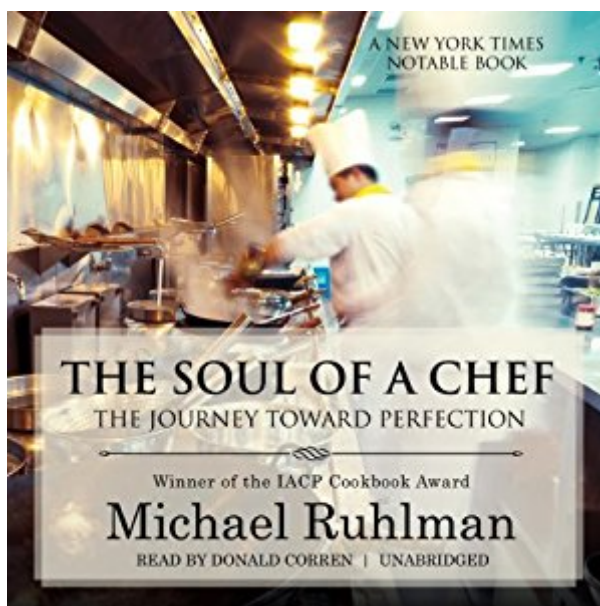


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# The Soul Of A Chef: The Journey Toward Perfection



## Synopsis

In his second in-depth foray into the world of professional cooking, Michael Ruhlman journeys into the heart of the profession. Observing the rigorous Certified Master Chef exam at the Culinary Institute of America, the most influential cooking school in the country, Ruhlman enters the lives and kitchens of rising star Michael Symon and the renowned Thomas Keller of the French Laundry. This fascinating audiobook will satisfy any listener's hunger for knowledge about cooking and food, the secrets of successful chefs, at what point cooking becomes an art form, and more. Like Ruhlman's *The Making of a Chef*, this is an instant classic in food writing - one of the fastest growing and most popular subjects today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Love the author, but this is not especially interesting. Ruhlman's 20 is a great read however (and a cookbook).

This book is worth reading for the portrayal of (in my opinion) the greatest American Chef this land has ever know, Thomas Keller. I learned more about what drives this Zen-master of cooking in this book than any articles I have read about Chef Keller or even from his drool-worthy cookbook. Michael Ruhlman is a great journalist. He has heart and is a passionate food writer. He doesn't go as in-depth as I would perhaps but he brings a chef's sensibility from his own experiences to his writing which I enjoyed. He profiles two other chefs (Michael Symon, another of

my favorite chefs and Brian Polcyn from the Detroit area) and a number of other characters surrounding these chefs under extraordinarily different circumstances and is able to create them in as enigmatic but real people in the process. His Epilogue was brilliantly done and wrapped it up nicely, I felt sad to see it end but look forward to reading his next book - *The Reach of a Chef*. This is required reading for anyone who wants to be a Chef, love a Chef or just admire a Chef. I am a fan of Ruhlman's for life and will read everything he has written. I know I am gushing but seriously, I was transported in this book yet left grounded at the same time. That's a rare gift in a writer.

This book is almost like three separate short stories, which makes it an easy read and keeps things interesting. Part 1 focuses on the CMC Exam, which is a professional certification given by the CIA (this is NOT the exam that CIA students take to graduate from the school). Ruhlman does a fantastic job writing about the exam in a way that has you biting your knuckles with suspense as if you were watching a sports event. His descriptions of the frantic lead-up to service for each section of the test and the judging panels provide serious drama. However, I did find the detail about classical cooking methods tedious to read at times. Part 2 focuses on Cleveland chef Michael Symon, who was a rising star on the culinary scene at the time and is now an Iron Chef on *Iron Chef America*. It's a light-hearted section compared to Part 1 and showcases Symon's bubbly personality, a critical factor in the success of his restaurant. I loved learning more about Symon's background, cooking style, personality, and business philosophy after seeing him on numerous cooking shows. He's kind of a badass and does food his own way while winning respect in the culinary industry. Part 3 focuses on Thomas Keller and "The French Laundry", widely considered the best chef and restaurant in the country. Ruhlman focuses on how Keller got to where he is despite no formal training and growing up in a family that was never focused on food. Ruhlman might be my favorite food writer and his second book doesn't disappoint. For more reviews, check out my blog, Sarah's Book Shelves.

Enjoyed reading this book. There was perhaps more than most would want to know about the Certified Master Chef examination, but for some the details were interesting. The second half about The French Kitchen was fascinating. Ruhlman got access to the inner workings of the kitchen and more importantly, the inner thoughts of the chef, Thomas Keller. He reconstructs Keller's career and offers insights how he built his extremely high standards of excellence that has made the French Laundry what it is. He gets maybe a little hyperbolic at times, but overall, I really enjoyed this book.

Soul of a Chef is a wonderful look into the culinary world. As a father of a 16-year-old who wants to be a chef I really appreciated this book.

It was a very good book, especially for those interested in cooking and the way chefs are trained. I gave it to a head chef on a cruise I was on. It was a gift because he hosted a "Chef's Table" which I knew I would find enjoyable.

great

In this book, Michael takes us into the kitchens of the CIA once again. He shows us some of the best chefs in the country, as they labor under the enormous stress of taking the CIA's 'Certified Master Chef' exams. He then travels to two of America's finest restaurants and explores the character of the Chefs who created them. Along the way, we meet some other colorful characters and some very delightful-sounding food. That's it in a nutshell. The reason I love this book is because it shows the heart and intensity of what I can only call the 'love of food' and the 'striving for excellence' that both of these Chefs possess. The discussion of their ingenuity in creating new dishes is very interesting as well, but it is the sheer PASSION for cooking that Michael communicates to us that kept my eyeballs glued to the pages. I have now read both of Michael's books on this subject: The Making of a Chef and The Soul of a Chef. I finished them both in about two weeks and my understanding of the world of cooking, not to mention my faith in the human race (how could you not love a species that is capable of such positive, again, passion??), has simply been...transformed. Thank you, Michael.

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