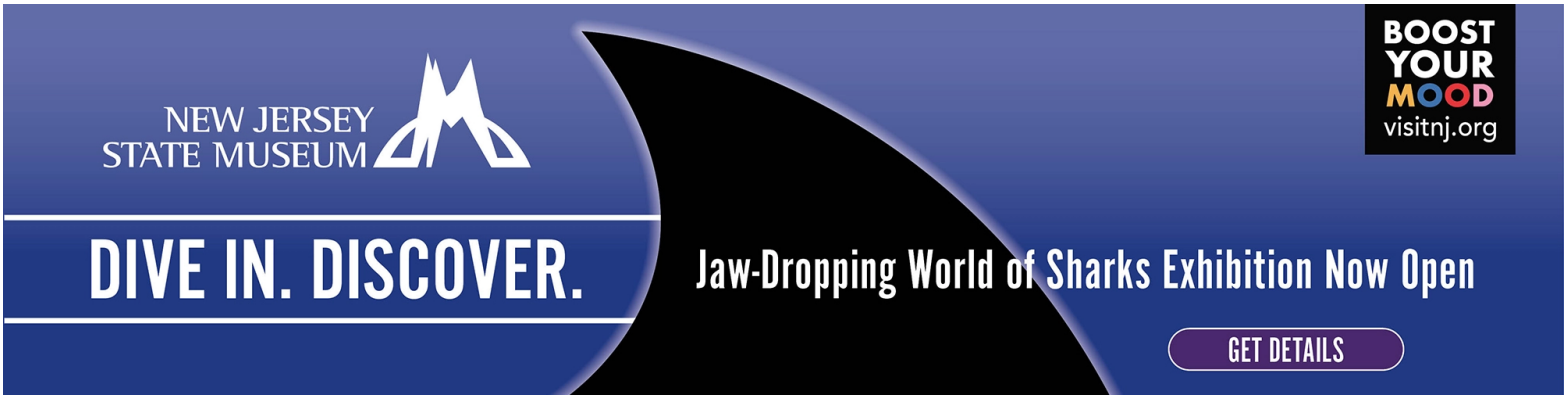


New Jersey MONTHLY

TABLE HOPPING

About Maggie Leenas

Hoboken Author Lisa Chernick Is Here to Help You Stock and Organize Your Kitchen

In her how-to guide, *Your Starter Kitchen*, the seasoned food writer [illegible] and cooking techniques for kitchens



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Lisa Chernick and her new cookbook, *Your Starter Kitchen*. Photos by Charlotte Hysen

Hoboken resident Lisa Chernick is here to not only help you organize your kitchen, but show you that it doesn't have to be an intimidating place. Her new book, Your Starter Kitchen, shows you that anything is possible when you step up to the stove with the right gear and essentials.

A culinary school graduate, Chernick spent years at Epicurious as the deputy food editor. She is currently the executive food editor at Weight Watchers (WW), where she works on the website and crafts cookbooks and recipes for WW members. With an opportunity from Simon and Schuster to write this new how-to guide, Chernick used her knowledge of 20 years in the food industry to help others reach their potential in the kitchen.

"The kitchen is the heart of the home," says Chernick. "It's the center of everything, and it doesn't have to be high pressure." Your Starter Kitchen is sectioned off into three parts: For a Small or First Kitchen, For a More Grown-Up Kitchen, and For a Large or Forever Home Kitchen. Each one specifies what essentials you need in your pantry, cabinets and recipe books.

We caught up with Chernick to ask about her new how-to guide, what her favorite kitchen essentials are and her background in the food writing industry.



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ou studied in Italy. Did being in Rome spark

someone who really loved cooking. But when larity and specificity around food. An Italian ents are always meant to be top notch.

No matter who you're talking to, whether you're talking to the guy who's driving the bus that you're riding on, or you're talking to someone who works in the food business, there's that level of passion about how food is supposed to be. I was just blown away and that made me really want to dive in and learn more about it.

TH: Your new book is a guide to help people organize their kitchen space. What made you write this?
LC: After 20 some odd years of writing and editing food content, I felt like I was just holding so much in my mind. I was able to create this essential hub of everything that I think it takes to be able to approach cooking with a sense of positivity so you can see a recipe and say, "I can do that."

In your first kitchen, there's sort of that mad scramble to get whatever and you're not really sure what you need. What can happen is people end up buying things that are inexpensive and just work for the moment. It's so important to not waste your money on a lot of stuff that you don't really need in that first kitchen. I promise you will carry that quality item with you for the whole of your cooking lifetime.

TH: So in crafting this book, who do you think it's best for?
LC: Part of the idea was that I feel like people look at their kitchen with fresh eyes at different stages of their lives. There's that moment when it's the first time you're on your own in a kitchen and it's a little bit of a reality check. So the book was meant to be able to talk to that person who's at that point in their life, as well as the person who has had a little bit more experience along the way, or is setting up a kitchen that's all their own for the first time.

TH: So this guide is kind of for everyone.
LC: Yes! It's kind of a combination of the space and the resources you use through the different stages of your life. But it could also work for someone who's seeing their kitchen with fresh eyes. I think during this whole pandemic, we're all sort of looking at our kitchens in a new way. It's a really great how-to guide for getting you from where you are to doing something next level.

TH: What made you include the "Kids Essentials" section?
LC: The kitchen is a great way to introduce kids to things that are actually educational. If you have a kid who thinks they hate math and fractions, and they like making cookies, all it takes is one or two


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y are important. I think it also gives your kids of fun. It's really nice to have the items that oment where the kitchen feels like a bonding,

rsonal ones?
nd are tried and true for me and my family. ny girls, my husband and I. There's a sheet

pan granola in there that I think is just life changing. And once you've had granola that you make yourself, you're just kind of like, why did I not do this my whole life?

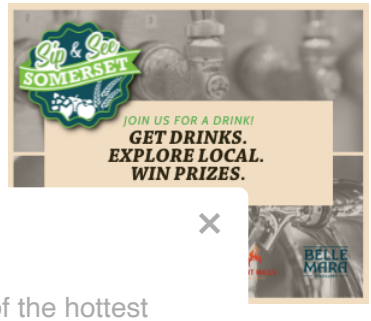
One of the most wonderful things I think a new cook can learn is how to do something really basic and do it really well, like the perfect roast chicken and mashed potatoes I put in there. I also love having cozy recipes if you're able to get together with people. Fall is going to be a nice time for Thanksgiving and the holidays coming up, but also just for cozy dishes that you look forward to once the heat goes away.

TH: You mentioned so many different essentials, but just personally what are your top three that you use in your kitchen?
LC: My chef's knife, it's worth whatever amount you can spend on it. It's the one thing to just feel like it's worth spending some serious money because you'll never have to buy another one. My enameled cast iron pan is another item that is worth every dime and you can use it for everything. The third thing I would have to say is my sheet pans, I've become obsessed with my sheet pans. When you have a kitchen that's really small and tight on space, sheet pans stack.

TH: What's one thing you hope people get out of Your Starter Kitchen?
LC: That it doesn't have to be high pressure, high stress to cook and make beautiful food in your kitchen. I'm really trying to pare it down to the basics. Less is more, so get just what you need and do it right. Then, you don't have to feel stressed, pressured, or overburdened. If you set it up right, you can do anything.

You can find Your Starter Kitchen *by Lisa Chernick on Amazon or locally at Little City Books, 100 Bloomfield Street, Hoboken. Learn more on the Simon and Schuster website.*

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