

Bare Bones COOKBOOK

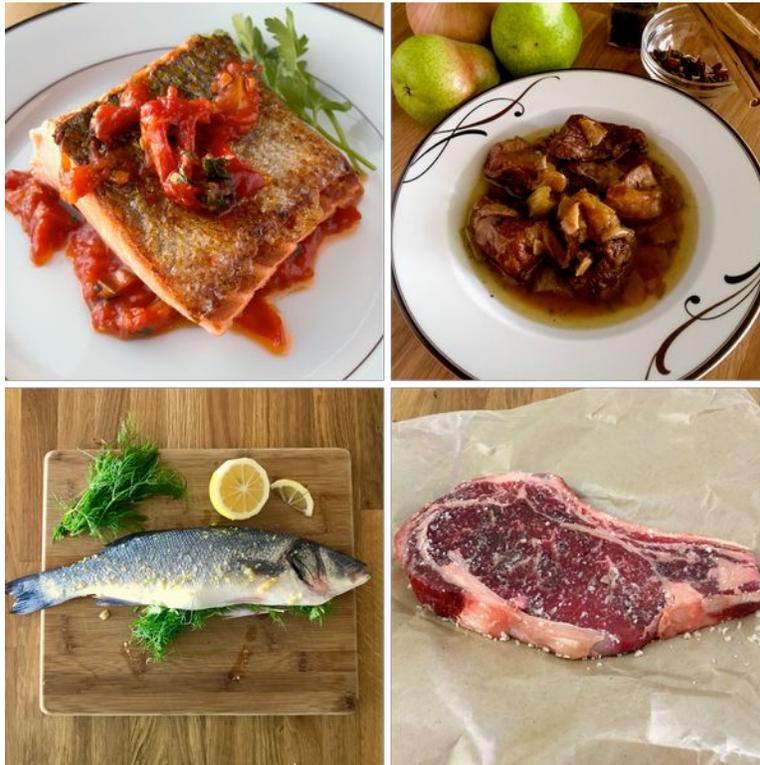
Healthy Eating, Devolved

Bob Kopinsky

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Chapter 1

Introduction



This is not a diet book. While the eating the food in this book will likely lead to significant improvements in your health and physique, this is a cookbook. In fact, it is a cookbook that assumes you do not know how to cook, which may be the best kind. This book is going to show you, step by step, how to prepare whole, nourishing, and

delicious meals that will leave you exceptionally satiated. A trim waistline is only one of many likely positive side effects.

I only wanted ingredients with top tier nutritional profiles for the recipes in this book. I avoid, entirely, fillers like grains, soy, sugar and excessive starches. I also do not use dairy, eggs, nuts, or seeds because, along with the fillers, they are some of the most common allergens, triggers for digestive issues, and sources of inflammation. What I do use are pastured, grass-fed meats, fresh, sustainably-caught seafood, and organic, seasonal vegetables and fruit. This is clean, wholesome eating at it's best.

Now, a cookbook isn't much use if you don't have the equipment to prepare the recipes. With that in mind, I have good news for you. There is no need to own a high end stove, have a huge backyard for grilling and smoking, collect excessive amounts of kitchen gadgets,

or store twenty different sizes of pots and pans. I make all of this food in a tiny, one bedroom apartment, on a bottom-end electric stove, with a minimum amount of equipment.

This is the book for you if you are just starting out, or if you're an experienced cook looking to streamline your home cooking process. I desperately wish I had this twenty years ago when I first started cooking for myself and had no idea what I was doing. I consider the information here invaluable. Food is who you are, quite literally. Take the time to learn how to make food for yourself and you will gain a level of independence that you didn't even know you were missing. Cook, eat, and become the healthy, vibrant person you were always meant to be.

Section 1

A Word On Nutrition

I get the majority of my daily energy needs from animal fats. You will notice in the recipes that I use rendered tallow and lard, recommend not trimming your meat, and leaving the skin on your fish, among other things. Not only does this up the fat content, but it leaves the ingredients in a more whole state. A pleasant consequence is that it also makes your food taste absolutely delicious. And why shouldn't it? Your taste buds were designed to help you find nourishing food, not put there to torment you while you try to eat healthy. I also include a fair amount of offal (organs) into my diet including liver, heart, and sweetbreads, as they are some of the most nutrient dense foods on the planet.

