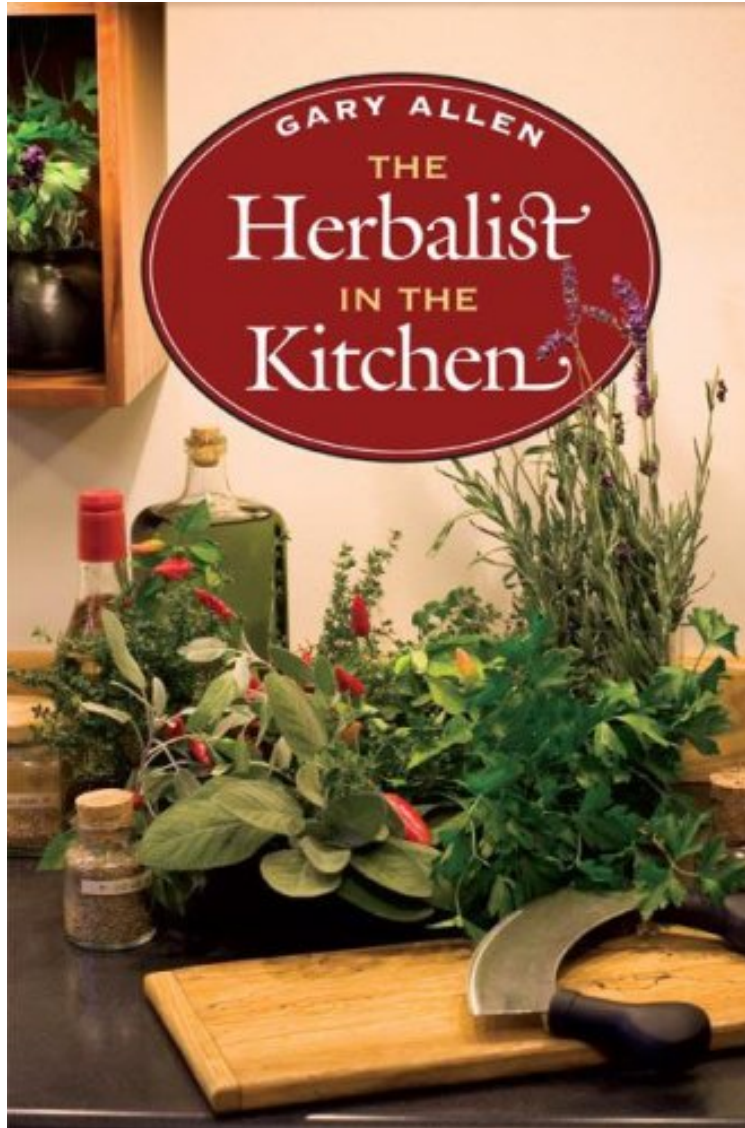


[PDF] The Herbalist in the Kitchen (The Food Series)

The Herbalist in the Kitchen (The Food Series)

Gary Allen

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Gary Allen : The Herbalist in the Kitchen (The Food Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Herbalist in the Kitchen (The Food Series):

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Neither Herbalist nor in the KitchenBy AcetoLet me start by saying that I am disappointed by the University of Illinois Press publications in "The Food Series". In general this is not the kind of research you might want from a university. Ken Albala has a book out on beans that I am about to read, but the other authors have nothing memorable to me.I do not like the title on two levels. He is no herbalist. Using that

nomenclature sets expectations beyond something perhaps antique or quaint. But, to me, it reinforces that scholarly aspect this series pretends. And, although a food writer, he gives you little of the kitchen save the rather short section in each entry: CULINARY USES. They are unhelpful for practical use. Somewhat informative (a pinch of history, a drop of chemistry and a hint of botany), the whole work is best thought of as something to page through. If something strikes your fancy, you can go from there to other sources. The book is not easy to use or especially pleasant to read. As a popular food writer, Mr. Allen brings not enough of that expertise here. I would say this is a bathroom book, as it is too small and colorless as a coffee table book. Were it not for the unusually fine binding, I would rather have a paperback version due to the price. Better you flee to "The Herb Society of America's Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs", edited by Schlosser. I do agree with most everything in the fine review by the "Spice Guy". I do not think even Schlosser's better book would quite fill his expectations of botanical rigor, but it is far more useful and easier to use. Heck though, he was one star more generous, perhaps because of how much ground this book covers, however briefly and sloppily it may do so. 14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A serious disappointment

By Pistopheles
This book is authored by an experienced writer, published by a university press, and fairly expensive. As would seem logical, I assumed a high degree of scholarship, and in this I was mistaken. Entries are organized according to botanical family, by which the author purportedly avoids the need for a main index. Unfortunately, even from the first, entries are categorized into incorrect families, making some impossible to find without paging through the whole book. The author does include a caveat about the not being a scientist, and taxonomy is not as fixed or as clear as is popularly imagined, but neither can excuse the magnitude of these very basic errors nor compensate for the resulting inability to locate information. More tragic than the errors affecting the book's organization are the factual problems with the entries themselves. The very reason for acquiring this book is its treatment of culinary herbs and spices beyond the usual few dozen for which information is available in any cookbook or suburban grocery store. Reliability of obscure facts is therefore central to the book's value. I would not complain about little things, like typographical errors, archaic naming or arguable conclusions. A half-dozen substantive errors (the kind that indicate a lack of understanding of, and experience with the subject matter) within the first hour of casual reading, however, was enough to unforgivably deteriorate the credibility of the entire work. This is a monumental book, on a fascinating subject, produced by an excellent and expert writer. It does contain interesting and useful information. It does not seem to contain the necessary contributions of botanists or other experts that could verify or correct the information presented, allowing it to be accessible and reliable. I will eagerly await the production of a second edition which will hopefully correct this --though, next time, I will read a large portion of it before shelling out another \$65.

The foodie's ultimate herbal encyclopedia
Created as the ideal reference for anyone with a serious interest in cooking with herbs, spices, or related plant materials, *The Herbalist in the Kitchen* is truly encyclopedic in scope. It provides complete information about the uses, botany, toxicity, and flavor chemistry of herbs, as well as a listing for nearly every name that an ingredient is known by around the world. Even including herbs and spices not yet seen in the United States (but likely to be featured in recipes for adventurous cooks soon), *The Herbalist in the Kitchen* is organized into one hundred and four sections, each consisting of a single botanical family. The book provides all available information about the chemical compounds responsible for a plant's characteristic taste and scent, which allows cooks to consider new subtleties and potential alternatives. For instance, the primary flavoring ingredient of cloves is eugenol; when a cook knows that bay leaves also contain eugenol, a range of exciting substitutions becomes clear. *The Herbalist in the Kitchen* also provides guidance about measuring herbs, enabling readers to understand the dated measuring standards from antique cookbooks. A volume in *The Food Series*, edited by Andrew W. Smith

"Finally, a reference book that won't send you to another reference book to find what you're looking for. *The Herbalist in the Kitchen* is a one-stop source for herb information. It includes everything from ethnic and scientific names to growing habits and culinary usage--all in a voice that makes you actually want to read it."--David Leite, publisher of the James Beard Award-winning Web site Leite's Culinaria (www.leitesculinaria.com)