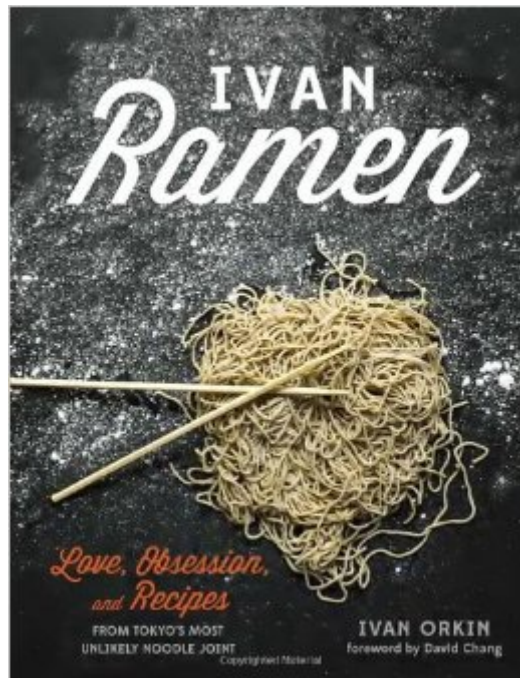


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Ivan Ramen: Love, Obsession, And Recipes From Tokyo's Most Unlikely Noodle Joint



Synopsis

The end-all-be-all guide to ramen from Ivan Orkin, the iconoclastic New York-born owner of Tokyo's top ramen shop. In 2007, Orkin, a middle-aged Jewish guy from Long Island, did something crazy. In the food-zealous, insular megalopolis of Tokyo, Ivan opened a ramen shop. He was a gaijin (foreigner), trying to make his name in a place that is fiercely opinionated about ramen. At first, customers came because they were curious, but word spread quickly about Ivan's handmade noodles, clean and complex broth, and thoughtfully prepared toppings. Soon enough, Ivan became a celebrity—a fixture of Japanese TV programs and the face of his own best-selling brand of instant ramen. Ivan opened a second location in Tokyo, and has now returned to New York City to open his first US branch. Ivan Ramen is essentially two books in one: a memoir and a cookbook. In these pages, Ivan tells the story of his ascent from wayward youth to a star of the Tokyo restaurant scene. He also shares more than forty recipes, including the complete, detailed recipe for his signature Shio Ramen; creative ways to use extra ramen components; and some of his most popular ramen variations. Written with equal parts candor, humor, gratitude, and irreverence, Ivan Ramen is the only English-language book that offers a look inside the cultish world of ramen making in Japan. It will inspire you to forge your own path, give you insight into Japanese culture, and leave you with a deep appreciation for what goes into a seemingly simple bowl of noodles.

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Customer Reviews

I think that those who rated this book on the low side really didn't understand what it was all

about. Having had ramen-ya's in Osaka, I can understand the fanaticism surrounding this noodle. There is so much more to ramen than the instant packages you can get 10 for whatever... For all home chefs, you remember the day you had your "AHA!" moment. I did with this cook book. His friend's comment on why no one was about to impart to Ivan the secrets of making ramen is that they only knew what they were taught and never actually THOUGHT about what made that bowl special or even contemplated on making something based on personal desire and taste. I've always wanted to make ramen from scratch. And this book REALLY had me THINKING about what I really was contemplating on doing. Making my OWN signature bowl with the things I really LOVE about ramen all in one spot. My whole outlook on home cuisine has changed dramatically. I've been a biochemist for most of my adult life, only switching my focus on completely new pathways in the last five years. It's time to break out my bench notebook and start working on a new and exciting project, one I'll be working on for the rest of my unusual life. Life is uncertain, as Ivan pointed out. Having been through some bad earthquakes myself and helping my friends dig their homes out after the Kobe Earthquake, well, a bowl of ramen really was more than a bowl of ramen back then. It's life-affirming. So I really did get it. A lot more than I had anticipated, so I feel this book was worth every single cent and then some. PS: Planning to host a Ivan Ramen Night. Will be parceling out each component out to fellow foodie friends, and for one night only, we'll assemble the whole shebang, and ACTUALLY be able to spend time eating and laughing rather than frantically rushing about the kitchen trying to get everything out... I'll let you know how it goes!

