



Dinner in an Instant: 75 Modern Recipes for Your Pressure Cooker, Multicooker, and Instant Pot(r)

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Inspired by her viral *New York Times* article "Why Do Cooks Love the Instant Pot(R)? I Bought One to Find Out," Melissa Clark's *Dinner in an Instant* has all new recipes that bring her signature flavor-forward dishes to everyone's favorite countertop appliance.

Dinner in an Instant gives home cooks recipes for elevated dinners that never sacrifice convenience. Beloved for her flawless recipes, Melissa Clark turns her imagination to the countertop appliances that have won American hearts from coast to coast. Recipes include Fresh Coconut Yogurt, Japanese Beef Curry, Osso Buco, Smoky Lentils, Green Persian Rice with Tahdig, and Lemon Verbena Creme Brulee.

Dinner in an Instant provides instructions when possible for making the same dish on both the pressure cooker and slow cooker settings, allowing home cooks flexibility. Symbols guide the reader toward Paleo, Vegan, Vegetarian, and Gluten Free dinners.

Fresh, approachable, and classic, *Dinner in an Instant* is Melissa Clark's most practical book yet.

Dinner in an Instant: 75 Modern Recipes for Your Pressure Cooker, Multicooker, and Instant Pot(r) Details

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Rosa says

I basically bought an Instant Pot because I knew Melissa Clark was writing an entire book on how to cook with it; I figured if someone who knows as much about cooking as she does would take up with one, the IP must be more than just a fad. And I've been very pleased with the IP (specifically for how it allows me to cook things like dried beans & brown rice, etc., in a hands-off fashion)... that having been said, as previous reviewers have noted, this is mostly Not a cookbook for weeknights. The best recipes in this cookbook (I've made a handful) are all about layering in different stages - browning onions first (or searing the meat), adding beans only after 30 minutes, cooking up a roux in the last 5 minutes, etc.... it is absolutely Not just dumping everything in the IP & walking away, only to come back to a full dinner. This degree of involvement may seem initially confusing, since the IP is self-billed as being all about speed and ease. However, I'd counter that there are PLENTY of web sites out there that already have "speedy" IP recipe databases (starting w/ IP's own site; Serious Eats and Epicurious are other sites w/ good fast IP recipe collections) - as much as I appreciate the usefulness of the "fast" recipes, most of them Taste fast (basically like every slow cooker recipe in existence). Clark's recipes are not about speed; rather, they're about getting the best dish possible out of pressure cooking. I haven't made one thing (Cuban pork, Japanese stew, chili) that wasn't deeply flavored & worthwhile, and where I didn't understand why she had us take this or that extra step. But yes, every time I plan on eating Melissa C.'s IP dish the same night, what transpires instead is my inevitable chirping at 8 p.m., right in the face of the fam's mostly stoic suffering, "Leftovers/sandwiches tonight! We'll eat this tomorrow..." (pressure is still building in the cooker at this point, with 45 minutes of actual cook time yet to kick off). The old "Do you want it fast or do you want it good" adage applies very much here.

Deanna says

There are a couple of recipes from every chapter I'm determined to try, with adaptations to my food tolerances, and including a few new ideas about how to do that (like a sticky tamarind sauce that I'll happily swap for the standard barbecue sauce ingredients I can't use and the disappointing common substitutes).

These are more sophisticated recipes than in common fare cookbooks yet completely accessible. A nice balance of special and normal, or of requiring a bit more attention versus either slapping something together or overworking the whole idea of dinner. I was pleasantly surprised with this one.

Katie says

I regret this purchase. The recipes are too complicated for weeknight cooking. Most have around two dozen ingredients, and many require the use of pots and pans in addition to the instant pot. Also, the only recipe we have made so far exceeded the maximum capacity of my 6L instant pot.

Nicky says

This title is misleading and the recipes too fancy and time consuming in my opinion.

Skylar says

So so so many delicious recipes in this book! Great accompaniment to an electric pressure cooker!

Dee says

This cookbook by Melissa Clark, a food columnist for the New York Times, is filled with unique recipes for your new electric pressure cooker or Instant Pot. I bought it because I wanted to make some unusual recipes along with the standard soups and stews. I'm looking forward to trying the Sticky Tamarind Baby Back Ribs or the Bittersweet Chocolate Pudding (pots de creme.) It isn't a large book, but it does have solid information about the best way to cook certain types of things in the pressure cooker.

