

MILLY'S

— REAL FOOD —

A little bit of
what you fancy
does you good



100+ easy and
delicious recipes
to comfort, restore
and put a smile on
your face

NICOLA MILLBANK

Nicola Millbank

Milly's Real Food: 100+ easy and delicious recipes to comfort, restore and put a smile on your face

Аннотация

MILLY'S REAL FOOD is all about going back to basics and creating tasty classics from scratch with a modern twist, making food a pleasure; both the ritual of cooking and the joy of eating. Recipes that embrace sustainable and accessible ingredients, easy methods and a refreshingly fad-free approach to home cooking. With 100 recipes including Saffron and Prosecco baked mussels, Rioja and Jerk Lamb shanks and Death by Chocolate Peanut Butter Cake, Milly is an advocate of using fresh produce, eating a varied diet and having fun with food. From a rising star on the foodie scene, MILLY'S REAL FOOD is the kind of cookbook that makes you excited to get in the kitchen and has the corner of every page turned down.

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Photography: Susanna Blåvarg

Food stylist: Sara Assum Hultberg with Nicola Millbank

Props stylist: Susanna Blåvarg with Nicola Millbank

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Make-up: Katie Nixon

Hair: Kieron Lavine

Recipe testing: Sara Assum Hultberg

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DEDICATION

For my Grandad, Walter, who at the ripe old age of 101 taught me

that “a little bit of what you fancy does you good.”

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Brunch

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Light Bites

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Puddings and Sweet Treats

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My Instagram Faves @millycookbook

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About the Publisher



INTRODUCTION

So, here we are.

If you're after a no-nonsense approach to home cooking, with a sprinkle of delicious recipes, a dash of reality and a ladle of EAT CARBS AND BE HAPPY, then this is your kind of book.

But before we go any further, a little bit about me. I'm an actress by trade, but I'm also a devoted foodie. And by that I mean I spend most of my spare time thinking up new recipes, writing about food, and dreaming about what I'm going to eat next. I live in London with my fiancé Mike and my miniature Dachshund Darcey, and in summer 2015 I set up a website, Milly Cookbook, to document my life in food. I had no idea then that my passion project would become a second all-consuming full-time job!

I don't do elimination diets. I do, however, eat just about everything, so don't be surprised if you see chicken wings or sweet potato gnocchi in here. My mantra is quite simple: Eat everything in moderation. So in this book you'll find recipes that embrace all ingredients and food groups from pancakes to paella, salads to sticky ribs.

Unless you've had your head in the sand, I'm sure you've heard of the "clean eating" trend that's been sweeping the nation. If that's your gig, then cool. As you were. But that's not my thing. My primary issue with the term "clean eating" is that it insinuates that unless you follow a sugarfree, alcohol-free (God forbid), gluten-free lifestyle, you are eating *dirty*. Eating a bowl

of courgetti instead of spaghetti is about as appealing to me as eating a sponge. I do not get a kick out of that. And don't get me started with the raw-avocado-matchaquinoa brownies ... just have a brownie and enjoy it!

The worst thing for me, perhaps, is the term "guilt-free". In the early days, I toyed with this tagline, but it soon became very apparent that there was something fundamentally wrong with it and I asked myself the question, "Why do we need guilt-free alternatives?" This surely perpetuates the notion that we have something to feel guilty about. Why should we feel guilty for eating food that we enjoy? Why have we abandoned staples such as bread and pasta? "Enough of the self-persecuting, self-diagnosing and demonising food groups," I thought. "It's time to enjoy our food again."

Not an easy ideal to stick to when you're in my line of work, I'll admit. I'm privy to the pressures that are put on women (and men for that matter) to fit the narrow definition of what the media think a woman (or man) should look like. Although I love what I do, I can become impatient and frustrated with the industry. It's very fickle; judging people on their looks and not their talent. It could be very demoralising in the early days, but I quickly learnt that you have to grow a thick skin and just power through. It's important to be yourself and not succumb to the pressures put on everyone to look a certain way. I really look up to the women who defy these rules; who've turned their backs and called people out on it. They're the women who've made history.

