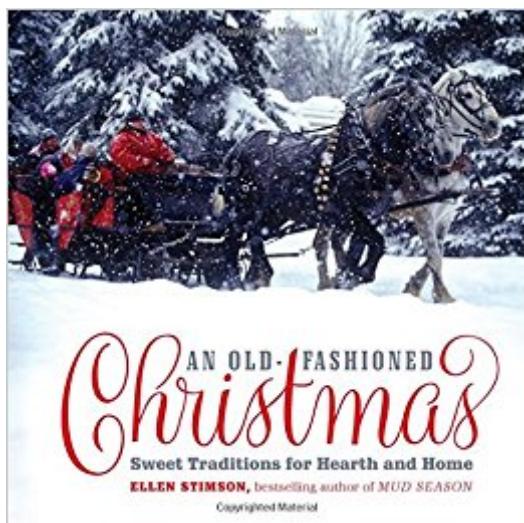


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# An Old-Fashioned Christmas: Sweet Traditions For Hearth And Home



## **Synopsis**

Celebrate the beauty and charm of the holidays with recipes for traditional food and drink, decorating ideas, and heartwarming stories. With its trademark snow, piney forests, sleigh rides and woodsmoke curling out of village chimneys, New England was practically invented for the Christmas postcard. It's got your Christmas goose and the maple syrup you are gonna use to glaze it. It's most of the reason author Ellen Stimson made Vermont her home. Here she shares recipes that have been in her family for generations, mixes up a cocktail or two, and invites readers to make their own traditions. 75 color photographs

## **Book Information**

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Countryman Press; 1 edition (November 2, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1581573286

ISBN-13: 978-1581573282

Product Dimensions: 8.3 x 0.9 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 32 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #653,043 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #168 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Entertaining & Holidays > Christmas #396 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Entertaining & Holidays > Holidays #1106 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > Decorating & Design > Decorating

## **Customer Reviews**

"I've been a little uneasy about Christmas for a long time and now I shall stop. 'A festival of debauchery'. I like that idea. A big party. Cut out the stuff you don't enjoy. And a whole raft of stimulating recipes and a good snowstorm. Wonderful."---- Garrison Keillor host of A Prairie Home Companion

Ellen Stimson is a bread-and-butter homecook...possibly more butter than bread. Her house and table are usually full to overflowing with friends, family, and a whole bunch of folks who have come to Vermont just to eat at her table and listen to her stories. During one particularly misguided period, she churned out her justifiably famous mac and cheese from the kitchen of what was possibly the oldest country store in America. That tale was told in the hilarious bestselling Mud

Season. She cooks and writes about the whole divine and delicious catastrophe from a farmhouse in Vermont.Â

This book wasn't what I expected. It was far better. I ordered it, having read and loved Ellen's "Mud Season," and was expecting a "Christmas decorating a la Currier and Ives-meets Martha Stewart" kind of book. But what I got was a group of heartwarming, funny family stories accompanied by recipes that had me wanting to grab the nearest rolling pin or plan a party and make beef tenderloin with gorgonzola sauce. The recipes are unfussy but delicious, and some of them are so retro you might wonder when the jello mold will appear. Well, it doesn't, but a dynamite Brady bunch cheese ball that I'm sure I'll make, does. The writing is clever but not contrived. You feel like you're almost having a conversation with her, it's so natural. Ellen has a gift for a good turn of phrase, and keeps you engaged. I got the book this afternoon and read it straight through. Once you read it, you'll wish you had started making your own "Christmas Adventure" years ago ( read the book to learn what that is). She makes you wish you lived in Vermont at Christmas, where you'd be invited to her parties, or go sledding together. She makes you want to call up that elderly aunt or grandmom and hold a cooking session to learn her secret recipe. She makes you think about spreading the Christmas cheer to not just the humans you love, but to your furry friends as well (doggie treat recipes included, although some sound delicious for humans too). I also love the way the book was organized, with explanations and lovely photos about the multitude of Christmas ornaments collected through the years, and the stories behind them. It's a real "feel good" book. Maybe I can't go sledding with Ellen down that snow covered trail, but I sure can come inside on a cold day and prepare her recipe for hot chocolate or maple bacon popcorn. I bought the book for myself, but I have a few friends and family members who will also find this book under the tree on Christmas.

I never buy Christmas books by favorite authors because I've found most of them to be sentimental and not quite authentic. I made an exception because this is Ellen, and Ellen doesn't disappoint. I had never heard of her until a year or so ago, and now she is on my gotta have everything she writes list. She is a great story teller and I bought the book more for the stories than the recipes, but then I started looking at the recipes. At least 2 entrees call for a bottle of red wine and dark cocoa powder. The recipes all look delicious and I can't imagine any of them could turn out wrong. These are tried and true family dishes. Most are fairly simple with a relatively short list of ingredients - sometimes only 3 or 4 - my kind of cooking. Did I mention there's red wine and dark cocoa? Never mind - what sets this book apart from others are the stories about family, engaging the reader as

though we are friends sitting across the table from one other - or maybe cooking together.

I bought this book based on the wonderful reviews and now feel compelled to leave my own: I fully agree it IS absolutely wonderful! When the author admits she moved to Vermont in part because it is the "Christmasiest" state I was all-in! The book contains charming Christmas stories and memories along with recipes (can't wait to try them!). I've bought quite a few Christmas themed books hoping for this type of "can't wait to turn the page" experience and I've finally found it! If you love Christmas and/or great recipes please treat yourself to this gem of a book!

This book will fill all of your senses with the essence of the holidays! Not only are you invited into the home of the perfect hostess that is Ellen Stimson, but you are trusted to share in recipes that have been in the family for generations. I am working my way through the family stories, walking through the memories that make each and every Christmas season that much more magical....baking, and tasting, and loving each and every minute of it!

This is a charming read but as a cookbook I think it is lacking. The recipes are imprecise and include a lot of "a bit of this" and "some of that" and there are almost no pictures of the food...most of the pictures are of Christmas ornaments and Vermont winters. I did make the chocolate chip cookies and they are good but a bit greasy as they are loaded with butter. So I found this just ok, which was less than I expected based on all the great reviews.

really enjoy reading so far.....recipes that I think even I can attempt.....plus personal stories that led me to read Stimson's other book(s).....which are incredibly funny. This is a great book to pull out at Christmastime and reread. Recommend it!!

I bought this book to give for Christmas gifts, but since I don't generally cook anything I need recipes for, I didn't get one for myself. But having read her two previous books, I decided to look through it. Well, it didn't take long before I knew that I had to have one of my own! This is MUCH more than a typical holiday cookbook. Ellen's stories and family traditions are funny, touching and envu-inducing.

This is such an engaging book! Warm and well-written, it invites you into the Christmas spirit and motivates you to make the yummy looking and sounding dishes and meals. More an experience

than a mere cookbook. You'll love it!

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