

introduction

Delicious & Doable represents everything I believe in when it comes to both eating and preparing a meal. Neither should be about perfection. I encourage you to: utilize leftovers, shop off the reduced produce rack, fuel up on nutrient-dense foods, and indulge in whatever sinful treat you're craving (may I suggest Grilled Chocolate Sandwiches (page 107) and/or Caramel Covered Brie (page 131)). Most importantly, take pride in all the above while getting messy in the kitchen recreating many, if not all, of the recipes in this book.

For most of my career (almost twenty-five years) writing a cookbook felt like a farfetched dream. Something only possible for other people. As I established myself in the food industry (I credit hard work and grit) and gained credibility (TV segments, hosting a cooking show, writing for publications, and teaching cooking classes), people began asking, "When are you going to write a cookbook?"

I'm a firm believer in going with your gut. Although the idea for this cookbook has been floating around in my head for almost a decade (fun fact: I reached out to I C Publishing over five years ago inquiring about writing this book), the timing just never felt right. And then one day it did. I literally woke up one morning in late 2020 and said to Tyler and Colgan (my boys), "Today's the day, I'm finally going to begin writing my cookbook!"

My ultimate goal is to inspire folks to get in the kitchen and recreate delicious and doable dishes using (mostly) pantry staple/common ingredients and methods of cooking you don't need a thesaurus or degree in culinary arts to understand.

Sit back, relax, and enjoy this little story.

Early in my career I landed an exciting gig at a cooking school in Toronto. I had the pleasure of assisting (aka, cleaning up after) all the best chefs in the city as they worked their culinary magic to a sold-out classroom of (mostly) housewives. Women eager to get dinner on the table, offer their children something other than cereal for breakfast, and pick up a tip or two for entertaining friends and family. It's like going back to school when you've already got a lot of your plate (pun intended). If you're a parent, you get it!

One thing that always stood out to me when I assisted these classes was the look of fear on the women's faces as they watched the chef debone a leg of lamb, flambé a dessert, or effortlessly make a foie gras terrine. Were the culinary creations drool worthy and fine works of art when plated? Yes! But I can tell you firsthand that these students left class feeling defeated when it came to mealtime. Not inspired.

I remember one particular evening clearly saying to myself, "If I'm ever in a position to teach folks who just want to get dinner on the table and feed their family well, I'm going to do just that!" I've literally made it my mission.

Slowly but surely, my mission became a reality. I found myself at the head of the class (not always to a sold-out crowd in the beginning) teaching cooking. And I loved it! I prided myself on using pantry staple items and keeping budget in mind, all the while debunking fussy cooking methods and terms. Not only did the students devour my recipes, but they actually had a look of hope in their eyes. That look is what fueled me. Nothing brought me more satisfaction than students returning to future classes and sharing with me that their family loved the 20-Minute Seafood Chowder (page 132), or that their twelve-year-old made Get Up and Go Morning Muesli (page 9) for the family, or they recycled a bunch of leftovers and made Ultimate Supper Sandwich (page 33, one of my gang's fave dinners btw).

Writing *Delicious & Doable* has been an incredibly rewarding experience and a dream come true. My hope is that you will roll up your sleeves, get a bit messy, and find a ridiculous amount of joy recreating and eating the recipes within these pages, in *your* real and everyday life.

From my kitchen to yours, happy cooking and eating!

Charmaine