



The Violet Bakery Cookbook by Claire Ptak (£20, Good Food offer price £17, Square Peg)

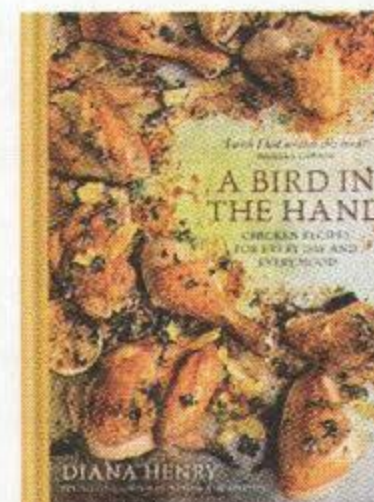
The Violet Bakery, a buzzing café in east London known for its excellent baking, is run by Claire, who worked as a pastry chef in Alice Waters' Chez Panisse in California. She has achieved a miracle by combining health and indulgence in her cakes, which feature unrefined sugars and wholegrain flours. From Prune, oat & spelt scones to the delicious Hazelnut toffee cake, these are wonderful recipes.

writer and blogger Anne Shooter. This is a real treat for keen bakers looking for inspiration, bringing a suggestion of spice, a hint of honey and the tang of pomegranates to cakes and bakes. There are also some family recipes for traditional Middle Eastern breads and a few savoury treats like Smoked haddock pastries.



Sesame & Spice: Baking from the East End to the Middle East by Anne Shooter (£25, Good Food offer price £22.50, Headline)

Bring a touch of the exotic to your kitchen with this fabulous collection of Middle Eastern-inspired bakes from food



A Bird in the Hand by Diana Henry (£20, Good Food offer price £18, Octopus)
A real desert island cookbook.

You can never have too many ideas for chicken, and Diana's are some of our favourites. She includes ideas for sautés and braises, twists on the perennial roast, salads, pilafs and leftovers. There's chicken fancied up for dinner parties or dressed down for kids, plus lots of quick midweek suppers.

TAKE A COOKERY COURSE

Japanese Street Food: Gyoza Class, Yuki's Kitchen, Crystal Palace, London (020 8816 7499, yukiskitchen.com)

Tutor Yuki grew up in Japan, where she learned to cook with her mother. She has lived in Chicago, trained as a chef and helped to develop menus at several restaurants in the UK.

The class is held in her white, open-plan home kitchen. She greeted me and the three other students with a cup of Japanese tea.

First, she demonstrated how to make the fillings (a mix of pork and prawn, with Savoy cabbage and assorted wild mushrooms and spices) and shape the gyoza (Japanese dumplings). Then we had a go ourselves, working in pairs.

Yuki makes it look very easy, folding the edges of her dumpling skin into perfect folds in under three seconds. But practice makes perfect, and we were given plenty of gyoza skins so we could get the technique right.

Yuki talked through Japanese ingredients and explained the difference between frying and



boiling gyoza. She also created a Japanese stock (dashi), which has a deep, strong flavour. She made a fragrant mushroom rice with

the stock, then she showed us how to cook the gyoza. Our session finished with lunch, including everything we had prepared earlier. Delicious!

Verdict Yuki demonstrates restaurant-quality dishes you can make at home. A great introduction to Japanese cooking.
Cost £60 for a morning class, including lunch.

Chelsie Collins



WE LOVE

This lovely bowl is ideal for our ramen recipe on page 84 - it's deep but still perfectly sized for one person. Kikyo flower ramen bowl, £16, souschef.co.uk



DRINK NOTES

Sarah Jane Evans chooses her top bottles this month

Truly Irresistible Barbera d'Asti 2012, Italy, 14.5%, £6.99, The Co-op

How could you possibly resist the brand name of this bottle? In fact, it's disarmingly good, part of the Co-op's improved range.

Bursting with dark plums and cherries, but balanced with a fine savoury zestiness. Just the thing for a wintry lasagne or pasta and ragu.



Soft Brew, 0%, £1.20, independent stockists nationwide

Thinking of guests who have to drive this Easter, or planning to give up alcohol for Lent?

Soft Brew - with its subtle Apple, Lemon, or Lime & elderflower versions - is one that got the thumbs-up at our tasting. It's a drink for people who like the hoppy taste of beer and lager.



El Pájaro Rojo 2013, Bierzo, Spain, 13.5%, £10.97, asda.com

Take a look at Asda's online Wine Shop. It has been helpfully designed so that you can buy a mixed case and pop one or more expensive wines in the box to try.

This one is a rich, substantial red. Make up a case for Easter with some good-value Extra Special Old Vines Garnacha and Extra Special Douro from Portugal (both £5).

