



In this beautifully hued how-to... Sri Owen discusses key elements of Indonesian food in delicious detail.

The spices of life

These books explore different cuisines – from Indonesian to Catalan – but all are the result of a lifelong passion, says Joanna Savill.

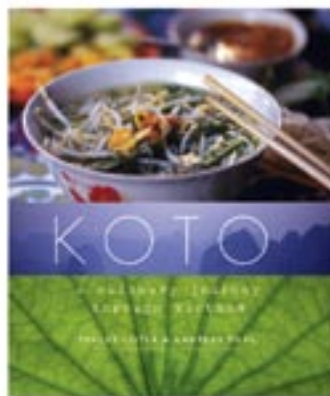


**SRI OWEN'S
INDONESIAN FOOD**

Sri Owen
(Pavilion Books, \$60, hbk)
Born in west Sumatra, raised in Java, long based in London, Sri Owen wrote her first Indonesian cookbook in 1976 – and there have been several titles since. The latest is a beautifully hued how-to, with stories, cultural notes and a dense glossary. The key elements of Indonesian food are discussed in delicious detail. Javanese and Sumatran classics are there, so too the specialties of Bali and beyond. **Why buy** For a rare reference on all things Indonesian. **Perfect for** perennial explorers of culture and cuisine.



MY FAVOURITE INGREDIENTS
Skye Gyngell
(Quadrille Publishing, \$49.95, hbk)
Her immensely useable books (northern hemisphere slant aside) and kitchen-garden approach seem to spark our collective culinary imagination. Maybe it's the squeaky-fresh produce and her ways to cook it, mostly Mediterranean-led but with an English-meadow lightness. A hazelnut picada with skirt steak pays a clever tribute to Catalonia, while baked honey pears ooze sticky spices. Sumptuously simple. **Why buy** For instant produce-fired inspiration. **Perfect for** kitchen gardeners and market cooks.



KOTO: A CULINARY JOURNEY THROUGH VIETNAM
Tracey Lister and Andreas Pohl
(Hardie Grant Books, \$45, pbk)
Vietnamese-Australian Jimmy Pham was travelling through his homeland when he saw the plight of Hanoi's street kids. Nearly a decade later, many of them have jobs in the restaurant industry, thanks to his charity KOTO – Know One Teach One – a landmark hospitality-training college and restaurant. This is the KOTO story with lovely recipes from the length and breadth of Vietnam. **Why buy** For Vietnamese food with history and heart. **Perfect for** visitors to Vietnam, past, present and future.



Catalan Cuisine: Europe's Last Great Culinary Secret

Colman Andrews
(Grub Street Publishing, \$39.99, pbk)
The result of much travel, research, eating and cooking is this food-and-fact-packed compendium, reprinted in the late-90s after an initial 1988 release. "Since then," Colman Andrews writes, "basic elements of the Catalan repertoire... have added interesting new accents to [our] culinary vocabulary." Salt cod and romesco, anyone? **Why buy** For a thorough grounding in a great food culture. **Perfect for** lovers of all things culinary and Catalan.

SHORTLIST

MY AMALFI COAST by Amanda Tabberer (Lantern, \$69.95, hbk) is an evocatively personal travel guide to one of Italy's most glorious regions, from an Australian who lived and loved it for 18 years. **FLAVOURS OF MELBOURNE** by Charmaine O'Brien (Wakefield Press, \$39.95, pbk) is packed with tales from Melbourne's food history, painstakingly researched and colourfully told. And do a conscience check on your food choices with **ETHICAL EATING** by sustainability campaigner Angela Crocombe (Penguin, \$24.95, pbk).