I'm not going to waste paragraphs convincing you that reintroducing these lost foods into your diet is actually a

really healthy thing to do. I'm also not going to explain how grains and farming have ruined our once unprecedented brain development, or tell you how humans are "transitional carnivores", not omnivores. There are experts far more knowledgeable than I am who can talk for days about the diet of pre-agriculture humans, our digestive anatomy, use of ketones over glucose, and the health problems caused by high carbohydrate (starch and sugar) diets. I'm not one of those experts, and I assume if you have gotten this book that you are already convinced, or at least curious.

What I am going to do is advocate that we start eating whole animals again, including all the fat. As extreme of an idea as this may sound, there is nothing in this book that would be unfamiliar to your great grandparents. You will not find "keto cookies", "primal waffles", or other bizarre recipes trying to somehow emulate modern day processed snacks and treats. What you will find are extremely satiating dishes created with whole

meats and vegetables using classic techniques. I highly recommend eating all of this delicious food **until you are full**. There is no need to practice portion control or avoid the fatty bits because of some dogma you learned in grade school. Trust your sense of hunger to let you know when your body has been nourished, which is something you can do when you eat real food.



I will close with this photo that my girlfriend insisted I

include. I am generally reserved and hesitate to “put myself out there,” but you need to know I practice what I preach. I have been eating a high fat (ketogenic), moderate protein, animal based diet for about two years and am currently forty-one years old. I didn’t prep for this photo by leaning out, crash dieting, or doing a bunch of cardio. It was just a random day in her parent’s backyard (as evidenced by my questionable footwear and lack of even tanning). My current gym routine involves about two days of weight training a week for around an hour a session and some light mobility work when I feel like it. Considering how much effort I used to put in at the gym I cannot believe how easy it is to maintain a lean physique eating these foods. It feels like I’m cheating. I would like you to feel like your cheating too. Break the rules, eat real food, and your body will do the rest.

Chapter 2

Hardware

In this chapter, you'll discover exactly what equipment you are going to need to cook everything in this book. I'm a minimalist by nature, so the list is as short as possible to keep your kitchen tidy as well as affordable. I've lived in crowded cities most of my adult life and space is always at a premium. I do not have a gigantic kitchen, an extra room, closet space, or a garage to keep years of accumulated kitchen gadgets. I've had to make do with the stove I happen to have and a small assortment of pots and pans. Fortunately, that's really all you need.

Section 1

Stove



Speaking of the stove I happen to have, here it is in all of its glory. This model is the second cheapest the company makes and retails for around four hundred dollars. We currently live in a one bedroom apartment, with appliances provided by the landlord, and everything for this book was cooked on this stove. In recent years, home cooking has become less and less

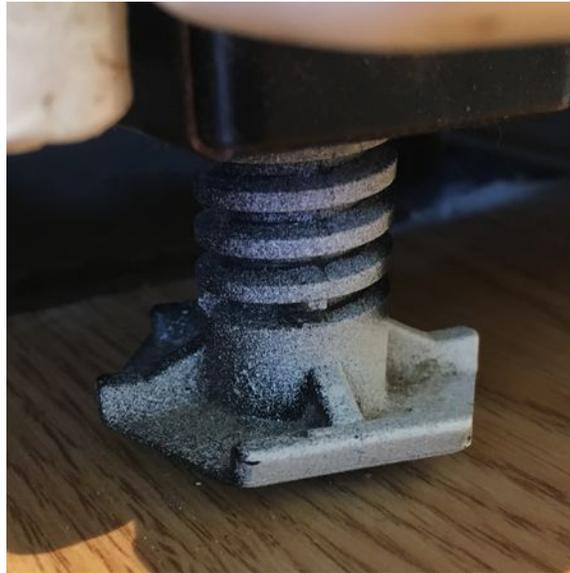
popular (especially in urban areas) and I really feel like appliances have become an afterthought, with landlords assuming that you aren't going to use them. I want to reassure you that if you are in a similar situation, you can still make restaurant caliber food at home, even on a cheap electric stove.

Heat: For the recipes in this book, when I am talking about stovetop heat, I will be referring to "medium", "medium high", "low", etc. Unfortunately, these terms vary widely depending on your stove. My current stove's medium was my last stove's "almost at full". There will be a little guesswork until you figure out the nuances of your own stove, but I try to give other pointers on heat when I can. For a range like the one above, when I refer to "high" that's about "8" on the dial, so my "medium" is around "4". Anything above 8 is almost too aggressive and will instantly burn anything that touches it (so save those temps for boiling water). If you have a gas range, "high" means turn the dial up as

far as it will go as long as the flame is still under the pan. Gas heats more slowly, but also much more evenly, and doesn't have the problem of the pan not sitting level on the burner (for the most part). If you are lucky and have an induction range you get the best of both worlds, the super fast heating of electric and the evenness of gas. In this case, again, "high" is about 80% of max power.

