

# EMMA DE THOUARS



Embrace the Pleasure of Cooking for Yourself

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# FORE



# WORD

Almost every time I ask people if they like to cook, I get vague, apologetic answers that always boil down to the same thing: “Yes, I like cooking” followed by a long summary of why they almost never to do it. I often hear “only when I have time” or “only if I’m cooking for friends.” People in relationships do cook when their partners are home, but if they have an evening to themselves they end up getting takeout or just grabbing a bag of chips. People who live alone often cook too much food and then are compelled to eat the same thing for days on end. I want to change that with this book.

You deserve the best of the best, even when you’re eating alone. Don’t worry — I won’t tell you to spend hours in the kitchen because you’re worth it, or that cooking for yourself is the ultimate form of self-care. While both of these things are true, let’s be realistic: most evenings, after a busy day, you have to decide what you’re going to eat, get groceries, cook a meal and then do the dishes on top of it. That’s exhausting. You want to be able to fall back on a few easy recipes that don’t require much thought and have an intelligently stocked fridge where you can find the perfect leftovers.

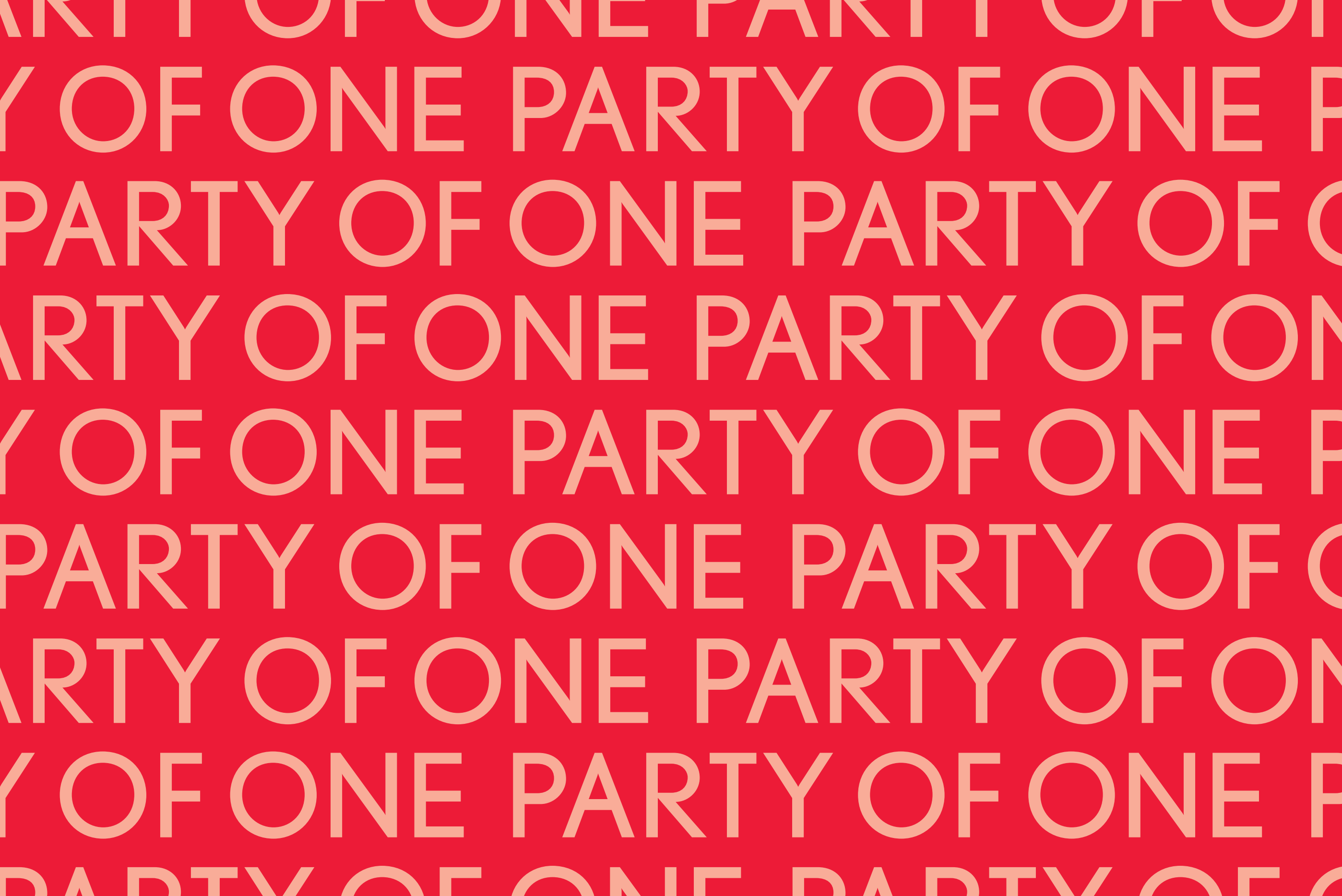
Let me help you. After all, I am an experienced expert in eating alone — I have not had a relationship or housemates in years — and most evenings I cook for

