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# Entertaining



## Synopsis

With 500 glorious full-color photographs, 300 original recipes, and hundreds of innovative ideas, Entertaining is the book that revolutionized the way people entertain today. 500 full-color photographs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is the book that launched an empire. Martha Stewart's Entertaining was the world's first exposure to the doyenne of domestication. Entertaining offers recipes and menus for a number of different parties, including wedding receptions, afternoon teas, and a sumptuous Christmas dessert buffet. The book is lavishly illustrated, and much attention is paid to the dishes' presentation as well as their preparation. Even if you use it only as a springboard for your own party planning, Martha Stewart's Entertaining will provide fodder for many a celebration.

With 500 glorious full-color photographs, 300 original recipes, and hundreds of innovative ideas, Entertaining is the book that revolutionized the way people entertain today. 500 full-color photographs.

This book made a huge impact on me as a young wife. It changed how I thought about entertaining and presenting food. This is either the third or fourth copy of this I have purchased. Mine keeps going missing! -- as I loan it out and then forget who has it! LOL. The hairstyles might be dated but the concepts and advice are still exactly spot on.

This book *Entertaining* by Martha Stewart covers recipes such as Brooke's Mustard Dip, Cottage Cheese and Dill Dip, and Cheddar Cheese Fondue (pages 70-71). There are also dinner party ideas such as almond cookies (page 125), Crème Caramel (page 179) and holiday party ideas such as cat shaped iced sugar cookies (page 209). Martha Stewart also includes an at home wedding section starting on page 263.

This book was published over 20 years ago. It is the foundation of Martha Stewart's reputation, the starting point of her magazine, TV shows, and Kmart product line. The book is worthy of that reputation, as I am hard pressed to think of how any book could do a better job at its chosen task. I chose to review this old, now classic volume because I recently reviewed two new books on entertaining menus and I felt I could not do the subject justice without consulting the established authority on the subject. I also felt compelled to visit this book because in spite of Martha's well-publicized problems, I have believed she is very good at what she does. Her success is not built on hype, marketing, or fluff. This book demonstrates that fact. As pointed out by a recent biographer, Christopher Byron, in the book *'Martha, Inc.'*, Stewart has largely invented her persona of talented amateur who happens to be very good at classic 'homemaking' tasks. This 'handmade' aspect of her character comes through in all her works, and it is not seen as phoniness or pretend knowledge. I believe it is seen as an attitude of 'Look, even I, an untrained (fill in what you will) can do this. You can too.' In fact, on one of her TV shows, Martha says her job is really 'learning fast' from experts. She constantly praises and quotes from genuine experts such as Julia Child without assuming any credit for having the smarts to have borrowed from such a well-recognized source. In decorating, a constant theme is doing clever things with inexpensive materials to achieve a 'Wow' effect. Many of her recommendations can lead one to a fairly hefty price tag, but then, you are foolish if you plan a party for 12 or 24 or 48 or 100 and wish to have it come off well, and not expect a pretty sizable cost. Stewart's first priority is for you to succeed. And, for her, success, is that you please your guests and have fun yourself. She succeeds in providing ample materials for doing that. Her second priority is to be smart in finding economical solutions, such as in hiring help for both wait staff and musical entertainment. The talented amateur persona is entirely genuine. The best thing about her Food Network show is not what she does, but the quality of her guests and what they can do. That did not stop her from assembling a first rate book with professional grade instruction in some very important cooking and baking skills. There are, for example, exceptionally well done full page illustrated tutorials on making pie crusts, making French bread, creating wedding bouquets, building a gingerbread mansion, and creating a crudite platter. The general quality of these

instructions surpasses most features in her magazine and rival step by step instructions by Jacques Pepin. One may think that if Martha is copying recipes from Julia Child, why not simply get 'Mastering the Art of French Cooking' and be done with it. This would work if you had the time, as Martha did, to work your way through this book and pick out those recipes which fit various occasions. I may also note that while they are true classics of cookbook writing craft, Julia Child's recipes are not for the novice. Martha succeeds in making the recipes she has chosen much more accessible to the inexperienced cook. This is not to say Martha Stewart expects a homemaker with average kitchen skills will actually prepare meals for 12, let alone 100. Her recommendations are as much a means of preventing caterers from pulling the wool over the client's eyes as they are recipes for the solo chef. Realistically, for the self-catered party, the recipes are source materials with the bonus that it gives recipes, which work well together by look and by taste. One important aspect of this work which the prospective reader cannot forget is that this is NOT 'Entertaining Lite'. This is how to go the full nine yards without breaking the bank. If there is a trade off between quality and economy, quality wins. The heart of the tutorial on how to entertain is a detailed lesson on how to plan and check preparations. I am certain wrote much of the material in the book, but I am also sure that she had a lot of professional help from Clarkson Potter layout artists and her credited photographers in the design of the book. Whatever the source, the outcome is worthy of the classic mantle which has been given to the book. It is a worthy standard by which to judge other books on similar subjects. While over a dozen different photographers contributed pictures and most are simply good, the overall effect is excellent. The layout staff really earned their money. In spite of the battalion of assistants Martha must have had in putting this book together, she constantly maintains the illusion that she is personally guiding you through the details by having many scenes photographed at her house and her events with her family members and heirlooms on center stage most of the time. This point of view is familiar to anyone who has read her magazine with its schedule of things Martha will be doing this month. Be sure to buy the paperback edition of the book published in 1998 as the original hard cover edition published in 1982 would not have the Internet web sites for the Sources. Regardless of Martha's reported corrosive persona 'off camera' and her allegedly illegal dealings, she knows how to throw a good party and she succeeds at passing that information on to you. Highly recommended.

I really like this book its a classic but the recipes are a bit long. Buy it for the heck of it just as an addition to your library but other than that there's so much on the web now you wouldn't miss it if you didn't buy it-seriously.

Bought a new copy of this book for a chef who works for friends who live in the Bahamas. Since they do a lot of entertaining large groups of friends I think it will come in handy. I have been using my book for many years and the recipes, in Martha Stewart tradition, are superior.

Love the old pictures from the 80's Amazing how in a matter of 10 years or so, Martha went from caterer to multi billion dollar entrepreneur

After having a few of the items in this cookbook while visiting a friend, I had to order the book. While some recipes are written to feed upwards of 50 people, I've adapted them for dinner for 4 with no trouble. As someone who is not a natural in the kitchen, I have found the recipes very easy to put together, and love the good classic menus. Just perfect for someone like me!

Despite its vintage status, the book came in great condition and is a welcome addition to my library of cookbooks.

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