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# **Homemade: Finnish Rye, Feed Sack Fashion, And Other Simple Ingredients From My Life In Food**



## Synopsis

Beatrice Ojakangas, the oldest of ten children, came by it naturally—she's the cooking but also the pluck and perseverance that she's served up with her renowned Scandinavian dishes over the years. In the wake of the Moose Lake fires and famine of 1918, Ojakangas tells us in this delightful memoir-cum-cookbook, her grandfather sent for a Finnish mail-order bride—and got one who'd trained as a chef. Ojakangas's stories, are, unsurprisingly, steeped in food lore: tales of cardamom and rye, baking salt cake at the age of five on a wood-burning stove, growing up on venison, making egg rolls for Chun King, and sending off a Pillsbury Bake Off-winning recipe without ever making it. And from here, how those early roots flourished through hard work and dedication to a successful (but never easy) career in food writing and a much wider world, from working for pizza roll king Jenò Paulucci to researching food traditions in Finland and appearing with Julia Child and Martha Stewart—all without ever leaving behind the lessons learned on the farm. As she says, "first you have to start with good ingredients and a good idea." Chock-full of recipes, anecdotes, and a kind humor that bring to vivid life the Finnish culture of northern Minnesota as well as the wider culinary world, *Homemade* delivers the savory and the sweet in equal measures and casts a warm light on a rich slice of the country's cooking heritage.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Beatrice Ojakangas has long been my personal cookbook hero. Her life story, told with candor and

dry wit, describes what could be nine lives in the world of food and cooking— all of them riveting. From her mother's cardamom-scented rural kitchen, to the editorial offices of the famed *Sunset* magazine, to her rightful place cooking alongside Julia Child, to her Minnesota kitchen where she authored twenty-nine (now thirty!) cookbooks, this book proves that Beatrice Ojakangas is not only one of this country's most important food writers, but a national treasure. As I read, I laughed, got very hungry, picked my rhubarb, wept with fondness, and then I did what she'd want me to do: I pulled myself together, tied on an apron, and preheated my oven."

—Amy Thielen, author of *The New Midwestern Table*

"Beatrice Ojakangas makes her compelling family stories rich for all senses: we smell the cardamom in the bread cooling on the counter, savor the cream of morel soup, and long for chiffon cake. Best of all, we experience the joy of recreating these flavors ourselves with the recipes she provides. This book is a public service to history as well as to our stomachs."

—Lucie Amundsen, co-owner of Locally Laid Egg Company and author of *Locally Laid: How We Built a Plucky, Industry-changing Egg Farm from Scratch*

"If it seems surprising that a farm kid looking for something new could end up taking pictures with Ronald Reagan and baking with Julia Child, pick up a copy of the book."

—Mpls. St. Paul Magazine

"Even if you've never visited Minnesota or taken a sauna, the warm, conversational tone makes for an engaging read."

—Tangled Up in Food

"Foodies everywhere, especially those who have an interest in the actual cooks behind the recipes will thoroughly enjoy this well-written book. Ojakangas is a wonderful, down-to-earth person; regular people can relate to her, and this cookbook will provide not only good recipes, but a good reading experience."

—BellaOnline

"I highly recommend *Homemade* for any kitchen. The recipes are easy to follow and Beatrice's story is a wonderful accompaniment."

—Heavree Reviews

"Ojakangas, who lives in Duluth, has published 'Homemade,' a look back at growing up in a Finnish-American community in northern Minnesota, and her travels through the world of cookbooks (she has written 29), gourmet cooking and bake-off prizes—all salted with plenty of recipes, especially for Finnish favorites."

—Rochester Post-Bulletin

"From growing up as the oldest of 10 children in Minnesota to establishing a career as one of the leading authorities on Nordic food in the U.S., Ojakangas writes a book that is full of stories that anyone with an interest in Scandinavian cooking or the Scandinavian-American experience will enjoy."

—The Norwegian American

"This memoir from James Beard Cookbook Hall of Fame author Beatrice Ojakangas is chock-full of recipes, anecdotes, and a kind humor that bring to vivid life the Finnish culture of Northern Minnesota as well as the wider culinary world."