myself and no one else because I love it. I’m happiest when I’m puttering around at home and spending the evening on the couch with a book, especially if I’ve had something tasty to eat beforehand. I’ve learned how to cook in small quantities over the years and how to prep meal components throughout the week, so I can quickly assemble dinner out of a few premade things. In short, I am highly skilled in the culinary management of a one-person household.

In this book, I’ve compiled my favorite tips and recipes for you, so that you can become just as much of an expert as me — or at least not resort to a microwavable dinner every night. Cooking for one isn’t complicated; you just need to think a little differently.

Even though the number of single-person households is growing fast, the world hasn’t caught on just yet. Grocery store packaging is too much for one person and most cookbooks contain recipes that serve four people. Sure, you can divide those recipes by four, but then you’ll still have three-quarters of a cabbage left, for example. Cooking for yourself requires a little more planning and self-awareness, but once you get the hang of it, it’s really, really fun. You can do it! I promise.

Love, Emma







## Egg with Instagrammable Nutty Butter

Two boiled eggs on toast is the perfect breakfast, but sometimes you want to impress someone. Maybe it's yourself or maybe you want to take an amazing photo for your friends or online followers. If that's the case, spoon some of this nutty, buttery, golden sauce over your eggs. There's very little extra work involved, but it will make your breakfast moment look and taste better.

2 eggs

Small handful of peeled hazelnuts

Butter

1 tbsp sesame seeds

1/2 tsp ground turmeric

Pinch of Aleppo pepper

Salt

Toast

Fresh dill leaves

Boil the water in a medium saucepan. Add the eggs and cook for 5 minutes. (I prefer a runny yolk, so cook the eggs for a bit longer if you'd like them to be more firm.)

Meanwhile, coarsely chop the hazelnuts. Melt a large spoonful of butter in a small skillet over low heat. Watch closely so that you don't burn the butter. Add the hazelnuts, sesame seeds, turmeric, Aleppo pepper and a pinch of salt. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, until the hazelnuts and sesame seeds are golden. Turn off the heat.

Drain the eggs and shock them under cold running water. Then peel and halve the eggs. Place the egg halves on toast and drizzle the hazelnut butter overtop. Sprinkle with dill.

**VARIATION** : I often eat this on toast, but it's also great overtop Greek yogurt with some grated garlic stirred in. Eat it with whole wheat pita for dipping.

**STORAGE** : Sometimes I think it's a waste to cook just one or two eggs. If you know you'll be eating at home a few more times that week, boil a few more and make the marinated eggs on page 98.



# Vegetable Fritters

This recipe lets you make something tasty out of all your leftover vegetables. I was inspired by perkedel jagung from Indonesia and pakora from India. I add spices to the batter as is done with pakora, but the texture of the final dish more closely resembles perkedel jagung. If you don't have any of the spices you can leave them out and the fritters will still be amazingly good.

1 egg
1 tbsp all-purpose flour
1 tbsp cornstarch
1/2 tsp ground cumin
1/2 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp ground coriander
1/3 cup (15 g) fresh cilantro sprigs
1 green onion
1 shallot
5 oz (150 g) vegetables (here: corn, carrot, cabbage)
Salt
Sunflower oil for frying

In a bowl, combine the egg, flour, cornstarch, ground cumin, chili powder and ground coriander.