Evenness: The biggest difference between a "good" stove and a "cheap" stove is not just power, it's how even the heat is distributed while cooking. Take the oven for instance. In my current oven, there are "hot" and "cold" spots; the rear is much warmer than the front, and the top is hotter than the bottom. It also varies a bit side to side. Conversely, with my sister's expensive convection oven, you can essentially put the food anywhere and achieve an even heat. For many of the recipes in this book, I will encourage you to move the pan around while cooking in an attempt to compensate for having a less than ideal stove. This may mean either turning the

pan on the stovetop or doing a 180 with your roast halfway through cooking.



Leveling your stove can help with this. Most stoves have adjustable feet on them that you can raise and lower to make sure your stovetop is flat. The most common are the screw-in variety that are adjusted "up" by loosening the foot, and "down" by tightening. Check your model online for specific instructions (companies keep all of their manuals as downloadable .PDF's). If you notice liquid in all of your pans consistently pooling to one side then you likely need to adjust these.

Section 2

Knives



Chef's Knife: The workhorse of your kitchen will be what's known as a "Chef's Knife". This large, wide-bladed knife is intended for vegetable slicing and general prep work on a wide variety of foods. 90% of the time, this is the only knife you will be using and, honestly, it may be the only knife you need to buy. In the photo, I show the two I currently own. The one on

the cutting board was the first one I purchased. It was fairly cheap (about ten dollars) and by any technical standard isn't a very good knife; the handle is plastic, the blade is thin, the balance isn't great (where the center of mass is), and the steel is cheap. That being said I probably use it everyday. It was inexpensive so I don't have to worry about it, the blade is great for thin slicing, and it's light so it's easy to control. You really don't need to spend much to get a completely useable knife.

Above that is a slightly more expensive chef's knife that will cost you about forty or fifty dollars. It's a "forged" knife, which means the knife is formed (hammered) from a piece of steel rather than being cut from a sheet like my cheap one. You can tell because the bottom of the blade forms into the handle. It's easier to hold, the balance is better, the steel holds an edge longer, and is overall a more solid knife that can handle heavier prep work like cutting through small bones.

The options for chef's knives are fairly vast, and trust me, you can spend as much money as you want. You can buy stainless steel, carbon steel (that needs to be oiled), or even ceramic blades, along with all types of polymer and exotic wood handles.

Cutting Board: The second thing you need to own is a cutting board. The one shown in the photo is my everyday use board that's made out of bamboo. Hardwood is also a great option but is a little more expensive and can require more care to maintain. Cutting boards feel different with different knives. Some will feel sticky when the knife hits it, others will slide all over the place. It may take a bit of trial and error to find what feels right to you, but for now, an inexpensive bamboo board will work fine.

Honing Steel: To maintain the edge on your knives, you will need to get a honing steel, pictured at the

bottom of the photo. During use, knives will start to lose their sharpness. The edge itself doesn't get dull per se (food, in general, is less hard than steel so you aren't grinding down the edge) but what can happen is the force you exert can bend the thinnest part of the edge on a microscopic level. Honing steel is used to basically bend it back.

Fillet Knife (Optional): The only other knife I would recommend for the recipes in this book is a fillet knife, especially if you are going to be preparing any of the fish dishes. Fillet knives have very thin, flexible blades that tend to be sharper than chef's knives. They are very useful for breaking down and preparing fish, or other delicate meats like liver or small poultry. Again, nothing fancy, the one in the photo used to be in my tackle box and probably cost less than ten dollars. It works just fine.

Section 3

Preparation: Honing

There are several different ways to use honing steel, this is one of the safest and easiest to master. A light touch is the key to getting your knife sharp again. You don't need to use your honing steel every time you use your knives, but if you notice they are getting a bit dull or you have a delicate job (like cutting tomatoes or fish) it's probably a good idea to freshen them up.

1. Hold the honing steel, upright, in your non-dominant hand making sure all fingers are behind the guard and not on the metal.
2. Hold the knife to be sharpened in your other hand as you would normally.



3. Position the knife so that the end of the blade (the widest part) is at the top of the steel, with the blade perpendicular to the honing steel, like an upside-down L.