Now, I know what some of you are thinking – an actress woke up one day, decided she wanted to do a book and so had an entire team of people writing it for her with her name slapped on the front, right? Wrong. Blood, sweat and tears have been poured into making this book, not only because I'm an utter control freak and wanted to be involved in every part of it, but because I was given the chance. My publisher took the rather brave step of handing over the creative reins, allowing me complete control over the photography, the food styling, the props – the whole look and feel of the book! And I think we've created something rather wonderful. I did a lot of research online before I stumbled upon a photographer – Susanna – whose work I loved, and I fired off an email with no expectations whatsoever. I was stunned when she emailed back to say she was available, and she wanted to work with me! Next I found a beautiful and talented food stylist – Sara – and a team of fabulous hair and makeup artists and, we then shot the book in Stockholm, Sweden, returning to my distant Scandinavian roots to take inspiration from the colour schemes, the laidback attitude, effortlessly cool interiors and food. All of the recipes are mine: I've created them, tested them, tweaked them and now I want to share them with you. I've learnt so much already and I hope this is just the beginning of my food journey.





Growing up, I always sat down to dinner with my family. No matter what anyone was doing we always made it back to the table. The kitchen was the hub of our home; we cooked, we laughed, we cried, we ate and drank and caught up on the day's events together. Mealtimes equating togetherness is such an important mentality to have. Because of this I always associate food with family, talking and laughing – positivity. Snacking and eating on the go makes food become fuel. I'm very much a person who lives to eat and doesn't eat to live; it's such an important part of my life. Home cooking is, after all, what we all do. We survive on it every day. It is something we all have in common.

And this is why I want to celebrate the home cook again, dedicate my time to making real food and always aim for *lagom* (a Swedish term meaning “just the right amount”).

When I moved to London aged 18, I started to try lots of new food from all over the world – from Japan to France via Portugal. My cooking, however, wasn't quite so cosmopolitan. Shepherd's Pie, stir-fries and tray bakes were pretty much all I could cook and I quickly tired of the beige monotony. Something had to change. Cooking became my hobby; I experimented with flavours, learnt a few of the basics and began curating dishes, many of which have made it into this book.

I'm not a chef – I never have been and I've never tried to be. (And, for the record, I have appalling knife skills and I'm not afraid to admit it.) What I am, is passionate about home cooking, mixing flavours and experimenting with recipes that

can be enjoyed with friends and family. Creating something that makes us happy and brings us all together.

So I wanted to create a book with recipes that were a fitting testament to that philosophy, using accessible and affordable ingredients – no weekly pay cheques spent at health food shops on coconut oil and spirulina. It's all about fresh, easy to find and reasonably priced produce, the best of British grub cooked to perfection and embracing Scandinavian, European, Mediterranean, Asian and Middle Eastern cuisines.

I also wanted to create a book that the generations of female cooks and chefs before me would be proud of. It's these ladies who have blazed a trail, and who have given me the courage to stand confidently by my values regarding what we eat, how we eat, and our relationship with food. This is my way of saying thank you to them. Above all, *Milly's Real Food* is a little bit of everything; how I like to eat at home and what I cook my friends and family. As my hero of a grandfather, Walter, would say: "A little bit of what you fancy does you good." Let's get cooking some *Real Food*.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark grey ink, appearing to read 'Milly'.

P.S. Share your recipe photos, favourite foodie haunts, meal ideas, and real food tips, tricks and hacks with me on Instagram @millycookbook or Twitter @MillyCookbook, with the hashtag #MillysRealFood





WHAT TO KEEP IN YOUR FRIDGE

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Berries: strawberries, blueberries and raspberries – perfect for breakfast, they can be frozen for smoothies and made into jams when they're on their way out. Lots of **lemons** and **limes** for easy seasoning and bringing a dish to life immediately. Anything green: **broccoli, green beans and sprouts** – fantastic sources of iron and easy to use as a base, just add a dressing or a sauce; grill or fry to make dinner a bit more exciting. **Mini Cos lettuce** and **cucumber** for their refreshing crunch, plus **celery, carrots** and **banana shallots** as the base for casseroles, ragu, pasta sauces and risotto.