Finely chop the cilantro, including the tender stems. Cut the green onion into 2-inch (5 cm) pieces and cut those pieces into thin strips. Finely chop the shallot. Do what you like with the vegetables. Corn can be drained and added to the batter; carrot and cabbage should be cut into thin strips. I like strips better than finely chopped because you get pointy bits that become extra crispy when fried. Most vegetables can be cut into strips, but something like a leftover boiled potatoes should be diced into small pieces. Stir the cilantro, green onion, shallot and vegetables into the batter; season with salt.

Heat a generous layer of sunflower oil in a wok or skillet over medium heat. Working in batches, as necessary, scoop balls of batter into the oil. Flatten the fritters with the back of a spoon and fry for a few minutes, until crunchy and golden brown. Flip and cook until golden on the other side and hot in the center. Drain on paper towels and serve.

**VARIATION** : Perkedel jagung is eaten without a dip, but various dips might be good with it, of course. Any leftover Love Potion (p. 61) or the yogurt dip for the dilly pancakes on page 69 would work nicely here. If you want to make a quick green chutney, combine some pureed mint, green chile and lime juice.





# Tofu Salad with Quick Chili Oil

This dish is great when the weather is hot and you don’t feel like sweating over the stove for a long time. It works well with any vegetables you have on hand. (Broccolini is a particularly nice addition). If you don’t have time to make your own chili oil, use prepared chili crisp. However, keep in mind that making chili oil from scratch will only take as long as your rice takes to cook and having homemade chili oil around is never a bad thing. Try to use good-quality tofu, since you’re eating it raw.

**HOMEMADE CHILI OIL** : Combine 3 tablespoons (45 mL) hot pepper flakes, 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon granulated sugar in a small heatproof bowl. Heat ⅓ cup (75 mL) sunflower oil in a small saucepan. Once the oil is hot, pour it into the bowl so the ingredients start bubbling; stir to combine. Add soy sauce and let cool before using. Homemade chili oil will keep for months in the fridge.

**OPTIONAL** : This is a very basic chili oil. For added flavor you could also add star anise, cumin powder, a cinnamon stick or cloves during the first step. Or stir in garlic-shallot crisps (see page 144).

**LEFTOVERS** : This will make more chili oil than you need for this recipe, but you can add chili oil to everything. I like it on scrambled eggs for breakfast, on congee (see page 85), in noodles, or straight on top of fried tofu or any vegetables. Combine it with some soy sauce to make a dip for dumplings.

4 oz (125 g) firm tofu
¼ English cucumber
Salt
½ cup (100 g) jasmine rice
1 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp chili oil (see column) or chili crisp
1 tsp rice vinegar
½ tsp granulated sugar
1 tsp sesame oil
1 tsp grated fresh gingerroot
1 green onion
Small handful of cilantro leaves

Cut the tofu and cucumber into ¼-inch (0.5 cm) cubes. Add a pinch of salt, stir and let stand while you prepare the rest of the recipe. This will give them plenty of flavor.

Cook the rice according to the directions on page 81.

In a bowl, combine the soy sauce, chili oil, rice vinegar, sugar, sesame oil and ginger. Add the tofu and cucumber; stir to combine. Taste and add more salt, if needed.

Thinly slice the green onion and finely chop the cilantro. Spoon the rice into a bowl and top with the tofu salad followed by the green onion and cilantro. Don’t worry if you are out of either green onion or cilantro: the recipe will still be great with just one of them.

**LEFTOVER TOFU? MAKE VEGAN MAYO** : Combine 4 oz (125 g) tofu, 1 large tablespoon of Dijon mustard, 3 tbsp + 1 tsp (50 mL) olive oil, 3 tbsp + 1 tsp (50 mL) sunflower oil, the juice of half a lemon and plenty of salt and pepper in a tall cup and use an immersion blender to process until smooth. Taste and add more lemon juice or salt, as necessary.