You are going to sweep the blade down the side of the honing steel, like you are trying to shave the thinnest amount of material off of it. Keep that in mind throughout the next steps.



4. Lightly touch the blade edge to the surface of the honing steel. The knife should not be flat against the steel, but rather angled slightly, about twenty degrees.



5. Using your wrist only (do not bend your elbow), rotate the knife down so the edge slides along the honing steel, until you've gone the entire length of the blade. Again, think about trying to shave a bit of the steel off, using a very light amount of pressure.

6. Bring the knife back to the starting position and repeat for the other side of the blade.
7. Repeat this process about five to six times for each side of the blade.

Chapter 3

Ingredients

The food you eat is literally what you are. You consume pounds of your environment every day as food. It makes up your brain, your muscles, your bones, your heart, your skin... everything. Before talking about cuts of meat, or what particular variety of heirloom tomato makes the best sauce, it is really worth taking a step back and looking at where your food was grown, how it was raised, and who raised it. This chapter will focus on choosing the right kind of ingredient, as well as giving some basic examples of how to prepare those ingredients for cooking.

Things you eat either were alive or are alive. In the day to day rush this reality tends to get lost as we shove food in our faces while driving to the next stressful thing we have to do. With this book, I challenge you to slow

down and really consider what you are eating as something that is living. I really believe that it is our responsibility to treat our food with as much respect as possible, whether in properly raising it, properly preparing it, or taking the time to sit down and properly eat it. Not only are you respecting the life you are consuming, you are respecting your own life. This is my personal philosophy and what drove me to write this book.

Section 2

Preparation: Dicing an Onion

Dicing onions is one of the most fundamental kitchen tasks. The size of the dice can be adjusted depending on your application, but always focus on making consistently sized pieces. Uniform pieces heat uniformly, which is crucial for good cooking. The method I describe leaves the root side attached (thanks for the tip, Mom) which helps keep the onion pieces together during cutting.



8. Slice the onion in half lengthwise, cutting the root portion of the bulb in half.



9. Slice off the tip of the non-root side and peel off the skin and first layer.

It's not worth trying to peel only the skin and leave the first layer. The outer layer tends to be tough and will cook much more slowly than the rest of the onion. Save the outer layer for stock making or for the compost bin.



10. Make a series of cuts parallel to the cutting board. Stop just short of cutting all the way through. The root side will help keep the onion together.



11. Now make another series of cuts perpendicular to the cutting board. Again, don't cut through the root.



12. Carefully slice the onion along the sections you have made.



13. Continue until you get to the root portion.

Section 3

Preparation: Bouquet Garni

When making stew, soups, and sauces, you will sometimes want to use herbs for their flavor, but do not necessarily want extra leaves and stems in the final dish. A way to have the best of both worlds is to bundle the herbs together into a “bouquet garni” (garnished bouquet). By tying them together, you can cook them with the rest of the meal, and then remove them before you serve it. I’m going to show you two ways to do this, one using fresh herbs, and the other using whole, dried spices. You’ll need some butcher’s string, a knife, and some cut cheesecloth for the second method. For the first demonstration I am using rosemary and parsley.



1. Lay your herbs lengthwise on the cutting board. Measure out a length of the string that is more than twice the length of the herbs. Fold it in half and lay it next to them, with the fold coming right to the top of the bunch.



2. Wrap the long end of the string around the bottom of the bunch (the side without the fold) being sure to get all the herbs and both sides of the folded part of the string.



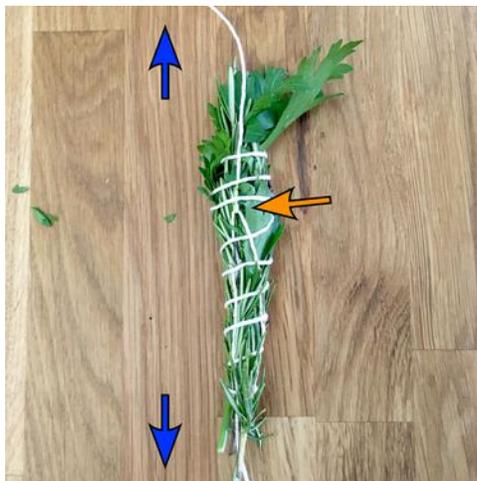
3. Continue wrapping the string around the bunch, leaving space between each wrap, until you get nearly to the top of the bunch.



