

Food

*As the holidays approach,
Food Editor Valerie Mansour wonders
what could be better than a warm, spicy dessert like
Spiced Pear Clafoutis from Costas Halavrezos' Seasoned:
Recipes and Essays from the Spiceman. She also
recommends Jason Lynch's Spiced Apple Cake
from his book, Straight
from the Line.*



Jeff Harper

Holiday baking? This Spiced Apple Cake has a Christmas comfort-food quality.

Spiced Apple Cake

From *Straight from the Line: Recipes and Reflections From a Chef at Work* by Jason Lynch

- 3 pounds local apples
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of fine sea salt
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¾ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg (freshly grated, if possible)
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 large egg, beaten
- ¼ cup light canola oil

1 Cut and slice the apples. Set aside half the apples for the batter; toss the other half in the lemon juice and white sugar; then place in the bottom of a rectangular 8 x 12-inch pan or a circular 10-inch pan and bake for 10 minutes at 350°F.

- 2 While the apples are in the oven, combine the rest of the ingredients. Purée the remaining apples and stir into the batter.
- 3 Remove the apples from the oven and pour the batter over top, then bake at 350°F until top of cake springs back, another 15-20 minutes.

Makes 8 servings.

Spiced Pear Clafoutis

From *Seasoned: Recipes and Essays from The Spiceman* by Costas Halavrezos

"My market table is just a few paces away from Boates Farm's array of organic apples, pears, ciders and vinegars," writes Costas Halavrezos, who sells his spices at the Historic Farmers' Market in Halifax. "I'm especially fond of the father-and-son team's Bosc pears. The leathery-looking but thin skin of the Bosc covers a firm, sweet flesh that's much easier to slice for this classic dish than other, juicier varieties, but any pear will do. The slices

absorb Gingerbread Spice (ginger, allspice, cinnamon, mace and anise) beautifully, and float half-submerged in their sweet batter as they bake to a golden hue."

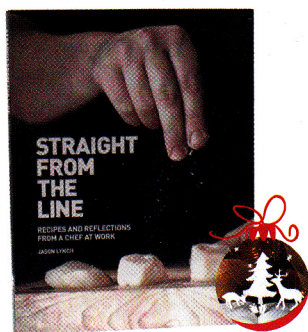
- ¼ cup raisins or currants
- 2 tablespoons rum or sherry
- 4 pears
- 2 teaspoons The Spiceman's Ground Gingerbread Spice, divided (or combine ginger, allspice, cinnamon, mace, and anise)
- 6 tablespoons honey or maple syrup, divided
- 4 eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- ½ cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons melted butter
- 7 ounces milk
- 3 tablespoons heavy (35%) cream
- 1 cup all-purpose unbleached flour, sifted

- 1 Soak raisins or currants in rum or sherry. Let rest for 30 mins.
- 2 Peel, core, and cut pears into slices.
- 3 Sprinkle pear slices with half the Gingerbread Spice and half the honey or maple syrup. Mix well and let soak.
- 4 Heat oven to 425°F.
- 5 Place eggs and yolks in a bowl with sugar, melted butter and remaining spices. Mix well.
- 6 Add milk, cream, and liquid from pears. Mix well. Reserve pear slices.
- 7 Add flour to liquid ingredients and mix gently. Add raisins or currants and their liquid.
- 8 Butter and lightly flour an 8 x 12-inch cake pan. Pour mixture into pan.
- 9 Spread pear slices evenly over batter.
- 10 Bake in oven, 25-30 minutes, until clafoutis puffs up and fruit is cooked.
- 11 Remove from oven and top with remaining honey or maple syrup.
- 12 Serve warm or at room temperature.

