

PRESSURE COOKING EVERY DAY: 80 modern recipes for stovetop pressure cooking - Denise Smart. Published in soft covers by Hamlyn [www.octopusbooks.co.uk] at £7.99. 128 246 mm x 190mm pages in full colour throughout. ISBN 978-0-6006-3578-9

A book entirely about pressure cooking is unusual these days, so when one was reviewed in a national newspaper recently our Flying Fish editor agreed that it deserved a second look. Aimed at young people – students? – living in bedsits with a stove-top cooker but no oven, Pressure Cooking Every Day is also very relevant to ocean cruising galleys, even though nowadays all but the very smallest boats have an oven. A pressure cooker saves gas by cooking in a third of the time taken by conventional means, and the lid clips on and stays on – very useful on a bouncing yacht, even if the pot isn't under pressure. The large, rather heavy, good quality pan has a variety of uses, from jam making to cooking spaghetti for a crowd, and as a pressure cooker can tenderise tougher cuts of meat – or that octopus that was a gift from friendly locals – and nutrients are retained rather than being boiled away by lengthy cooking.

The first section, 'Brunch and Lunch', includes a variety of ideas for snacks and light meals, although the only one I can see myself using is for Caribbean Butternut Squash Soup, which includes coconut milk and lime juice. The recipe for baked beans in tomato sauce seems rather absurd – isn't it far easier to open a can? – but could be useful if you happen to have haricot beans on board and are miles from even a basic shop. 'Midweek Meals' include such staples as chilli con carne using dried kidney beans, lentil and cauliflower curry for vegetarians, as well as more exotic dishes such as Spicy Jambalaya and shredded duck salad with mango and pomegranate.

The 'Gatherings' section offers meals for entertaining, including a tasty-sounding recipe for chorizo and squid stew, and Lamb Shawarma, which needs 90 minutes at high pressure but would take four to five hours in the oven. 'Sides and Preserves' has a suggestion for baked sweet potatoes – pressure cook them whole for 15 minutes, then transfer to a hot oven for five minutes to crisp the skins - much quicker than baking them from scratch. Then there's Mango Chutney - perfect when mangoes come free in the tropics and you've saved all those empty jars.

The last chapter, 'Something Sweet', includes a recipe for Sea Salt Chocolate Brownies which got rave reviews from the newspaper reviewer. If you have an oven you'd be unlikely to make brownies this way - food for thought, though! Tempting colour photos accompany most of the recipes, and it would be a useful addition to the bookshelf of any yacht which carries a pressure cooker.

EHHM