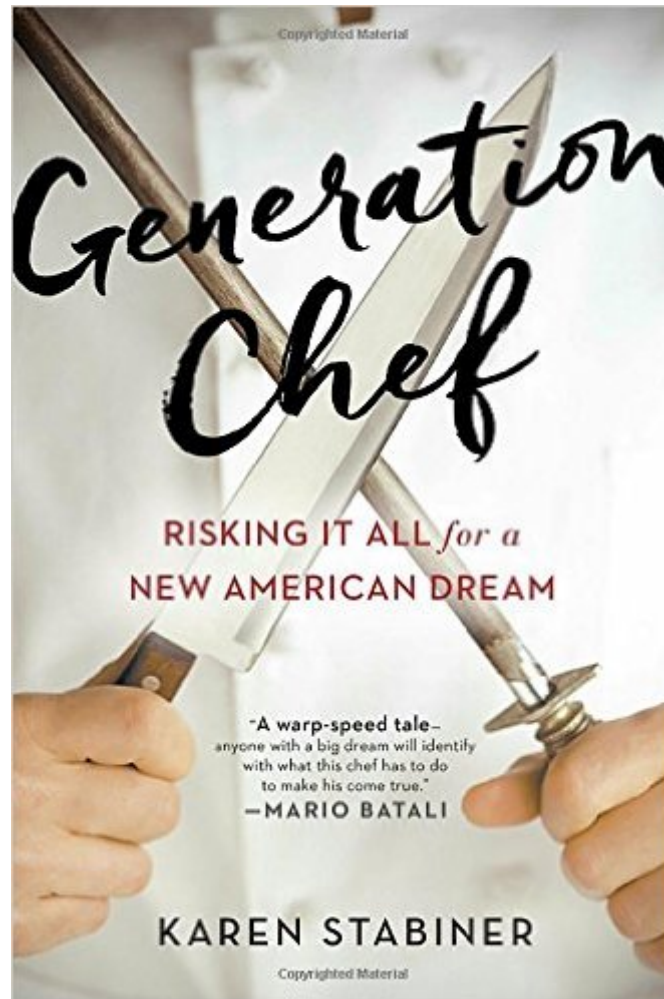


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# Generation Chef: Risking It All For A New American Dream



## Synopsis

Inside what life is really like for the new generation of professional cooksâa captivating tale of the make-or-break first year at a young chefâs new restaurant. Â For many young people, being a chef is as compelling a dream as being a rock star or professional athlete. Skill and creativity in the kitchen are more profitable than ever before, as cooks scramble to reach the topâbut talent isnât enough. Todayâs chef needs the business savvy of a high-risk entrepreneur, determination, and big dose of luck.Â The heart of *Generation Chef* is the story of Jonah Miller, who at age twenty-four attempts to fulfill a lifelong dream by opening the Basque restaurant Huertas in New York City, still the high-stakes center of the restaurant business for an ambitious young chef. Miller, a rising star who has been named to the 30-Under-30 list of both *Forbes* and *Zagat*, quits his job as a sous chef, creates a business plan, lines up investors, leases a space, hires a staff, and gets ready to put his reputation and his future on the line. Journalist and food writer Karen Stabiner takes us inside Huertasâs roller-coaster first year, but also provides insight into the challenging world a young chef faces todayâthe intense financial pressures, the overcrowded field of aspiring cooks, and the impact of reviews and social media, which can dictate who survives. A fast-paced narrative filled with suspense, *Generation Chef* is a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at drive and passion in one of todayâs hottest professions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm a fan of competitive cooking shows, and you can't watch a single episode without at least one

contestant talking about how their drive to excel as a chef has decimated their private life. I'm always left to wonder why someone would choose to enter this time-sucking, high-anxiety business. Unfortunately, this book about restaurateur Jonah Miller doesn't really answer my question. Mr. Miller does indeed risk his money and reputation in his quest to open Huertas, his first restaurant, in Manhattan. In the opening paragraph, the reader learns that he is \$700,000 in debt before the doors of the Basque restaurant have even opened. As you make your way through the book, you read about location and construction problems, staffing problems, late nights and early mornings, food costs and sourcing, picky diners and bad reviews. But you read not one word about what Mr. Miller's choice of career has meant for his personal life. He has a wife... that's all we know. I would have gladly exchanged the chapters on the lives and careers of other restaurateurs who have crossed paths with Mr. Miller for ones that demonstrate the sacrifices he has made in his personal relationships. Has he had doubts? Does he have any regrets? At one point, he does say, "If someone came in today and said he'd buy the place for \$2 million, I'd say okay." But his regret is in regards to the tough slog of operating the restaurant, not about his personal life. The author spends time filling in the backstory of other restaurant owners and Mr. Miller's employees -- debt, broken relationships, thwarted career aspirations, exhaustion -- but about Mr. Miller himself, she is silent. Perhaps that's the deal she made with Mr. Miller in order to get the restaurant story.

For years I've always dreamed of opening my own café/bakery, so I like reading about others that have taken the plunge. It is always exciting to read about the struggles and triumphs a person experiences on the road to becoming a restaurateur, but this book misses the mark a little bit. This book, especially the beginning, just goes off on too many paths. Sometimes it reads more like a Who's Who of NYC Chefs than a story of Jonah Miller and Huertas. The parts of the book that focus on Mr. Miller were excellent, but too often the focus would shift to other chefs that influenced Mr. Miller in some way. Another frustrating thing was after being given a detailed curriculum vitae of another chef's life, the person was never mentioned again. I also found the writing style a little chaotic. In particular I found the first chapter a tough read. The book starts with opening night at Huertas. This should be exciting time, but the narrative bounces all over the place and story loses momentum. The narrative shifts from a description of the building where Huertas is located to an analysis of why Jonah opts for a certain style of clothing. It bounces from the fixtures and layout of the restaurant's various rooms to Jonah's time as a high school baseball player to a detailed description/recipe of the appetizers and main dishes that would be served. The story then moves to the heat of opening night: orders are flying, it is standing room only, they are running out of food |.

then in the next sentence opening night at Huertas abruptly ends and you get a description on how the kitchen is cleaned.

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