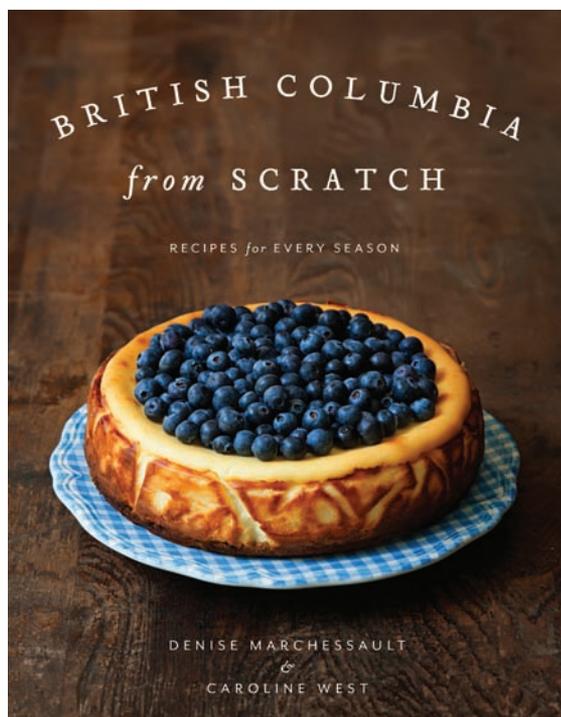


# British Columbia from Scratch

*Seven Reasons Why You Want this Cookbook* by Rebecca Bagniet



*British Columbia from Scratch,*  
by Denise Marchessault and Caroline West  
Whitecap, ISBN 978-1-77050-234-5

## 1. The Gougères

“I’m here for the gougères,” I heard one woman announce unapologetically as she arrived at the book signing at Cook Culture in Victoria. If you ever attended a class at Denise Marchessault’s cooking school, French Mint, you know what she’s talking about. Each class started with warm cheese puffs being pulled from the oven and offered around the kitchen. If you’ve also been missing these, or if you want to discover the perfect recipe for this classic hors d’oeuvre, it is there on page 184.

## 2. Every. Single. Other. Recipe.

“Oh my goodness, where to begin?” That is the question you will be asking yourself when you flip through *British Columbia from Scratch* for the first time. Divided into seasonal sections, this cookbook inspires you to make the most of the incredible ingredients available to us here in BC with unintimidating recipes that promise impressive results.

## 3. The writing

This book is not just a pleasure to cook from and to look at, it is also a joy to read. Denise is, without a doubt, a natural writer. There is humour (see the description for the frosted cranberry jellies on page 214), there is gentle coaching backed by years of experience, and most refreshingly, the prose is delightful. “I learned to get up close and personal with seafood at culinary school. I was taught to bring fish to my nose to inhale its mild – not fishy – sea-breeze aroma, and to test its body with my fingertips for a firm, springy resistance and tightly knit scales. I learned to lift the flaps on both sides of the head to examine the colour of the gills (they should be pinkish-red, rather than grey) and to look the fish in the eye to establish its worth (clear is fresh, cloudy is not).” Is that not the most beautiful description of fish selection you have ever laid eyes on? Don’t you want to read a food memoir written by Denise now? I do.

## 4. The photography

I’m supposed to be writing but my eyes keep drifting away from the computer screen to an open page of *British Columbia from Scratch*. The cookbook is open to a photograph of apricot pavlovas and I’m thinking I’d rather be baking (or eating). The photo – all light and crispy meringue and soft whipped cream and sunset-orange luscious apricots is making me salivate. Indeed, mouth-watering food photographs take centre stage on most pages but occasionally retreat to let landscapes

step into the foreground, offering a strong sense of place and reminding us of the great beauty that surrounds us, and the ingredients we use every day. Tragically, this talented photographer’s life was cut short by cancer just days after this book’s release. *British Columbia from Scratch* is a testament to Caroline West’s incredible creative spirit and skill as a photographer.

## 5. It will make you fall in love with BC (again)

In conversation with Denise a few days ago, she told me that the best compliment she’d had about the book so far was from someone who’d written that “it made them proud to be from BC”. That was the essence, she said, that she and Caroline were trying to capture, and they certainly succeeded. The endpapers of the book are made from a vintage map of BC with typewriter-typed tags pinned on important locations depicted in the book; cherries at Summerland, oysters at Mudge Island, halibut at Port Renfrew... The book is a true celebration of our province’s bounty and it makes you happy and grateful, to call BC home.

## 6. The fundamentals chapter

Denise starts this chapter off saying “If you want to become a better cook, start from scratch. Master the fundamentals and your cooking skills will soar.” This is a generous chapter filled with accessible recipes, helpful tips and photographs that are not just beautiful but also useful in that they illustrate something that Denise is describing in the text. I particularly love the two page spread illustrating the difference between soft, medium, firm and hard boiled eggs, each half egg sitting in a lovely retro egg cup with the correct cooking time written above. If you’ve been wanting a reliable go-to source for clear instruction on classic techniques, this is the book.

