Maffucci, especially as it's a low-cal dessert good enough to be served at your next dinner party. The fruit noodles are fresh and crunchy; the ricotta whipped with honey and vanilla adds a creamy, sweet consistency that you can't resist!

*Serves 2*

- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup raspberry jam
- 1 apple, spiralized with Blade C
- 1 pear, spiralized with Blade C
- 1/2 cup roughly chopped roasted and salted pistachios

In a medium bowl, whisk together the ricotta, honey and vanilla until light and fluffy.

Evenly divide the raspberry jam into two parfait glasses. Layer on the ricotta and add the apple and pear noodles. Sprinkle the pistachios on top and serve immediately.

***Tony's wine recommendation:***

Chenin Blanc, Viognier

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## Grilled Bananas



Oh how sinful, but ignore that and think, hey, it's another fruit serving! And the vanilla ice cream is dairy! So quick and easy in the indoor two-sided grill – you simply have the sauce made and grill the bananas at the last minute, serving hot!

From *125 Best Indoor Grill Recipes*.

*Serves 4*

Set on high

- 3 Tbsp packed brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 1 Tbsp orange-flavoured liqueur
- 2 tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/4 tap ground cinnamon
- 4 bananas, peeled and sliced in half lengthwise

In a small saucepan, over medium heat, stir brown sugar and butter together until butter is melted. Add liqueur, lemon juice and cinnamon. Continue stirring until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature.

Place sliced bananas in a shallow dish. Pour sauce over bananas; turn the fruit to coat evenly.

Spray both sides of contact grill with vegetable cooking spray or oil. Place bananas on contact grill, close lid and grill for 2 minutes or until fruit is softened but not mushy.

Serve immediately over vanilla ice cream, or waffles topped with chocolate sauce and walnuts. Oink away!

***Tony's wine recommendation:***

Sweet Muscat

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We wish to thank the following for permission to publish photographs and material:

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Happily enjoyed by Helen Hatton and Ron Morris.