Mindy says

I picked up this book for two purposes: to find a few more time-saving dinner recipes, and to learn a bit more about my Instant Pot. I didn't find the former. Most recipes called for at least a dozen ingredients, and there were very few "weeknight" meals. I was pleased to see so many recipes designated as gluten-free or vegetarian, and her explanations for making yogurt, eggs and braised meats were informative. And she included several modifications for slow-cooking rather than pressure cooking, as well as notes when certain recipes in the Instant Pot wouldn't actually save time. The few pages on the cooker itself were somewhat helpful, but—and here's where my inner editor comes out—her publisher is completely confused on the proper use of serif and sans serif typefaces. All the explanatory text was in a headache-inducing sans serif, while the quick steps of the recipes were in serif. This book should come with a couple Excedrins.

Jillian says

Every recipe I've made from this book has been amazing. From the simple steel-cut oats to a delicious and nuanced coconut curry chicken (the best curry recipe I've ever made), I've rated all the recipes between 8/10 (if my husband and I loved it while the kids didn't) and 10/10 (if it was a hit for the whole family). There are some sophisticated recipes that are just made easier because of the Instant Pot. I may be running out of the ones that seem kid-friendly at first glance, but they are enjoying most of them anyway!

Michelle says

If you go on the Instant Pot Community on Facebook, you will see pages of overcooked ribs ("sooOOOo good!"), tough beef stew ("hubby is picky and even he liked!"), mystery meatloaf from outer space ("best and EASIEST ever!!!! Love!!!!") and things that just should not be, like lasagna, moonshine, muffins, or (bewilderingly) plain Kraft Mac and Cheese.

Reading those posts, you'd think that sweet Jesus came down from heaven Himself and bestowed upon us the almighty Instant Pot.

I'll say it: most recipes for the Instant Pot on the internet look disgusting.

After browsing the internet for recipes, I wanted something a little more... epicurean... than Hamburger Helper. I'm the type of home chef that weighs flour when baking and ALWAYS cooks with a meat thermometer. I was thrilled to receive an Instant Pot for Christmas, but was thoroughly discouraged after browsing what people make with it.

Enter Melissa Clark.

I've been a fan of hers as a subscriber to New York Times Cooking - she's actually how I found out about the Instant Pot phenomenon. In the cookbook, she says something to the effect of "I don't want to show you what you can make in an Instant Pot, but what you SHOULD make".

This is not an "easy weeknight cooking" guide. The recipes are sophisticated with interesting flavors. This book has been knocked within the Instant Pot community because you "have to go grocery shopping for the ingredients" (a critique I have never understood) and "need to do prep work instead of dump and go". That is EXACTLY what I wanted - if this doesn't describe your cooking style, don't buy this book.

Reading this book gave me an idea of the IP's strengths and weaknesses - I'm looking forward to trying several of the recipes in here as well.

I wish there had been more vegetable dishes, but many of these look so lovely and fit for a special occasion.

Rachel says

I've had my Instant Pot since Prime Day 2015. But only used it a handful of times. One of my goals for 2018 was to get to know my IP and overcome my fear of it. It wasn't really fear, I guess, I just found it overwhelming. So many buttons, is it really on?, why is it beeping at me?! So when I heard that Melissa Clark had a new pressure cooking book coming out I put it on my Christmas/Birthday wish list. I loved her cookbook Dinner so I knew this would be a great source of recipes to try on my IP.

I'll list what I made below, but before I get to that I just want to say I am now devoted to my Instant Pot and use it multiple times a week. I've overcome my issues and want to use it more. This cookbook is great for getting to know your Instant Pot and what it can do. I highly recommend it.

Okay, so here's what I made and some notes on each:

Plain yogurt: This was a big test for myself. I've been wanting to make yogurt for a while now. It turned out

pretty good. A little watery, but tastes like yogurt!

Eggs cooked hard or soft: I've done both. For hard cooked I made about 2 dozen at one time for a party. The shells didn't come off amazingly easy, but there was only one dud out of the bunch. I also made soft cooked the other morning. I found them not quite as jammy in the middle as I liked, so I would recommend reducing the cooktime to 4 minutes.

Eggs with spinach, smoked salmon, and pickled shallots - this was the first recipe I made from the book and it is a winner.

Garlicky cuban pork - I had an IP malfunction during the cooking of this so I'll need to try it again. (Make sure your plug is plugged all the way into the unit!)

Sticky Tamarind Baby Back Ribs - oh my! So good and easy! I want to try this cooking method with regular BBQ sauce.

Japanese Beef Curry - delicious. It was different than most curry's.

Smokey Barbecue Chicken - I used my own sauce here (I'm a Memphis girl, I am picky about my sauces) and it was great. My chicken was a touch dry so I made a note to release the pressure manually next time.

Indian Butter Shrimp - delicious. I had issues with Step 5, but made it work.

Vietnamese Caramel Salmon - I may only cook salmon in the pressure cooker now. It was perfectly cooked and not a hint of dryness. The sauce used was super tasty.

