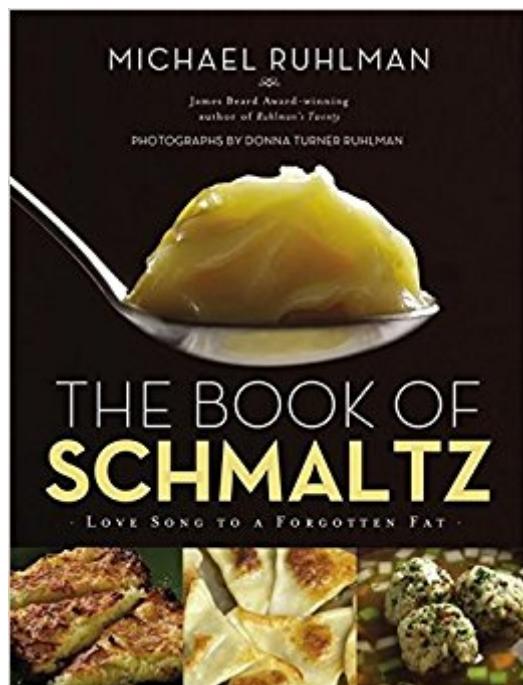


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# The Book Of Schmaltz: Love Song To A Forgotten Fat



## Synopsis

The definitive book on schmaltz--a staple in Jewish cuisine and a "thread in a great tapestry," by one of America's most respected culinary writers. For culinary expert Michael Ruhlman, the ultimate goal in cooking is flavor, and for certain dishes nothing introduces it half as well as schmaltz. A staple ingredient in traditional Jewish cuisine, schmaltz (or rendered chicken fat), is at risk of disappearing from use due to modern dietary trends and misperceptions about this versatile and flavor-packed ingredient. THE BOOK OF SCHMALTZ acts as a primer on schmaltz, taking a fresh look at traditional dishes like kugel, kishke, and kreplach, and also venturing into contemporary recipes that take advantage of the versatility of this marvelous fat. Potatoes cooked with schmaltz take on a crispness and satisfying flavor that vegetable oil can't produce. Meats and starches have a depth and complexity that set them apart from the same dishes prepared with olive oil or butter. What's more, schmaltz provides a unique link to the past that ought to be preserved. "Schmaltz is like a thread that runs through a great tapestry," says Ruhlman's neighbor Lois, whose cooking inspired his own journey into the world of schmaltz. "It's a secret handshake among Jews who love to cook and eat."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The foundation of the book is, of course, Ruhlman's schmaltz recipe, which is extraordinarily easy. Six steps, 90 minutes, and you're in business. Classics such as chopped liver, kreplach, and potato kugel follow, as do unconventional dishes including vichyssoise with gribenes and chives-and-chicken confit. They're now yours for the making." --David Leite, Leite's

Culinaria"Ruhlman, who has authored cookbooks with culinary greats like Thomas Keller and Michael Symon, puts his own spin on even the most classic recipes."â •Katherine Martinelli, The Jewish Daily Forward

Michael Ruhlman's innovative and successful food reference books include *Ratio*, *The Elements of Cooking*, *Ruhlman's Twenty*, and *Charcuterie*. He has appeared as a judge on *Iron Chef* and as a featured guest on *Anthony Bourdain's No Reservations*. He has also co-authored books with Thomas Keller, Eric Ripert, and Michael Symon. He lives in Cleveland, Ohio, with his wife, photographer Donna Turner Ruhlman.

Everything you want in a cookbook: detailed instructions, pictures, and even a decent background story about the book. Not only does the book have pictures, but it has before, during and after photos to guide you, which is a great help. I think this cookbook is a great idea, since every cookbook I have that has a recipe for schmaltz is brief and intimidating, so I never attempted to make schmaltz. This book explains the process in more detail than probably ever before, so any fear is removed, and the chance for success is great. I went to the local kosher supermarket and got two pounds of chicken fat and skin. I attempted the schmaltz recipe in an all-clad 13" stainless steel skillet and ended up with what looked like beautiful schmaltz, and it smelled great, too. I haven't used it in a recipe yet, but there is a potato knish recipe in the book that I will try. I may try to use my Le Creuset cast iron skillet next time, since the stainless steel pan had a lot of browned pieces stuck to it and I was scared they would burn by the end and ruin my schmaltz, but I don't believe that happened. The author does recommend to use a non-stick pan, but I do not cook with non-stick cookware. To sum up, if schmaltz is something you are interested to make, this is the book you should get, unless you have a grandmother that can show you. Edit: 10/18/13- I attempted to make the potato knish recipe. I believe I followed the directions very carefully. I weighed the ingredients to be as accurate as possible. I used a pastry cloth as the author recommends to get the dough very thin. Now the problem I had was that the directions state to bake the knishes in a 400 degree farenheit oven for 15 to 20 min until golden brown. I checked them during that time frame but the knishes were not getting brown, and I let them stay in the oven longer but by the time they were golden brown they were too dry and didn't taste good. The next batch I took out at 16 minutes and they were not dry but not golden brown either. I'm not deducting any stars because perhaps this was my fault, but I wasn't satisfied with the results. I guess it's more of a heads up not to bake them too long even though they may not be brown enough, probably because the dough is so thin.

Unique book on a rather unknown ingredient...I make my own schmaltz by saving fat till I have enough to render.

Michael Ruhlman is writing great books about food, chefs and cooking. He is passionately interested in the subject, and it shows in his work. I don't have this book any more--I had it for a couple of days and was contemplating which dishes to cook when a Jewish friend came to dinner. She looked at the book and talked about the recipes--dishes her grandmother used to fix that she had grown up with but had not tasted for years. The book talks about schmaltz, which is rendered chicken fat, and the traditional Jewish recipes made with it. I've cooked with schmaltz a bit, and like it--it's almost liquid at room temperature and is very easy to work with. If you're interested in making a truly traditional Jewish chopped chicken liver dish, this book will show you how to do it. It'll also teach you--in Ruhlman's careful, easy to understand style, how to prepare a number of other traditional dishes that are made with schmaltz. Needless to say, once our friend had browsed the book, she left with it, so I don't have it any more. I'm happy that it has a home where it's treasured. And I will order another book. I've read a number of Ruhlman's books and liked them, so may well go ahead and get all of them.

As a child my relatives always referred to me as "Schmaltz" because I was considered to be a lucky charm, unrelentingly entertaining therefore as indispensable as schmaltz in savory Eastern European cuisine

Enjoyable cookbook. Making the chicken liver recipe is the first time I've enjoyed eating homemade liver!

The book itself arrived quickly and in pristine condition. Some of the recipes were standards - others were interesting takes on traditional recipes. I'm anxious to try a bread recipe that is supposed to be exceptional - where you don't taste the schmaltz but enjoy the subtle flavor it provides.

The recipes bring me back to my childhood, and for that I am grateful. The food comes out great! It's also a good read.

Michael Ruhlman is a great writer and this book is an exceptional resource. Using animal fat for

cooking and flavoring has fallen into what I call disrespect. Some restaurants are using duck fat for frying french fries and of course, crunchy pork fat has enjoyed a new acceptance. Bottom line is, all are acceptable, all in moderation and certainly worth the smooth mouth feel.

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