—The Heavy Table

Beatrice Ojakangas grew up on a small farm in Minnesota and graduated from the University of Minnesota at Duluth. Childhood 4-H, college Home Ec, and work as a hospital dietary assistant, food editor, teacher, homemaker, and mother influenced her cooking career and her food writing for such publications as Gourmet, Bon Appetit, Woman's Day, Family Circle, Better Homes and Gardens, Midwest Living, Cooking Light, and numerous newspapers. Ojakangas is the author of twenty-nine cookbooks and was inducted in 2005 to the James Beard Cookbook Hall of Fame. She received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Minnesota in 2007.

Great all

reminded me of how I grew up.

I have loved Beatrice Ojakangas ever since I made her recipe for Chunk-O-Cheese Bread which was published in the 1957 Pillsbury Bake-off Booklet when she was a young finalist; oh how I marveled that a darling girl so young could win a national contest. My mother and grandmother both had kept the Bake-off booklets, and they fascinated me as a child while I was learning to cook. I consider Ojakangas the "Julia Child" of Scandinavian Cooking. Homemade is definitely up to her excellent standards: mouthwatering recipes, well-written stories and vignettes, easy to follow instructions, and a comprehensive index. You simply can't go wrong with a Beatrice Ojakangas cookbook. Homemade is somewhat different than other cookbooks, however. It is more of a memoir than a regular cookbook. The pictures aren't of the mouthwatering recipes featured as in her previous cook books; rather they are of family, friends, winning cooking contests, and television appearances. Although it would be nice to see pictures of the finished dishes, anyone who is familiar with Ojakangas will welcome this fascinating glimpse into her world. Many of the recipes are from her previous cookbooks (I own them all), so they are pictured there. I first made the Pulla Finnish Cardamom Coffee Bread, and it was fabulous. I have now adapted it to make the dough in my automatic bread machine. Her recipe for Nauvoo Wheat-Nut Coffee Cake is worthy of a fancy brunch with company, and her Finnish Rye Bread is the best I've ever had. While not all the recipes are for breads, the cakes, appetizers, and main dishes are also excellent. Foodies everywhere, especially those who have an interest in the actual cooks behind the

recipes will thoroughly enjoy this well-written book. Ojakangas is a wonderful, down-to-earth person; regular people can relate to her, and this cookbook will provide not only good recipes, but a good reading experience. Special thanks to NetGalley for supplying a review copy of this novel.

What a thoroughly enjoyable book. Beatrice Ojakangas is a Minnesota author of Finnish descent. She is also the author of 29 cookbooks. This, her latest project, is an autobiographical memoir. She covers, in great detail, her upbringing in Northern Minnesota, the beginnings of her career as a chef/cookbook author, the raising of her family, and her current roles as a wife/mother/celebrity. Ojakangas has a remarkable gift in her ability to tell a story, she makes you feel like you were next to her in the kitchen. Her memory of the details of her childhood is amazing. And her humor is contagious! As I noted in an update of my reading status, I was reading this on a cross-country airline trip, and the people seated next to me were concerned because I kept bursting out laughing and snorting. Great book, highly recommend it!

Just finished *Homemade: Finnish Rye, Feed Sack, Fashion, and Other Simple Ingredients From My Life In Food* by Beatrice Ojakangas and loved every minute of reading her book. Ojakangas is one of my favorite cookbook authors as her recipes always turn out fantastic. Thanks to reading her autobiography, I learned about Ojakangas grew up as a farm girl in northern Minnesota. I also learned about her maternal grandparents emigrated from Finland to live in the US. After their arrival, the family survived a fire and the flu epidemic of 1918. I also learned about how Ojakangas started working on the family farm at a young age and loved every minute of living in the country even if she smelled like a barn. Ojakangas mentions how other kids smelled like a barn too, and the odor was hardly noticed when they all arrived for school. Throughout her autobiography you will find recipes interspersed between the history of her life. I loved how the author wove in the family history with each recipe she included in her book. Highly recommend. Review written after downloading a galley from NetGalley.

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