Top 10 cookbooks of 2014

By T. Susan Chang

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1 “The Baking Bible,” by Rose Levy Beranbaum ($40)

For many, Beranbaum will always be the reigning Oven Queen. This long-awaited volume brings together the best of her breads and sweets. Buy a kitchen scale to go with it; every ingredient list is a chart with three separate columns for volume, metric weight, US weight.

2 “Apples of Uncommon Character,” by Rowan Jacobsen($35)

A gorgeous portrait gallery of apples, described with care and humor by this Vermont-based writer. (“Like the Incredible Hulk, Mutsu is huge, green, and strangely lovable.”) An appendix of sweet and savory recipes completes the package.

3 “My Perfect Pantry,” by Geoffrey Zakarian ($30)
equipment to put dinner on the table in no time flat. Perfect for the snowbound months when there’s “nothing” the house.

4 “Simple Thai Food,” by Leela Punyaratabandhu ($24.99)

Amplify your storebought curry pastes with a few smartly chosen aromatics for surprisingly authentic results. Written by the popular shesimmers.com blogger, this is the best home Thai book currently available.

5 “Fresh From the Farm,” by Susie Middleton ($28)

The Martha’s Vineyard resident and farmstand owner combines her trademark, deeply flavored recipes with anecdotes of farm life. The book makes a fine companion for those long winter nights spent browsing through seed catalogs.

6 “The Soda Fountain,” by Gia Giasullo and Peter Freeman ($19.99)

Filled with retro-chic and an abundance of fizz, this tribute to the history and lore of bubbly drinks is festive at all times of year. Present it to your loved one along with a soda-making device.

7 “Vegetarian for a New Generation,” by Liana Krissoff ($24.95)

A sleeper hit for the meatless crowd, this book veers sharply away from the “pure,” noninterventionist ethos so popular with farmers’ market devotees. Bold flavors meet and marry here, as in kale chips with coconut, zucchini with cracked coriander and mint.
8 “Shroom,” by Becky Selengut ($35)

This Portland, Ore.-based chef takes us on a grand tour of the mushroom kingdom, with 15 carefully chosen species you can find (almost) anywhere. Now you won’t be tongue-tied next time you’re in the company of a gorgeous handful of chanterelles.

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9 “Persiana,” by Sabrina Ghayour ($35)

Londoner, blogger, and cooking teacher Ghayour revisits favorite Middle Eastern dishes with an Iranian-focus palate and freshly-tweaked flavors. Grab those pomegranates from the produce aisle and go.

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10 “The Best Pasta Sauces,” by Micol Negrin ($28)

Sometimes you just need to change things up a little. This tightly focused, inspiring little volume — nothing too familiar, but nothing downright weird — will reinvent your pasta repertoire and change your nightly meals.