



# Tom Valenti's Soups, Stews, and One-Pot Meals: 125 Home Recipes from the Chef-Owner of New York City's Ouest and 'Cesca'

By Tom Valenti, Andrew Friedman

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**Tom Valenti's Soups, Stews, and One-Pot Meals: 125 Home Recipes from the Chef-Owner of New York City's Ouest and 'Cesca** By Tom Valenti, Andrew Friedman

This is the way we love to eat -- slowly braised, cut-with-a-spoon-tender meat resting in aromatic juices just waiting for the perfect piece of bread to come along and sop it up; a steaming bowl of chowder filled with chunks of fish and potatoes in rich broth laced with the smoky-sweet-salty flavor of bacon; a casserole that's spent some serious time in the oven as layer upon layer of creamy, soft cheese, pasta, herbs, and meat meld into a delectable whole. And as luck would have it, this is the way celebrated New York City chef Tom Valenti *loves* to cook. Considered Manhattan's grandmaster of comfort food, Valenti has made this beloved cooking his trademark. In fact, on any given night, you'll find him in his wildly successful Upper West Side restaurants Ouest and 'Cesca feeding the world's A-list -- Bill Clinton, Steven Spielberg, Charlie Rose, Jerry Seinfeld, Judy Collins, Joan Didion. Because, of course, this is the food they *love* to eat, too.

In *Tom Valenti's Soups, Stews, and One-Pot Meals*, Valenti and coauthor Andrew Friedman dish up the flavor we've come to expect from a New York chef, without any of the fuss. This is food that gets better a day or two after it's made, food to make on the weekend and savor throughout a busy week, food that is perfect for dinner parties and family celebrations.

Here are 125 realistic recipes for the home cook -- most made in one pot -- and all based on the fact that the right ingredients, left alone to cook in a single vessel with virtually no intervention from the cook, steadily build glorious flavor and leave far fewer pots to clean.

The book includes "Variations" and "Tomorrow's Table," tips on ways to embellish a dish by adding vegetables or meats or provide economy by stretching it into another satisfying meal by simply adding another ingredient. Valenti and Friedman embrace what they term "cooking in the real world," encouraging home cooks to use canned stocks and beans whenever appropriate. They discuss key ingredients; offer a section on condiments, garnishes, and accompaniments; provide a list of mail-order sources; and recommend cookware (though you won't need a lot).

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Valenti (chef/owner of Ouest and another Manhattan restaurant slated to open later this year) would seem particularly well-suited to write a cookbook (with the apparently indefatigable Friedman) on homey one-pot meals. After all, he made his name with a lamb shank cooked gently until it falls off the bone (presented here with a slight variation as Moroccan-Spice Braised Lamb Shanks). There's a slackness here, however, not in the recipes themselves, which are uniformly tight and well-written, but in the dishes, which run along the very familiar lines of Classic Braised Beef Brisket and Pasta and Bean Soup. It's a shame, too, because when Valenti perks up a recipe with imagination he scores big: Turkey Soup with Stuffing Dumplings makes ingenious use of Thanksgiving leftovers, and the technique used in Olive-Oil Poached Red Snapper with Tomato and Scallions will be new to many. Valenti employs a snappy tone that sometimes slips into snide, as in a headnote for a very simple Silken Corn Puree in which he rails against writing that describes "food as a season on a plate or in a bowl." He also takes a refreshingly home cook-oriented approach in his introduction. A foreword by Mario Batali adds little, aside from informing the reader that both chefs find dish-washing odious.

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### Review

Bobby Flay Chef-owner of Mesa Grill and Bolo and host of the Food Network's *Boy Meets Grill* and *FoodNation* I crave the lusty and gutsy flavors of Tom Valenti's food twelve months a year. Now, instead of trying to steal his dishes from his menu, I have them all right here in *Tom Valenti's Soups, Stews, and One-Pot Meals*.

Lidia Bastianich Chef-owner of Felidia, Becco, and Lidia's and host of Public Television's *Lidia's Italian-American Kitchen* and *Lidia's Italian Table* If you enjoy the mellow, velvety, complex, and succulent flavors that come from one-pot meals cooked slowly, this is the book to have.

### About the Author

Andrew Friedman has made a career of getting to know the heads and hearts of professional cooks and athletes. For more than ten years, Friedman has collaborated with many of the nation's best and most revered chefs on cookbooks and other writing projects. His writing career began in 1997, when Alfred Portale, asked him to collaborate on the *Gotham Bar and Grill Cookbook*. The book received wide acclaim and since then he has worked as a cookbook collaborator on more than twenty projects, helping a number of the nation's best chefs (Alfred Portale, David Waltuck, Tom Valenti, and many others) share their unique culinary viewpoints with readers. As coauthor of the *New York Times* bestseller *Breaking Back*, the memoir of American tennis star James Blake, he took readers inside an athlete's mind during training and competition, and he does the same as a frequent contributor to *Tennis Magazine*. In *KNIVES AT DAWN: The American Team and the Bocuse d'Or 2009*, Friedman combines these two personal passions to tell the story of the premier cooking competition in the world. Friedman has contributed articles to *O—The Oprah Magazine* and other publications and websites. He has been profiled in *The New York Daily News* and *New York Magazine*, and interviewed for, or featured in articles in, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, as well as on NPR's *Taste of the Nation* and WOR Radio's *Food Talk*. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Columbia University, and is a graduate of the French Culinary Institute's "La Technique" cooking program. He lives in New York City with his family.

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