31 December 2013: Okay, we all decided to make our yearly New Year's Eve party something to really remember. Tonight was our Ivan Ramen Night!!! Man, I would want to do this at least monthly! It was really great with the least painful way to put together this great bowl of noodles. I took photos. Won't be able to put them here like I would like it, because I go crazy on layout and photos. Can't do it here at ... let's get back to the subject at hand. Took us less than an hour before we started serving yummy ramen. I also had made some black garlic oil if you wanted it in your bowl. I have had it this way, and I loved it!! The noodles were stunning -- and I made these all by myself! So now I can do this as often as I want. And I do like making homemade pasta. It soaks up the flavors wonderfully. I was amazed on how great the broth was. I definitely want to make my own magick fish dust. I could use this in many recipes I make. The problem is that this is an expensive ingredient. But it is cool to have a grating box exactly like Iron Chef Morimoto. I highly recommend that if you want to do "the ramen", parcel out the job to fellow foodies. Now that I know what this all tastes like, I can replicate this all by myself easily. It won't assemble itself. I'll give myself at least a week. My only change? I love the pork in this recipe. It would cause a HUGE imbalance, but I'd rather have 2-3 slices. And I

LOVE hard-boiled eggs. At least 2 here. We decided to do something very different. It's like Evening at the Improv as we each described how we made in the most humorous way possible. I'm glad I digitaped this. It was hysterical! So it's almost 23:00. We're all fat and sassy with too much ramen. However, I know what happens to ramen after you've even a huge bowl of it. You'll want something decadent and deep-fried. So we're having deep-fried cilantro shrimp rolls. I've also thawed out some really great honey-smoked salmon from Peninsula Seafoods. I've turned it into smoked salmon rangoon with a fine dipping chili sauce -- 1 part chili sauce and 1 part plum jelly. Yummy! I do highly recommend putting together this meal of ramen with friends who love ramen, too.

I felt compelled to write a review after I saw the one star review from the guy who "should have taken a closer look at the product description." I read this over the weekend after receiving it as a gift. Even though I haven't cooked any recipes, this will undoubtedly will be a great framework on how to make good ramen at home. I love his attention to detail. Temperatures for stock are given to the degree. Everything else is just as precise. Weights are listed (how does one properly measure bonito flakes if not by weight?). Here's what the book isn't: a Japanese cookbook. It's the author's story of going to Japan as well as his recipe for ramen and a few other recipes for what to do with leftovers from making ramen. That's it. The only thing I absolutely hated was the preface from David Chang. He basically goes on to berate white Americans for not being able to eat noodles properly and thereby ruining his ramen. The guy sets up shop in NYC and has an incredible reputation as a Chef and doesn't expect to get a bunch of meatheaded, moronic Instagram hipsters that don't know what they are doing? Living here in Seattle, I can walk into any no name pho joint that is filled with white folks slurping the noodles properly down like Asians. I realize that having David Chang's pompous preface will probably help sell some books, but man he's a dingleberry.

Ramen, so delicious with so many variations. Yes, I am a committed fan of ramen. I search for restaurants serving ramen when I travel. I make my own noodles at home. I work on perfecting the right balance for my broth and seasoning. I am a ramen addict. So when I saw this book I did my happy dance and clicked the keys to have it in my hands. I got more than I hoped for when I finished it. Ivan, is a Jewish White guy from New York. He studied Japanese lit and when graduated thought he should use it so he moved to Japan. Where he met his first wife and started to discover his destiny. He fell in love with Japan, the people, and the food. They moved back to NY for a while where they had a child. Tragedy struck and his life went into a spin. He ended up picking up and moving back to Japan where he floundered and slowly rebuilt his life. He also ate a lot of ramen.

This quest for the perfect bowl was fascinating to read. His story is important to the bowl he places in front of his customer. The history of every ingredient, every step has value. His interaction with other great chefs and retailers, it all builds the flavor. This is a book where the history of the soup is important to understand to respect the final product. I loved it, his story was never uninteresting. The recipes while time consuming have been directed in a way to simplify the process with timing. I have included many of his steps into my homestyle bowl and plan of using them all soon. What I love about his recipes is that he pushes you to be creative, make it yours. There is one to die for dessert, Lemon Sorbet. Totally drool worthy according to everyone in my home that has eaten it.

Yes, the biography is a little gratuitous but he has to sell a book, and really...recipes on ramen and the leftovers wouldn't fill a book. People are complaining that the ingredients are hard to source and takes too long to make? Uh. This is the reason why ramen is \$9-11 a bowl. If you spread the process out through several days, it's very manageable. Most of the stuff you can leave it alone on the stove or oven. It's not like a risotto or a roux where you have to stir every second. What the heck are people expecting? Good ramen is simple, but not easy to make. If you can't find shaved bonito or dried fish at your local Asian or Japanese supermarket there are MANY online sources where you can buy it.

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