4. Bring the end of the string through the initial fold.



5. Grab ahold of both ends of the string. Begin to pull them away from each other. This will cause the folded loop to tighten.



6. Continue pulling and working the string tighter until the fold has been pulled through a few of the wrappings (orange arrow).



7. Trim the excess string. Your bouquet is ready to use.

Chapter 4

Searing and Sautéing

This chapter focuses exclusively on how to prepare food quickly with a frying pan, which is an essential skill to master in order to become a successful home cook. This is the most extensive chapter in this book, with good reason, as the techniques here will form the backbone of your day to day cooking.

Section 1

Technique: Fish Fillet with Crispy Skin



Crispy skin will elevate any dish that uses a fish fillet, and that crispy skin is the result of a good sear. This simple recipe shows how to get that sear every time with only minimal effort and ingredients. While you can garnish a fillet like this with all manner of sauces and condiments, I absolutely love it on it's own.

Ingredients

Black Cod or Salmon Fillet

Sea Salt

Coconut Oil

Hardware

10" Skillet

Fillet Knife

Cutting Board

Fish Spatula

8. Let the fish come to room temperature.
9. Pat the fish dry with some paper towels. Apply a generous amount of salt to the skin side of the fillet.
10. Put the skillet on a medium high heat. Add 2 tbsp of coconut oil.
11. Once the pan is up to temperature, place the fillet in the center of the pan.

Add the fish to the pan very carefully as it will likely splash. Hold the fish by one end, with the skin facing away from you. Place the end of the fish in the pan and lay the fish away from you effectively shielding yourself with the fish.

12. Let the fish cook until the meat turns from translucent to opaque about three quarters of the way up the side. This will take about 6 minutes.

The oil will likely pop several times while this is cooking, which can be rather intimidating if you aren't used to it. This is normal and a sign that your pan is the correct temperature.

13. Take the fish spatula and slide it under the fish, very carefully wiggling through any sticky spots. Gently turn the fish onto the other side.

14. Allow the fish to continue cooking for about one minute, just enough to get some heat through the entire filet. You are looking for medium rare.

Unfortunately, the "touch test" doesn't work with fish. Better to cook the fish too little than too much, so err on the side of underdone. It will likely be fine.

15. Remove the fish from the heat and let it rest on a rack for a few minutes before serving.

An apron is highly recommended. I also like having a lid for the pan ready to literally use as a shield.

Section 2

Salmon with Tomato Reduction



I had salmon and some lovely "Early Girl" tomatoes on hand and was trying to figure out what to do with them. I was constructing all these complicated ideas about doing a bloody Mary style sauce, or somehow working in fresh rosemary and smoked peppers. Nope. I tasted the cooked tomatoes and salmon together and that was really all I needed to do. I threw in some parsley at the

end mostly for color and called it a day. Simple is always better.

Ingredients

~ 1lb Salmon Fillets

4-6 Small Tomatoes, sliced

Duck Fat or Avocado Oil

1 tsp Fresh Parsley, chopped

Salt

Hardware

10" Skillet

3 qt Saucepan

Chef's Knife

Cutting Board

Spatula

Tongs

1. Place the saucepan on the stove over medium heat. Add the tomatoes, a couple tablespoons of fat, and

some salt.

2. Cook, stirring occasionally until there's almost no liquid left and the tomatoes start to fry a bit.

Be careful here, tomatoes can burn and when they do it's awful. Keep the heat very "medium".

3. Add the parsley, stir to incorporate, and then remove the pan from the heat.
4. When the sauce is done, prepare the salmon fillets according to [Technique: Fish Fillet with Crispy Skin](#) with some of the fat.
5. When the fish is done, spoon some of the sauce onto the plate. Place a fillet on top of it and spoon over a little more of the sauce.

Section 9

Moroccan Lamb



I'm not going to lie I ripped this recipe off of a restaurant we went to last week. Well, sort of, their's is beef and didn't have any onions or parsley. Also, I have never actually tasted theirs (it was in a jar for sale as you were leaving) I just thought the ingredients sounded intriguing. I have no idea if it's traditional Moroccan or not and I sort of don't care as it's delicious. I imagine

this would be great in lettuce wraps but we always end up eating it before I bother to get the lettuce.