DELI

Prosciutto or Parma ham – eat the slices as they are, or, for a twist, try frying them as a bacon alternative; add to stews

and sauces for an extra kick of flavour. **Chorizo** – essential for Mike's Paella and a game-changer with seared scallops and in chicken dishes.

DAIRY

Halloumi and **feta** cheese and the full-on **stinky blues**. Full fat, salted **butter**. **Parmesan** to make any savoury dish sing, and it lasts forever.

MEAT

Chicken – buy a whole bird, roast it and live off the leftovers for days: cost-effective and extremely versatile. **Beef brisket, chuck** and **oxtail** for slow-cooked and hearty ragu. **Pork** or **beef mince** for Bolognese: double up the ingredients and you can freeze portions for later meals. Good-quality **sausages** have more uses than just bangers and mash: squeeze the meat out into pasta sauces and slice them into stews.

FISH	Salmon, cod and prawns – quick to cook, packed full of goodness and easy to rustle up a meal in minutes.
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WHAT TO KEEP IN YOUR CUPBOARD

VEGETABLES	Potatoes – sweet potatoes, new potatoes and Desirée for the best dauphinoise. Mushrooms: chestnut, shiitake, enoki, oyster – the weirder, the better. Do try different ones. Tomatoes in all shapes and colours, if you can find them – perfect as a light lunch with mozzarella and a staple for homemade tomato sauce.
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OILS	Extra-virgin olive oil – the best you can afford, for drizzling. Rapeseed oil for cooking because it has a higher smoke point, which means it retains its nutritional qualities even after being heated. Toasted sesame oil
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makes Asian dishes really wonderful.

HERBS & SPICES

Chilli flakes, dried rosemary, thyme and oregano are my cupboard essentials and go into so many of my recipes. **Chinese five spice, curry powder and turmeric** lend themselves to lots of dishes, adding colour and a delicious depth of flavour. Ground and whole **cinnamon** works brilliantly in savoury and sweet dishes and drinks. **Saffron** is, without doubt, the most decadent, but a little goes a long way. Add to the cooking water when preparing rice for a fragrant dish or work into seafood pasta sauces. Salt *must* be **flaked sea salt**. Don't bother with table salt to season your food, leave that for the pasta water.

BREAD &

ANYTHING – I'm pro-carbs.

BISCUITS	Pitta, bagels, tortillas, fluffy white loaf, crackers and oatcakes are my favourites and form the basis of an instant delicious lunch or substantial snack (there's no beating a ham and cheese toastie when you're starving and the cupboard is bare). Store bread in the freezer if you don't manage to get through a whole loaf or pack in 3 days.
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WHAT TO KEEP IN YOUR CUPBOARD

EGGS	Free-range hen's eggs (also duck eggs are tasty and available at a lot of big supermarkets).
CONDIMENTS	Stock jelly or cubes save dishes which need that extra oomph; soy sauce, oyster sauce, Sriracha (the only hot sauce worth its salt) and hoisin are all essential for Asian dishes; peanut butter – dollop into sauces and dips,

fry with chicken and add to noodles and broth for an extra kick; **Marmite** – treat it like stock in stews and ragu, it adds a different element to a hearty dish; **wholegrain and Dijon mustard** work their way into almost every vegetable side dish of mine as well as salad dressings.

DRIED & GRAINS

Pasta: Love it all, but **lasagne sheets** are my cupboard essential. **White** and **brown rice**, **Arborio risotto rice** and **pearl barley** – different but my absolute favourite and pleasingly chewy.

TINNED

I always have jars of **passata** and tins of **tomatoes** – cherry, chopped or whole. They go into every Italian pasta dish and stew – I buy them by the truck-load. **Coconut cream** is much better than coconut milk, it has ten times more flavour. **Chickpeas** – a single

tin of chickpeas can make a tub of homemade hummus; I also like to roast them and drench with hot sauce to make a tasty snack.

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