Long grain white rice - perfect. I'm not sure cooking rice in the pressure cooker is better than on the stove top - it certainly didn't save any time - but it's nice to know this is an option.

Creamy Macaroni and Cheese - decent

Garlicky Beans with Broccoli Rabe - only half this recipe is cooked in the IP. But it was a tasty dish.

Vietnamese Chicken and Rice soup - good, not our favorite though.

Red curry vegetable noodle soup - delicious

Beets with Dill, Lime, and Yogurt - delicious, but not sure if this was necessarily faster than other cooking methods.

Green beans, Italian Grandma-Style - delicious. I really wish Melissa Clark would develop a Greek Grandma-style.

Butter Braised Yukon Gold Potatoes - oh soooooo delicious. I loved this one.

I did not try any of the dessert recipes because I just can't get over that hurdle in my brain yet. Maybe next year.

Let me know if you have any questions. I really enjoyed this cookbook and will certainly continue to use it.

Kate Cronin says

I recently accidentally bought myself a present (hate it when that happens) and even though I was a little afraid of the Instant Pot initially, I have forged ahead with modern pressure cooking. This cookbook is a great resource and I wanted to try just about every recipe in this book. For those unfamiliar, an Instant Pot can sear, slow cook, pressure cook, make rice and yogurt (no, not all at the same time). I intend to try each feature because if I'm going to buy myself a present, I really should make the most of it. Which means I'll have to accidentally buy this cookbook too.

Darcie says

I thought "the incident" had banished pressure cookers from my life forever, yet even I succumbed to Instant Pot fever in October, lured by promises of safety features that would certainly prevent chicken and dumplings from exploding in the kitchen when a seventh grader is at home alone. (Just to pull a hypothetical situation out of nowhere.)

I really like my Instant Pot - I give it credit for the best chicken curry I've ever made. I also really like the guidance Melissa Clark gives for using an Instant Pot. However, I first read her guide on nytimes.com and got the aforementioned recipe from that source as well. This cookbook has the recipe, along with a whole bunch of stuff I'd never make.

Sarah says

This was okay, but I mostly skimmed the second half after I realized most of the recipes were either more involved or used ingredients a little too exotic for my grocery budget. The stuff I made was good, but at this stage of my life, I'm more at the quick, cheap, and easy stage of meal preparation.

jeanmarie says

I like the recipes in this book a LOT. However, while the title is clever, the only 'instant' is the pot you cook it in. This cookbook is perfect for people who love cooking and have tons of time to devote to it and appreciate good food. This cookbook is NOT perfect for people who love cooking but don't have a lot of time.

I've made 3 or 4 of the recipes from here, which I admit is a small percentage. In these recipes -- and in the book overall -- are a ton of steps and dishes for most things. The mac and cheese has you blend the sauce in a blender before putting it in, for example. The beef bourguignon has you brown the meat for 8-12 minutes in TWO batches. Plus, sautéing the vegetables. Oh, and making the onions and mushrooms on the stove, then add those to the pan. Also, after you're done, cook the sauce down to reduce it. I'm not opposed to doing some sautéing before cooking, but for that beef recipe (which is the most delicious pot roast-y dish I've ever made or eaten), if I'd followed all her instructions I'd also have dirtied a pan, the instant pot, two additional bowls, and a bunch of utensils. I don't mind this in theory, but I didn't buy an instant pot so I can have more steps to my meals!

I think a better book title would have been something like 'instantly elevated' -- the dal from the cookbook is also terrific, but this is NOT a weeknight cookbook.... or really a timesaver. The title makes you think that it will help you conquer dinner somewhat quickly, which is NOT the case!

Ok, all this aside -- there are many pros to the book: she tells you how long it will take (helpful for planning, although I am still quite slow even when I cut steps), she gives you a crock pot alternative (instant pot has a slow cooker function) for many of the meals, there is a pretty good variety of recipes and everything I've made so far is delicious. I'm just disappointed in how many steps everything has. I was hoping for something along the smitten kitchen line -- it's good food but you can be confident she's tested this as the 'minimally delicious' way to do it. Instead, I'm sautéing this and that and questioning what browning the beef is doing besides aesthetics, etc.

P. says

Even though I don't have the Instant Pot, I do have a 3 in 1 cooker ,and I have made the Maple-Chile Glazed Sweet Potatoes (great) Butternut Squash with Tahini and Pomegranate Seeds (almost makes me like squash instead of grudgingly eating it because it's good for me and abundant) Barbecue Chicken (amazing with mac n cheese) and Japanese Beef Curry (a little too sweet for my taste and has mushrooms which for some reason I added even though I don't like them). People keep putting the library's copies on hold because it's a great cookbook, so I'll keep having to check it out to make more. I really want to try the duck confit.