Makes 8 servings. ■

Simple, straight up and spicy

Valerie Mansour reviews the latest in Atlantic Canadian food writing



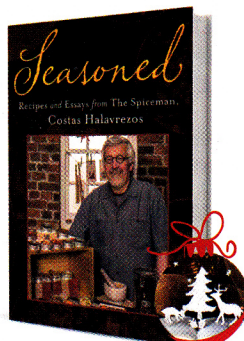
Straight from the Line: Recipes and Reflections From a Chef at Work

by Jason Lynch, \$29.95 (pb)
978-0-9917785-0-8, 136 pp.
Able Sense Publishing, October 2013

With exceptional photographs of ingredients, hands at work and finished dishes, *Straight from the Line* is a visually striking cookbook. Jason Lynch, from Wolfville, NS's acclaimed *Le Caveau* restaurant has created a tempting collection of salads, appetizers, main dishes, sides, soups, dressings, sauces and desserts.

Despite the occasional odd measurement (1/8 tsp?), it's a lovely cookbook. The recipes are not particularly difficult, but are all a bit special: Roasted Cauliflower and Cumin Soup; Citrus-Crusted Scallops with Curried Yogurt Dip; Swiss Chard with Chilies and Bacon—a simple, yet delicious, take on those healthy greens. Lynch is big on healthy and on buying local, with a chapter called “Shopping Local: Your Ideals and the Current Reality,” including a guide to local seasonal ingredients.

Lynch has been reluctant to write a cookbook but says he finally envisioned one that could be useful and fun. It is both.



Seasoned: Recipes and Essays from The Spiceman

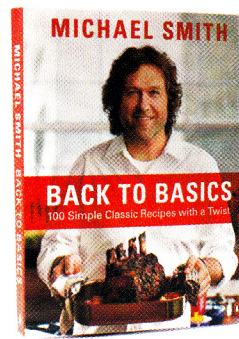
by Costas Halavrezos, \$24.95 (hc)
978-1-77108-080-4, 168 pp.
Nimbus Publishing, October 2013
Reviewed from an Advance Reader's Copy

Life after retirement took Costas Halavrezos, a popular CBC Radio host, into the world of exotic spices.

Each Saturday, he offers his wares at Halifax's Historic Farmers' Market. He reveals his new knowledge to us in this collection of stories, recipes and information about spices. I chuckled my way through many of his personal tales, which are set in the studio, his kitchen and his backyard.

Halavrezos encourages his readers to boldly travel to a new world of flavours, spices and blends, whether they be Lebanese, Cajun or Jerk. Recipes include Caribbean Black Beans and Cornbread, Berberé Roast Chicken, and West African Peanut and Sweet Potato Stew, as well as his family's favourite, the Greek casserole Pastitsio.

It's a pleasant and easy read and he has lots of food knowledge to share. The flavours take us to exciting places far away, while the stories read like a visit with a familiar friend.



Back to Basics: 100 Simple Classic Recipes with a Twist

by Michael Smith, \$32.00 (pb)
978-0-14-318410-2, 255 pp.
Penguin Books Canada, September 2013

With Michael Smith's recipes, you never have to worry about missing a particular ingredient. He enthusiastically encourages home chefs to substitute, experiment and make a particular recipe their very own.

This is a beautiful, enticing collection of ideas for salads, seafood, vegetables, meat, pasta and desserts.

The recipes in this book—his seventh—are useful for everyday cooking, or special occasions. Smith suggests imaginative and flavourful twists, even for familiar dishes. How about cinnamon apples and sweet potatoes with your roast chicken? Curry or chili on your French fries? Bacon in your mac 'n cheese? Warm Kale, White Bean and Cranberry Salad made its way quickly to my table and was a huge hit.

Smith suggests that we sprout our lentils, cook our salmon in a parchment bag and add nutmeg to spinach.

It's clear that Smith has a lot of fun in the kitchen—and he wants us to do the same. ■

"The slices
...float half-submerged
in their sweet batter
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golden hue"



Spiced Pear *Clafoutis*. In *Seasoned*, author Costas Halavrezos acknowledges that a true *clafoutis* can only contain cherries—with pits. This recipe, he concedes, is technically a *flaugnarde*. Terminology aside, we call it delicious.