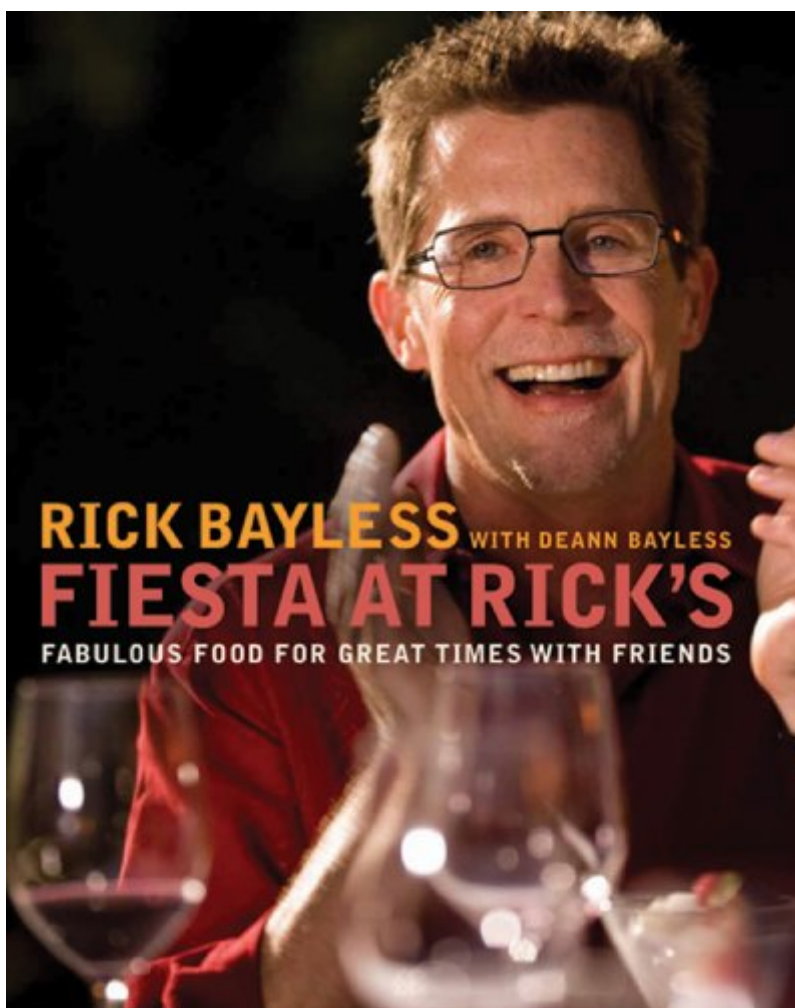


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Fiesta At Rick's: Fabulous Food For Great Times With Friends



Synopsis

Entertaining made easy, with Mexican-inspired recipes and handy tips from the celebrity chef and winner of Bravo's Top Chef Masters. Whether you're hosting a casual get-together with friends or throwing an outdoor shindig, no one can teach you the art of fiesta like Rick Bayless. With 150 recipes, Bayless offers you the key to unforgettable parties that will have guests clamoring for repeat invitations. There are recipes for small-dish snacking (Mushroom Ceviche, Devilish Shrimp), dynamic cocktails to get the party started (Champagne Margarita, Sizzling Mojito), and Bayless's signature takes on Mexican street food (Grilled Pork Tacos al Pastor, Roasted Vegetable Enchiladas). Live-fire grilled fish and meat dishes like the "Brava" Steak with "Lazy" Salsa will draw friends and family to the glow of open flames. And if you're going to throw a truly epic celebration, you'll need a killer finale like Frontera Grill's Chocolate Pecan Pie Bars or Dark Chocolate "Chile Ice Cream. Fiesta at Rick's offers 150 diverse preparations organized into easy-to-follow chapters. But it's far more than a collection of recipes. With four complete, can't-miss menus for parties ranging from a Luxury Guacamole Bar Cocktail Party for 12 to a Classic Mexican Mole Fiesta for 24, Bayless has all your friends covered. Each of these parties has a complete game plan, from a thought-out time line with advance shopping and preparation to a fiesta playlist. Whether a first-time entertainer or a seasoned veteran, anyone can learn from the helpful sidebars, which cover topics such as how to shuck oysters, the perfect avocado for guacamole, and the best way to pick out fresh fish for ceviche preparations. Bayless breaks down the timeless building blocks that make up authentic Mexican food, explaining the value of fresh tortillas and providing surprisingly simple instructions for making your own Mexican Fresh Cheese. Bayless's entertaining blueprint eliminates the guesswork, so you can let your inspiration run free. Companion to seasons six and seven of Rick's Public Television series Mexico "One Plate at a Time, Fiesta at Rick's is required reading for everyone who loves opening their home to friends and good times.

