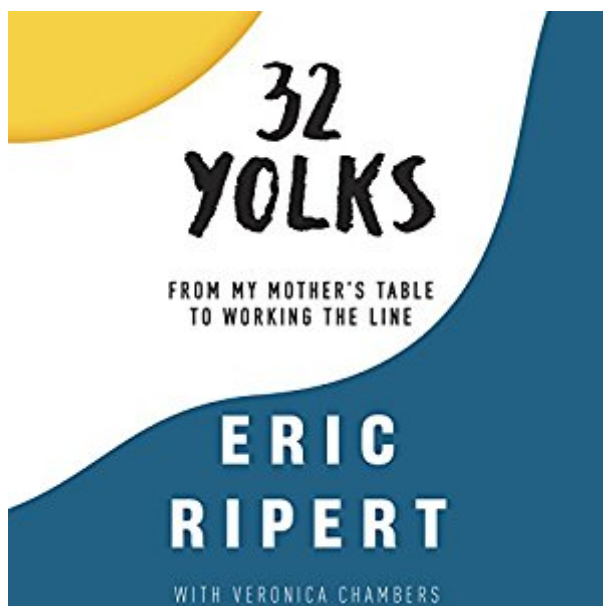


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# 32 Yolks: From My Mother's Table To Working The Line



## Synopsis

Hailed by Anthony Bourdain as "heartbreaking, horrifying, poignant, and inspiring", *32 Yolks* is the brave and affecting coming-of-age story about the making of a French chef, from the culinary icon behind the renowned New York City restaurant Le Bernardin. In an industry where celebrity chefs are known as much for their salty talk and quick tempers as their food, Eric Ripert stands out. The winner of four James Beard Awards, co-owner and chef of a world-renowned restaurant, and recipient of countless Michelin stars, Ripert embodies elegance and culinary perfection. But before the accolades, before he even knew how to make a proper hollandaise sauce, Eric Ripert was a lonely young boy in the south of France whose life was falling apart. Ripert's parents divorced when he was six, separating him from the father he idolized and replacing him with a cold, bullying stepfather who insisted that Ripert be sent away to boarding school. A few years later, Ripert's father died on a hiking trip. Through these tough times, the one thing that gave Ripert comfort was food. Told that boys had no place in the kitchen, Ripert would instead watch from the doorway as his mother rolled couscous by hand or his grandmother pressed out the buttery dough for the treat he loved above all others, tarte aux pommes. When an eccentric local chef took him under his wing, an 11-year-old Ripert realized that food was more than just an escape: It was his calling. That passion would carry him through the drudgery of culinary school and into the high-pressure world of Paris' most elite restaurants, where Ripert discovered that learning to cook was the easy part - surviving the line was the battle. Taking us from Eric Ripert's childhood in the south of France and the mountains of Andorra into the demanding kitchens of such legendary Parisian chefs as Joël Robuchon and Dominique Bouchet, until, at the age of 24, Ripert made his way to the United States, *32 Yolks* is the tender and richly told story of how one of our greatest living chefs found himself - and his home - in the kitchen.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The first half of this book is a young man struggling through a difficult childhood. Ripert's intelligence, honesty, and clarity make this section entertaining and relatable. Although his situation was much different from mine growing up, his description of the emotional impact often left me thinking, "I know exactly how that felt." The second section was even more fascinating. It tells the story of a young man beginning a craft that he would one day master. It tells of the early mistakes, and of the struggles of the long, frustrating work day in the kitchen. Ripert's details, such as mentioning specific dishes, ingredients, or techniques, brings the stories to life. Combined with the various settings around France that Ripert and his co writer present vividly, this section makes for an engaging read. After finishing this book, I felt as if I had just finished having a long conversation with a legend, and that I had learned stories and lessons I would never forget.

A kitchen and some ingredients are transformed into a sumptuous read, inviting us to observe the making of a chef. We are offered not only training from kitchen help to sous chef to becoming master but allowed to witness slices of a child, a soul yearning for connection and finally the man who finds the giving and sharing of love in a dish. The spiritual quest continues as we only finish the hors d'oeuvres and consume the last page. We are left waiting for the next course with a wonderful bottle of French wine to hold us over.

This is a book that demands acceptance for what it is rather than docilely fitting into the "chef's biography" genre. How? by following two intertwined threads. The first thread is religious - tracing the influences which took him from an angry young man to a future Buddhist. The second thread is gourmand - tracing the influences that took him from the consummate consumer to a devotee of ingredients themselves. Each of the individuals involved in molding him is fleshed out in sufficient detail to understand why they had such an influence. The uncontrollable young man develops into a focused, in the moment, disciplined, efficient, elegant young chef ... as for the rest of his life, that is not the focus of this book.

Admittedly, I bought Ripert's memoir for research yesterday, intending to study it for a project that I'm working on. I fell in love with every step of his journey, not just his culinary path, and I finished it today. Poignant, heartbreaking at times, and full of humor and passion, 32 Yolks is a must read! Just say yes to this inspiring Chef!

This is the surprisingly well told story of the making of the famous Le Bernardin chef. Having eaten at his restaurant many times it was an interesting look at what brought him to where he is. Like most people who are passionate about their work, the driving force of his life began in childhood and never faltered. His descriptions of the kitchens where he learned his skills and the chefs who brought his talents to life bring you right into the small, hot, fearful spaces that shaped his talent.

I was surprised. I thought that Eric Ripert had lived an ideal life because of some TV shows he did on PBS. He suffered abuse, according to the book, and had hard times, but, also had amazing, wonderful people in his life. I really liked the book. I think it is a really nice read. Also, I have never eaten in fancy restaurants like he talks about, but if the abuse that he writes about still goes on, I do not want to be any part of it.

I knew little of Eric, other than he is a famous chef, and this book allowed me to not only learn about his upbringing, but to also understand how he became the chef he is today. To be honest, I was not expecting such a well written memoir. He was able to invoke the images and smells of his youth so beautifully that it took me there. I can't ask for much more than that. I had the pleasure very recently of hearing him talk about his book, and he is every bit as beautiful and humble as this work evokes. A great read.

Being a line cook is a VERY demanding job. The cook must turn out identical products dozens of times each shift. All parts of a meal have to be delivered from multiple cooks at the same time often to multiple guests at each table. A mistake stands out like a musician farting during a love song. Eric's book will help you understand how the kitchen operates to handle precision and rigid time constraints. It will shock you.

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