



Read & Feed

Oliver's Twist

Cornelius O'Donnell

In many ways I wish I had had television personality Jamie Oliver's new book, *Jamie's Food Revolution* (Hyperion, \$35), when I was starting to cook. Subtitled "Rediscover how to cook simple, delicious, affordable meals," it is equally helpful for those just beginning to try their wings in the kitchen, although you'll have to get the recipe for the Buffalo variety elsewhere. This is a British book, and you have to allow for things like cress, kettle, Fish Pie, and other references. Be brave; it's easy, and you'll figure it out in.

Oliver became a young superstar thanks to the Naked Chef moniker and his breezy style. His last few books—*Jamie's Food Revolution* is his eighth—didn't simply give recipes. The tousled-haired lad now exhibits his social conscience. Among other things, he's helped

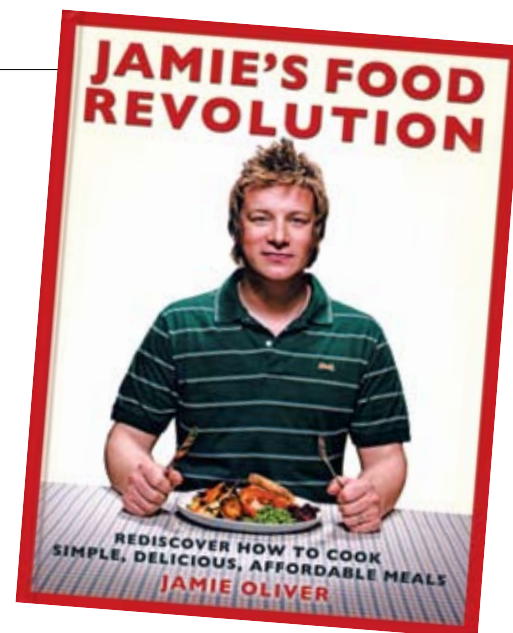
disadvantaged youths find careers in food service. And you might have caught his television series about raising food at home and cooking it within seconds of harvesting it. It, too, spawned a book.

In the newest book, he aims to get the reader to make one recipe from each section and then pass it along to a friend who is expected to do the same. Don't worry about all that—though it is a nice idea. Instead, look at the splendid color photographs, some step-by-step, that practically guarantee perfect results.

A word of caution, however: Many of the recipes are geared for two, especially in the "Twenty-minute Meals" chapter that begins the book. Once into each section, the offerings yield the usual four to six servings. And not all the recipes are in the usual form with ingredients listed separately. The vegetable chapter is an example, and you'll find a recipe in that style in the leek dish that follows.

If you've traveled to England, surely you remember the many Indian restaurants. This book reflects that influence with many curries. To get you hooked, try the Chicken Korma, a mild and creamy version that even kids will enjoy. There are color photos to help you get it right.

If you've shied away from salads and stuck with iceberg lettuce and bottled dressing, you'll find the salad section particularly inspiring. He makes his dressings in jam jars



(so do I), and his approach to what goes into a salad is particularly useful. He calls this "the philosophy of a great salad, pick-and-mix style." And there is a series of twenty-six photos scattered among sections: soft and crunchy greens, herbs, veggies, cheese, and toppings. Pick one of each category and toss.

I loved the "Homely Ground Beef" chapter, which includes (his titles): A Cracking Burger, Good Old Chili Con Carne, Ground Beef Wellington, Pot-Roast Meatloaf, Bolognese Sauce, etc. His Tomato Spaghetti is simplicity itself. Is this accessible food? You bet.

This is certainly a "different" kind of cookbook, but it's warmed by Jamie's approach to cooking. One repeated instruction: "Add a good lug of olive oil." (I figure it's two tablespoons.) Another: "Give the pot a little love and attention, and you'll be laughing." This just might be England's answer to "BAM!"

Now if Jamie would only comb his hair! 🍴

Baked Creamy Leeks

Preheat your oven to 400°F. Get yourself 1 3/4 pounds of LEEKS. Peel back the scruffy outer leaves, trim the ends and discard, then quarter the leeks lengthways and roughly chop them. Put them in a colander; give them a really good wash to get rid of any dirt, and drain. Peel and finely slice 2 cloves of GARLIC. Put a large pan on medium heat and add 2 pats of BUTTER, a lug of OLIVE OIL, and the garlic. Pick the leaves off 6 sprigs of FRESH THYME, discarding the stalks. Just as the garlic begins to take on the smallest amount of color, add all the leeks and the thyme leaves and give them a stir.

Turn up the heat and cook for about 10 minutes, until the leeks have softened. Meanwhile, grate 1 cup of CHEDDAR CHEESE. Remove the pan from the heat and season with a couple of good pinches of SALT AND PEPPER. Add just under 1 cup of HEAVY CREAM and half the grated cheese. Mix everything up and transfer into a baking dish that will give you a layer of leeks about 1 inch thick. Sprinkle over the rest of the cheese and bake in the preheated oven for about 20 minutes, until golden and bubbling. (Note from Cornelius: use about 2 Tbs. each of the oil and butter.)



Chef, teacher, and author Cornelius O'Donnell lives in Corning, New York.