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Customer Reviews

What an enticing cookbook! It makes even an introvert like me contemplate having a big party! (OK, to be fair, I have organized a few such.) SO many delicious variants of guacamole, for instance- and these are reasonably sized for the most part for fewer than a huge party. Many of the other dishes are, too- a party made of a lot of small plates can work for a smaller party by choosing among the options. And- a recipe for cheese! Not to mention chocoflan, which- as a mix of chocolate cake and flan- may be my Platonic ideal of a dessert. I was amused to see rosettes- albeit with a Mexican twist; I am ethnically Scandinavian, and these were a Yuletide staple for us. I have 2 other Bayless cookbooks, both of which I love. I am glad to add this one to the mix.

always delicious recipes

This is NOT a review of the content. I saw lots of interesting things to try. I just ordered the Kindle version of this book. I was very disappointed to find that the ingredient lists for the recipes are not formatted correctly on either my iPad or on the Kindle Reader on my desktop machine. The numerical amount of each ingredient is on a separate or 2 separate lines, and then the ingredient (i.e. cup of flour, sugar) is listed on the following line or it's all run together. That depends on the Kindle Reader I'm using. Also the index lacks links to the recipes. I am a fan of Rick Bayless so it is not a deal breaker, but it's a major disappointment... I usually check the sample- I didn't this time, though. Lesson learned...

I view this book as a complement to Bayless's other books: once you are comfortable with Mexican cuisine, this book is a big help when you want to show off your skills for a crowd. He and his wife Deann (co-author of the book) deal with the logistics of centering a party with various Mexican themes, from a "Luxury Guacamole Bar Cocktail Party for 12" to a "Classic Mexican Mole Fiesta for 24." Included are drink recipes, salsas, guacamoles (the roasted garlic and orange guacamole in particular is excellent), as well as many main dishes and desserts. Included are a surprising number of vegetarian options, important so that those guests don't feel left out of the party. The recipes also scale down well, if you aren't feeding 100 guests. Winners are the enfrijoladas, the guacamoles (not your typical guacs, these!), the Cochito Chiapaneco (grilled pork roast), the Tacos de Arrachera al Carb n, and his twist on Enchiladas Suizas. I didn't care for the Queso Fundido al Tequila, but so far most of the recipes have ranged from pretty good to great. If you are looking for an introduction to Mexican cooking from a beginner's standpoint, I'd suggest either "Mexico One Plate At A Time" (by Bayless), or "The Art of Mexican Cooking" by Diana Kennedy. Either of those will provide you with the solid fundamentals that you need before you can get the most out of Fiesta at Rick's.

Pros:*

- Detailed party-planning timelines*
- Mostly good to excellent recipes*
- Easy to follow and understand instructions

Cons:*

- A few "clunkers" in the recipes*
- Not a good Mexican cooking intro: the recipes make more sense if you are already familiar with Mexican cooking

I own every other Rick Bayless cookbook. The first one I bought in the 80s flops open to several recipes, and the pages are honored by many food stains. Even if you don't watch his PBS TV shows, Bayless is an absolutely reliable cookbook author, with understandable instructions, educational explanations, and yummy recipes. Best of all, he is accurate: If he says something will cook in 12 minutes or so, then you can be pretty sure it'll really be done by then. Fiesta at Rick's is, however, a *party* book, and I wasn't sure if I really needed to add it to my collection. I usually cook for two, occasionally four or six. Some of the recipes in Fiesta are for _25_, such as a posole party. Even though I had a big party coming up (10 people at a holiday pool party, with a menu which we had declared would be Make Your Own Tacos) I wasn't sure I *had* to have this. In such circumstances I turned to my Book Triage, usually relegated to authors of less certain adoration: I went to the library. (My rule is that if I cook three things from a library book and still want to cook more, I may permit myself to buy the book. This has saved me from several unfortunate purchases.) The bottom line: I'm almost certain to buy a copy of Fiesta. Granted, I've only made a couple of the recipes here. As it turns out, most of the tacos I made came from Mexico One Plate At A Time, doubled up, (and the zucchini tacos, from that cookbook, were the biggest hit). I used

Fiesta for the recipe for the roasted tomatillo salsa and for the grilled garlic and orange guacamole, which earned a few Wows. (Bayless says the latter serves 8-10 as a nibble; I set it alongside the other salsas, and there were no leftovers.) Still: Bayless makes me want to make more of these recipes. And I really **should** entertain more... Besides, not EVERYthing here is meant to serve 25. Plenty of the recipes are meant for a gathering of, say, 6-10 people, usually in combination with other dishes, such as Mexican Paella for Six or "Almost Oaxacan" Grilled Tostadas with Chorizo, Tangy Guacamole, and Fresh Cheese (serves 6-8, and doesn't sound bad as leftovers either). I suppose I can scale back some recipes, too, such as the many wonderful guac variations (toasted almond guac with apricots, bacon-and-tomato guac). For the most part, you can do your shopping at a well-equipped regular grocery store, though I am glad to have a Mexican grocery three miles away (especially for really fresh tortillas and pasillas at 99 cents a pound). I also appreciate the relatively high proportion of vegetarian dishes included in Fiesta, such as Plantain-stuffed Chipotle Chiles in Escabeche or the taco filling Fresh Cheese in Roasted Tomatillo Salsa (which was a finalist for my menu). "Relatively," mind you, because Mexican cooking is fairly meat heavy. However if your guest list includes a spice wimp, Fiesta won't help much. It's not that everything is hot-spicy, but I don't think there's anything to appeal to the White Bread member of your family. If you're new to Rick Bayless' cookbooks, I'd recommend that you start with another one only because you'll get to make more of the recipes. (Unless you are big on entertaining, in which case I think you should invite me to the Summertime Seafood Cocktail Party for 12.) However, if you have the smallest intention to put on a party -- such as a Thanksgiving mole party for 24 -- you won't go wrong with Fiesta.

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