# Harissa-Eggplant Caprese

I eat a caprese sandwich at least once a week and I make sure to include a mozzarella ball on my weekly grocery list. Even when I’m working at my favorite café, nine times out of ten I order a caprese sandwich. One of my best friends has teased me about this for as long as I can remember because she thinks it’s so basic, but I don’t care. Try to get good buffalo mozzarella if you can because it makes a caprese really shine.

**VARIATION** : This recipe can be made with any combination of herbs that you like. Basil does have the most caprese-like vibes, but dill, for example, will give it slightly more Middle Eastern flavors.

**HARISSA-EGGPLANT LEFTOVERS** : Use any leftover eggplant on flatbread with labneh (see page 37) and dill. It is also delicious on rice, with a spoonful of thick yogurt and more herbs. Or, try it on toasted bread or in a grilled sandwich with tomato and mozzarella or another mild cheese.

**LEFTOVER HARISSA DRESSING** : This is tasty on all roasted vegetables (cauliflower and green beans are two stars), as a salad dressing (with cucumber and little gem lettuce) or on crunchy roasted chickpeas or beans.

1 tbsp harissa paste or rose harissa paste
3 tbsp (45 mL) olive oil (approx.)
1 garlic clove
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1⁄2 large eggplant or 1 small one
1 tomato
Small handful of basil
Small handful of chives
Drizzle of vinegar or freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 small fresh mozzarella ball
Toast for serving

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

Combine the harissa paste and olive oil in a medium bowl. Grate the garlic clove over top and season with salt and pepper. Cut the eggplant into 3⁄4- by 1 1⁄4-inch (2 by 3 cm) pieces; add it to the harissa mixture and stir to combine. Spread the eggplant into a baking dish and roast for 30 to 40 minutes, turning occasionally, until completely soft and brown in some places. Remove the eggplant from the oven and let it cool to room temperature.

Meanwhile, cut the tomato into pieces. Season with salt to taste and let it stand for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, coarsely chop the basil. Cut the chives as finely as possible. Combine the tomato, basil, chives, eggplant and all the harissa oil from the baking dish on a plate or bowl. Add a tiny drizzle of vinegar and add more oil, if necessary. Add salt to taste, if needed. Tear the mozzarella into pieces and gently stir to combine. Serve with toast on the side.





# Pasta with Cherry Tomatoes, Anchovy and Garlic-Pistachio Crisps

Pasta with tomato sauce may be the ultimate quick meal. In the winter, I often make a super-easy sauce by combining canned tomatoes, garlic, anchovies and butter in a small baking dish. Slide it into the oven for 30 minutes, mash with a fork and you have the easiest tomato sauce ever. I usually make this sauce with fresh tomatoes during the sunnier months, still with anchovies, butter and garlic, but just a little different.

**VARIATION** : If you'd prefer a vegan meal, you can omit the anchovies. The garlic-pistachio crisps are tasty enough to carry the pasta. It's delicious with fresh basil as well if you have some.

**LEFTOVER ANCHOVIES** : I always buy jarred anchovies because they can keep in the fridge longer than an opened can. That being said, canned anchovies freeze surprisingly well. If you'd rather use a whole jar or can of anchovies at once, make anchovy butter. Finely chop the anchovies and stir them into the butter at room temperature. Bonus points for whipping the butter with a mixer. This butter is best kept in the fridge. Anchovies are also great on everything, so you'll finish it in no time. Put it on an egg with mayonnaise, tomato toast, buttered bread or add it to the pasta with Tuscan kale (see page 123).

2 garlic cloves
Handful of raw shelled pistachios
Olive oil for frying
Maldon salt
3½ oz (100 g) spaghetti
1 cup (150 g) cherry tomatoes
2 tbsp butter
3 anchovy fillets
Freshly ground black pepper

Finely chop the garlic. Coarsely chop the pistachios. Heat a few tablespoons of olive oil over low heat in a medium skillet. Add the garlic and cook for a few minutes, stirring constantly, until golden brown and crunchy. (Make sure to keep the heat low and continue stirring or else the garlic will burn!) Once the garlic is slightly browned (it will keep cooking outside the pan), drain over a fine-mesh sieve set over a heatproof bowl to collect the oil. Transfer the garlic crisps to a plate lined with paper towel.

