

Book Review – A Wilder Life: A Season-by-Season Guide to Getting in Touch with Nature

I enjoy a lifelong love affair with books. My collection had grown to a formidable size before my last three moves. Knowing each living situation would be temporary, I culled my library down to its bare bones—the best of the best. I now have another favorite to add to my smaller, more selective collection that will accompany me wherever I go.

A Wilder Life: A Season-by-Season Guide to Getting in Touch with Nature by Celestine Maddy with Abbye Churchill is a beautiful, informative, thoughtful compilation of facts, recipes, DIY instructions, and more – a book designed to put you a little more in touch with nature and a lot more in touch with yourself.

Celestine Maddy takes you on a season-by-season journey under the headings: Growing, Cooking, Home & Self-Reliance, Beauty & Healing, and Wilderness. The Growing sections include a seasonal growing checklist along with plant profiles and numerous educational articles about various aspects of gardening. Do you want to learn how to make cheese or a simple homemade tomato sauce? How about sauerkraut or the basics of canning? If so, check out the Cooking sections. The Home & Self-Reliance Sections, the Beauty & Healing Sections, and the Wilderness sections read like a cross between the Foxfire books, modern prepper guides, and Mother Earth News with a little bit of whimsy thrown in for good measure. You can choose from how to find water in the wilderness and foraging for edible plants to making a tincture, a perfume, or a healing balm. The following is a recipe from the spring Cooking section:

Make a Simple Ricotta

Ricotta is an Italian form of fresh cheese usually made with sheep's milk. Here we've substituted fresh cow's milk and used vinegar as our acid. Experiment with using lemon juice and citric acid in place of vinegar to see how that affects the flavor.

Makes 1 cup

Ingredients

- 6 cups whole milk (unpasteurized if possible or not processed using ultra-high temperatures)
- 2 cups cream
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt

Equipment

- Strainer
- Cheesecloth
- 4-quart pot

Directions

1. Line a strainer with damp cheesecloth and place over the sink.
2. In a 4-quart pot, combine the milk, cream, vinegar, and salt and bring the ingredients to a simmer (but do not let the mixture come to a boil , as this will burn your milk). After about 3 minutes, you should begin to see curds form and separate from the whey. Turn off the heat and remove the pot from the heat.
3. Pour the curds and the whey into the cheesecloth, allowing the whey to pass through the cloth. Let the mixture drain for 15 minutes.
4. Remove the cheesecloth from the strainer and twist the

top closed to capture the curds in one ball. Gently but firmly squeeze the curds. You don't want to remove all of the whey, just the majority of it.

5. The ricotta is now ready to eat or to incorporate into a recipe and will keep refrigerated for 1 to 2 days.

I highly recommend this book. Buy one for yourself and add it to your list of thoughtful gifts for others.

Find it on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other sites.