



MASTERCLASS

ALICE WATERS

TEACHES THE ART OF HOME COOKING



A LETTER FROM ALICE WATERS

Hello, and welcome to my MasterClass. I am so honored that you are taking this journey with me.

I want to invite you into my kitchen, so I can show you how I make delicious, seasonal meals out of what I have at hand and serve them to family and friends. But these classes are about more than learning how to cook. These classes are about a philosophy of food.

There are so many books about how to cook and so many recipes in the world. More important than any recipe, though, are the ingredients that go into it. Here is how I cook: First I'm at the farmers' market, looking for fruits and vegetables that are perfectly ripe and just picked. I'm not necessarily thinking about how the ingredients will go together, and I don't know yet what I'm going to cook—I'm just responding to what I'm finding. I'm letting my senses lead me: smelling the garlic, tasting the pungency of the radishes, feeling the firmness of the apricots. And when I do finally start imagining how the ingredients relate to one another, I'm improvising—trying to capture that moment in time.

I hope to teach you about discernment. You will learn how to explore your local farmers' markets and perhaps even your own backyard, using all your

senses to find ingredients that are at their peak. You will learn how to trust your own taste, and let it guide you to what is best and most flavorful. The great secret is that when your ingredients are organically grown, are ripe, and are in season, you don't have to do much to them to make something extraordinary.

This isn't about adhering to a set of recipes or strict rules—it's about exploring and marrying flavors and ingredients as they change through the seasons. I want you to be able to cook with spontaneity, building your confidence so that you can leap away from a script.

Anyone—*anyone*—can learn to do this. I never had a formal culinary education before I opened Chez Panisse at 27. But what I loved to do—and still do!—is bring people together around a table with food that's vibrant and flavorful and alive. Because this is a story, too, about how food can change your life. I was awakened to taste when I went to France in my early twenties, and I first started to think about food differently.

What I'm teaching is not new. Our grandmothers and our grandmothers' grandmothers thought about food and eating and cooking like this. But it has been forgotten here in this country, and it is being forgotten around the world. We have been indoctrinated by a fast food culture for the past 50 years—a culture with empty values that tell us that food should always be fast, cheap, and easy, and that cooking is drudgery. Fast food culture tells us that everything should look and taste exactly the same, no matter what the season. Fast food culture wants us to believe that we don't have the time or money to sit down together and share good, homemade food.

But that is not the case. This is a class about reconnecting to those basic, earthbound human values of civilization since the beginning of time. It's about learning to feed ourselves deliciously, economically, and in harmony with nature. It's about the slow, patient joy of waiting for a tomato to sweeten on the vine. It's about the conversations we have with the farmers who care for the land, and the connections we make when our family and friends gather at the dinner table. It's about helping our children explore the incredible biodiversity of our planet, letting them dig in the soil with their own hands, growing and harvesting and cooking their own food so that they effortlessly absorb lessons of sustainability. And more than anything, it's about taste and pleasure. Because this is the greatest secret of all: when you start eating this way, you will fall in love. It is that simple.

With hopefulness,

ALICE WATERS

ABOUT ALICE WATERS

Alice Waters is a chef, author, food activist, and the founder and owner of Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California. She has been a champion of local, sustainable agriculture for over four decades. In 1995, she founded the Edible Schoolyard Project, which advocates for a free school lunch for all children and a sustainable food curriculum in every public school. She has been vice president of Slow Food International since 2002. She conceived and helped create the Yale Sustainable Food Project in 2003 and the Rome Sustainable Food Project at the American Academy in Rome in 2007. Her honors include election as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2007; Harvard Medical School's Global Environmental Citizen Award, which she shared with Kofi Annan in 2008; and induction into the French Legion of Honor in 2010. In 2015 she was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Obama, proving that eating is a political act and that the table is a powerful means to social justice and positive change. Her most recent honor was induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 2017. Alice is the author of 15 books, including New York Times bestsellers *The Art of Simple Food I & II*, *Edible Schoolyard: A Universal Idea*, and *Coming to My Senses: The Making of a Counterculture Cook*, a memoir.