Pour the garlic oil back into the skillet and heat over low heat. Add the chopped pistachios and cook for a few minutes, stirring constantly, until golden brown. Add a bit more oil, if necessary, although the nuts don't need very much fat. They are already fatty. Add the browned pistachios, reserving the skillet, to the garlic on the paper towel, combine with a spoon and add salt to taste.

Bring a pot of generously salted water to a boil and cook the spaghetti according to the package directions.

Meanwhile, halve the cherry tomatoes. Melt the butter in a medium skillet over low heat. Add the anchovies and cook, stirring, until the anchovies have disintegrated. Add the tomatoes and a little bit of black pepper; cook for a few minutes until softened. Drain the pasta, reserving a few tablespoons of cooking water. Add pasta and reserved water to the skillet; stir to combine. Spoon onto a plate and serve topped with the garlic-pistachio crisps.





# Quick Berry Crumble with Sesame Seeds

Crumble was my favorite dessert back when I was a student. My housemate and I used to shoot each other a certain look after dinner and we’d know it was crumble time. We always kept a bag of frozen fruit on hand for this purpose and then we’d whip up this dessert a few times a week, preferably with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. You can make this crumble in a ramekin or bake the crumbs separately, in which case you can sprinkle them on vanilla ice cream or fruit that has briefly been warmed in a pan. Sliced peaches are a very good choice here.

**VARIATION** : There are endless variations of this dessert. Apple crumble remains one of the most delicious things in the world, with a pinch of cinnamon or cardamom, for example. Try it using one of the fun berry blends from the frozen section of the supermarket. If you don’t have a freezer, keep any leftover frozen fruit in the fridge and serve it on yogurt the next morning or mix it into a smoothie.

<b>Topping</b>
2½ tbsp (20 g) all-purpose flour
1 tbsp granulated sugar
2 tsp raw sesame seeds (perhaps a mix of black and white)
2 tbsp (30 g) butter
Pinch of salt
<b>Fruit</b>
¾ cup (120 g) frozen or fresh blueberries or other fruit
1 tbsp granulated sugar
1 tsp cornstarch
Grated zest and juice of ½ lemon (preferably organic)
1 scoop of vanilla ice cream (optional)
<b>You will need</b>
Large ramekin or ovenproof bowl

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C).

Combine the flour, sugar, sesame seeds, butter and salt in a medium bowl with your fingers just until crumbs form. Don’t mix for too long or it will become sticky.

In another medium bowl, combine the blueberries, sugar, cornstarch and the lemon zest and juice. Spoon the blueberry mixture into a ramekin and spread the topping over it. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the blueberries are bubbling and the topping is golden brown. Let it cool slightly and serve, perhaps with a scoop of ice cream over top.



# Cooking for one just got a lot more fun

Calling all singles! Emma de Thouars has loved cooking for herself for years. In *Solo*, she shares recipes and provides smart tips on shopping for one. You'll never have to eat the same thing for a week again. Keeping a small kitchen with limited appliances in mind, Emma offers creative ways to prepare quick and tasty food at the end of a busy day. Expect sauces that are delicious on everything, lots of veg, snacks, treats, and advice on smart shopping, how to use leftovers, make variations and much more. Think Eggs with Instagrammable Nutty Butter, Tofu Salad with Quick Chili Oil, Harissa-Eggplant Caprese and Brothy Beans.

In this inspiring book, Emma shows that you can still be a culinary star even when you're cooking for yourself.

*"Solo is an amazing collection of Emma's culinary life lessons. She always knows how to make something delicious with very little. Single or not, this book will have a prominent spot in your kitchen."*  
— Ghislaine Voogd (@veggilaine)

*"With Solo, you'll discover a different way of doing things as a one-person household: more convenient, cheaper, more sustainable and, above all, tastier. You need Solo!"*  
— Anita Witzier

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