

Simply Genius:

Rozanne Gold's Three-Ingredient Recipes or "How I Turned My Tiny Apartment into a Culinary Hotspot."

By Amy Tarshis

Whether you're a pro in the kitchen or a rookie, you've probably experienced "ingredient overload." After thumbing through cookbooks, you select a new recipe to prepare only to be overwhelmed by the laundry list of ingredients required. Rozanne Gold (who at age 23 was asked to be the personal chef at Gracie Mansion to former New York City Mayor Ed Koch) knows a thing or two about creating imaginative and flavorful dishes and promises that it's possible to cook a six-course meal and still breeze through the express lane at the supermarket. She's so good at it in fact, she's created a niche for herself in the culinary world by writing cookbooks highlighting recipes she's created consisting of only three ingredients! Also of benefit is Gold's true understanding of a variety of ingredients and flavors, and how they respond to various cooking techniques. Water, salt and pepper—fundamental to all cooking—are considered "free" ingredients in Gold's kitchen. As she puts it, "Recipes using only three ingredients are extraordinarily liberating: The cook can kiss the drudgery of shopping goodbye." Had your average run-of-the-mill cookbook authors published a book with this concept, they might be viewed with much suspicion. But this is Rozanne Gold we're talking about, one of the most influential women in the food world. Her monthly column featured in Bon Appetit magazine, "Entertaining Made Easy," reaches five million fans. She's penned six popular books, including Little Meals: A Great New Way to Eat & Cook, Recipes 1-2-3, Recipes 1-2-3 Menu Cookbook, Entertaining 1-2-3, Healthy 1-2-3 and Desserts 1-2-3. She's won the culinary world's top prizes, including the prestigious James Beard Book Award (three times), and often appears on national television shows. This cookbook single-handedly cures all forms of "culinary anxiety." Best of all, her ability to combine just the right three ingredients ensures that you will enjoy the most positive feedback every time.

Here are a few of my favorites from Recipes 1-2-3...*



Za'atar Pita

Yields 32 pieces

4 pita breads

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

1/4 cup za'atar (a spice blend, available in Middle Eastern markets)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lay the pita breads on a baking sheet. Using a pastry brush, spread the oil evenly to cover tops of the pita bread. Sprinkle each with one tablespoon of za'atar. Drizzle each pita with a little olive oil. Bake eight minutes, or until the edges just begin to color. Let cool and cut into eighths.

Creamy Chick Pea Soup

Makes about 4 cups, serving 6

1 cup chickpea flour (found in health food stores)

4 cups chicken or vegetable broth, preferably homemade

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Combine the chickpea flour and broth in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat until smooth.

Pour into a large, heavy pot and add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon each finely ground white and black pepper.

Bring to a boil, then immediately lower the heat and simmer 10 minutes, stirring often with a wooden spoon or wire whisk. The soup will thicken quickly. Add water to thin as desired. Drizzle with the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil.

Red Wine Onion Soup

Makes 6 1/2 cups, serving 4-6

3 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 pounds Spanish onions, peeled, halved and thinly sliced

1 cup cabernet sauvignon or other robust red wine

Melt the butter in a large heavy pot with a cover. Add the onions and sauté over medium heat for 30 to 40 minutes, until onions are soft and caramelized (they will be a deep-brown color). Stir often, scraping up the brown bits with a wooden spoon.

Add the wine and cook, stirring frequently, until most of the liquid has evaporated.

Ms. Tarshis has written numerous culinary and lifestyle articles for publications including San Francisco's Nob Hill Gazette, Paper magazine as well as a variety of web sites. She has also served as the public relations director and event planner for "Greens," the Young Adult division of the prestigious James Beard Foundation. Additionally, she is a longtime contributor to many NYC guidebooks on the topic of restaurants and other places of interest.

Add 6 cups water, 2 teaspoons salt, and freshly-ground white pepper to taste. Bring to a boil. Lower the heat, cover and simmer 20 minutes. Purée 2 cups of soup (with onions) in a food processor until smooth.

Add this mixture to the soup pot and cook 10 minutes longer, uncovered. Serve very hot.

Salmon Baked In Grape Leaves

Serves 4

4 thick salmon fillets, 6 ounces each, cut from the center of the fish

5 tablespoons unsalted butter

8 large grape leaves in brine

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Remove the skin and any bones from the fish. Season well with salt and pepper. Slice the butter thinly and place half tablespoon on top of each fillet.

Remove the grape leaves from their brine and pat dry with paper towels. Wrap the fish tightly in grape leaves, using 2 for each piece of fish. Tuck in the ends of the grape leaves to make a tight, neat package.

Spread 2 tablespoons of the remaining butter over the bottom of a baking pan. Use bits of the remaining butter (one tablespoon) to cover the tops of the grape leaf-wrapped fish.

Put the fish on a baking sheet and bake 8 minutes. Serve the fish immediately, still wrapped in the grape leaves.

Maple-Glazed Corned Beef

Serves 6-8

4 to 5 pounds corned beef

30 whole cloves

1/2 cup pure maple syrup

In an enameled casserole, cover the corned beef with water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, cover and simmer until done, allowing 50-55 minutes per pound. Place on a rack in an open roasting pan.

Stick beef with whole cloves in a crosshatch design. Pre-heat the oven to 375 degrees.

Pour the syrup over the meat and put in the oven to glaze for about 15 minutes. Baste occasionally with syrup. **JA**

* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999). Reprinted with the permission of Rozanne Gold.