## 7. The friendship

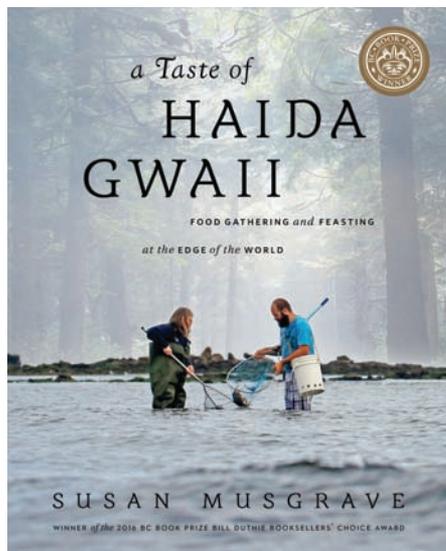
In a heartfelt tribute to Caroline shortly after her death, Denise wrote how grateful she was to have a “tangible

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testament of their friendship and joyful collaboration.” This friendship and joyful collaboration is strongly felt throughout the book, for instance, under the dream-like image of pear soufflés, captured just as they were beginning to sink: “Despite the speed with which the soufflés were dispatched from the oven to the camera, they started their inevitable collapse before Caroline could photograph them at their loftiest height. We cursed their descent, then Caroline sighed and said, “Well, they’re real, Denise.” Real is what we went with.” Denise tells me that this was a gift Caroline gave her – helping her let go of that ever-present quest for perfection and embrace the “real”. Other friendships are hinted at throughout the book – loyal recipe testers, cooking school helpers and guest chefs. You can tell that this book was made by people who love food and love sharing food with others. The result is a cookbook that will inspire you to feed your own friendships.

## A Taste of Haida Gwaii

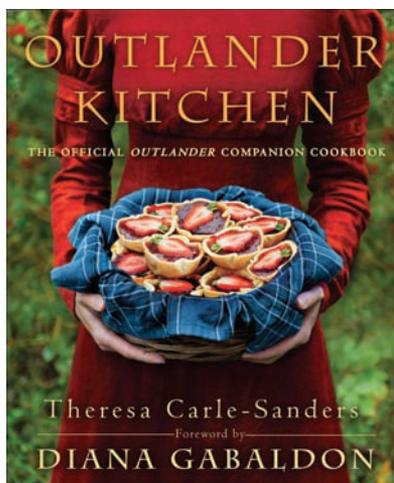


*A Taste of Haida Gwaii*  
by Susan Musgrave  
Whitecap, ISBN 9781770502161

Remote Haida Gwaii, with its rich history, abundant wildlife, and seas brimming with ingredients, holds a fascination for British Columbians. We dream of a pristine environment, food that is clean and pure and a close camaraderie that comes from adhering to a self-sufficient life. Author Susan Musgrave, an eccentric writer, poet, and sometimes food writer, takes that journey for us. Interspersed with recipes such as seaweed lasagna, smoked salmon with spruce tips, and cloudberry moonlight cream, Musgrave tells short stories about her life on the

archipelago, her childhood, local lore, and the many unique foodstuffs found in the area. *A Taste of Haida Gwaii: Food Gathering and Feasting at the Edge of the World* is the next best thing to moving to Masset. You will be inspired and satisfied. So sit back and enjoy the ride.

## The Outlander Kitchen Cookbook



*Outlander Kitchen*  
By Theresa Carle-Sanders  
Photography by Rebecca Wellman  
Random House Publishing,  
ISBN 9781101967577

Victoria’s own Rebecca Wellman, a freelance professional photographer (full disclosure Wellman shoots for EAT), teamed up with Pender Island writer Teresa Carle-Sanders to produce the beautiful *Outlander Kitchen: The Official Outlander Companion Cookbook* to the runaway popular TV series. Wellman has written an account of her experience that you can find online at: [eatmagazine.ca/an-insiders-view-of-the-outlander-kitchen-cookbook/](http://eatmagazine.ca/an-insiders-view-of-the-outlander-kitchen-cookbook/)

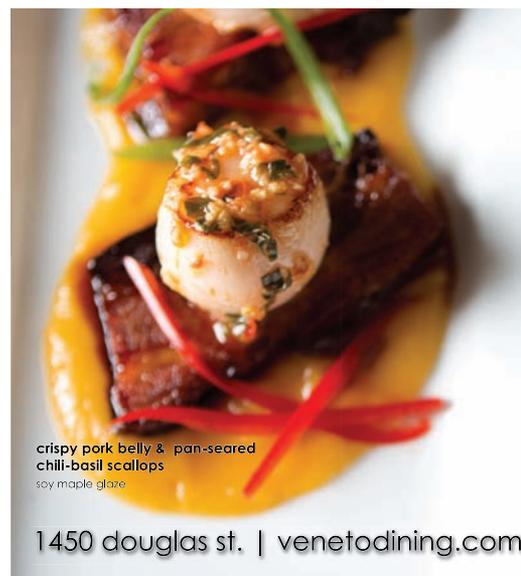


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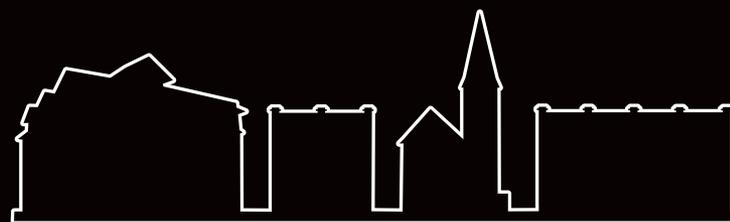
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