

# I Like You

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“Whether you live in a basement with the income of a ten-year-old girl or on a saffron farm in the south of Spain, the spirit of hospitality is the same. It’s the giving of yourself, a present of you to them from me for us.”  
— Amy Sedaris

BY PERRY WINFIELD

Throwing a party is either a royal pain in the buttocks or some of the most thrilling moments of your life. It just depends on the person. Amy Sedaris, known mostly as the character Jerri Blank on the TV show *Strangers with Candy*, is the latter type and imparts her expertise as a seasoned party hostess. But rather than write the typical, dry, and haughty type of book you would expect from Martha Stewart, Sedaris likes to create parties people will remember less for the perfect table setting and goat cheese tartlets and more for the Lil’ Smoky Cheese Balls and stiff Salty Dogs.

Sedaris is obviously a great cook, but rather than try to impress her guests with dishes they’ve never heard of or can’t pronounce, she gives them exactly what they want — Macaroni & Cheese, Southern Fried Chicken, Deviled Eggs and Chicken Pot Pie. And she does it in a way that no other hospitality author ever has.

Broken into chapters like “A Rich Uncle Comes to Visit,” “Entertaining The Elderly,” and “Ladies Night,” the self-effacing but hysterical Sedaris (sister of author David Sedaris) comprehensively covers the ins and outs of entertaining guests who would find pleasure in slicing a cake made entirely of cold-cuts. In other words, Sedaris isn’t snooty when it comes to throwing a soirée.

But that’s not to say that these recipes aren’t something to drool over. Quite the opposite, in fact. Classic recipes for Steak Diane and Baked Alaska are as intriguing as I Remember the War Cube Steak and Chicken Snatchatore and recall an era (think late-’60s, early ’70s) when there was a fondue pot in every other household, appliances were either banana yellow or avocado green, and the only chef that was a celebrity was Mom.

Sprinkled throughout the book, Sedaris offers up helpful tips (some arbitrary, some not) on topics like blind dates, beauty, grooming and gift-giving among many others. She also addresses those that aren’t so hospitable and suggests ways in which they can be a better guest, “Remember, one cannot throw a successful party without successful

guests.&rdquo;

The book is a visual kaleidoscope, presented in a very do-it-yourself fashion and highlighted by photos of Sedaris, shot by designer Todd Oldham, dressed either in classically American garb or covered only in frosting and sprinkles.

If Fannie Farmer had a sense of fashion, a fully-stocked tiki bar, and a three-foot bong in her cupboard, her cookbooks might have turned out more like I Like You.

I Like You

&ldquo;Hospitality Under the Influence&rdquo;

By Amy Sedaris

Warner Books

\$27.99

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