Ingredients

1 lb Ground Lamb

1 Large Onion, small dice

¼-½ cup of Ginger, fine dice

¼ cup of Olives, small dice

Fresh Parsley, small bunch, chopped

1 tsp of Ground Turmeric

½ tsp of Ground Cinnamon

1 - 2 tbsp Fat (olive oil works fine, lamb is better)

Sea Salt

Hardware

10" Skillet

Chef's Knife

Cutting Board

Spatula

1. Cook the lamb as in Technique: [How to Brown Ground](#)

Meat

2. When the meat is crispy and brown, add the onion, ginger, turmeric, and cinnamon to the pan. Stir with the spatula to incorporate everything into the mixture.
3. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are soft and sweet, about 5-7 minutes.
4. Add the chopped parsley and olives to the pan. Use the spatula to mix everything together until incorporated. Turn off the heat and let sit for a couple minutes before serving.

My S.O. wants me to include the fact that the jar from the restaurant had raisins on the ingredient list as well, so those can be added if you'd like the dish sweeter. I can't stand raisins and wasn't going to mention it but she's standing right behind me so there you have it.

I use this method of "ground meat with vegetables in a pan" constantly for quick meals. Try recreating some of your own favorite dishes (Thai lettuce wraps, chili, shepherds pie, etc) by cooking the ingredients similarly. Brown the meat, cook with the veggies and spices, then finish with fresh things. Done and done.

Chapter 5

Roasting

Roasting is the most primitive cooking method that home cooks will likely use. It involves simply exposing a piece of meat to dry heat until it is cooked. Based on temperature and time, the results can vary dramatically, from a juicy medium rare prime rib, to a pork roast that has been cooked so long that it is practically falling apart. Roasts are some of the most impressive dishes to serve for groups and can make any meal feel like a special occasion. The roast is usually a large piece of meat, or even a whole animal which can be very intimidating for a novice cook. This chapter will show you how to achieve the perfect roast in your own home oven through simple techniques, so you can confidently tackle any cut you prefer.

Chapter 6

Braising

Braising, in its essence, is searing a piece of meat, then cooking it slowly in liquid. Tough, normally inedible cuts of meat are broken down and rendered into sought after dishes that are the centerpieces for holidays and celebrations. Lamb shank, pot roast, osso bucco, coq au vin, ... all these meals are braises, and all are extremely delicious and satisfying. This chapter will teach you how to master the braise which, in truth, is one of the easiest (and most forgiving) ways to cook.

Section 1

Lamb Ribs with Mustard Sauce



Mustard is a fun ingredient because it tastes completely different when you cook it. It loses its spice and vinegar and takes on a very round, almost nutty flavor. I take advantage of that in the sauce by cooking some, and adding the rest uncooked at the end to give it some bite. This recipe would work with pork, beef, or almost any other ribs as well. The ribs get some color and a little bit

of crunch from the dry heat of an oven right before they are served.

Ingredients

1½ lbs Lamb Breast
1 Purple Onion, sliced
1 Clove of Garlic, sliced
3 tbsp Brown Mustard
Fresh Rosemary
Lamb Tallow
Water
Salt

Hardware

4 Quart Stock Pot or Pressure Cooker
Roasting Pan
Stainless Steel Tongs
Chef's Knife
Cutting Board

1. Place the pot over medium heat and add a couple tablespoons of tallow.
2. Add the onions, garlic, and a small sprig of rosemary to the pot with some salt. Cook until the onions begin to go translucent.
3. Add the meat into the pan along with enough water so the ribs are mostly covered (if the breast is too long to fit you may have to cut it in half). Add a bit more salt.
4. Cook the meat in the braising liquid:

Stock Pot: Increase the heat to bring the water to a boil, then reduce to a light simmer. Place the lid on the pan and let cook for about three hours, until the meat is falling off the bone. Check on the mixture every so often and make sure the liquid level doesn't drop below about 1½ cups (if you add more water, be sure to bring it back to a simmer).

Pressure Cooker: Lock the lid on the pot, bring up the heat to medium high until a good amount of steam is escaping, and then back down the heat until just a bit is escaping. Let cook for one hour.

The next part of the recipe is a two step process. You are going to make a sauce from the braising liquid, and roast the ribs in the oven to give them some color.

5. Once the meat is cooked, remove the meat from the pot and place it into a roasting pan or other oven safe vessel. While it's still hot, rub some tallow over the exposed surface.
6. Preheat your oven to 375°F.
7. While the oven is preheating, place the pot with the braising liquid back on the burner over medium heat. Add 2 tbsp of mustard (reserve 1 tbsp) and stir to incorporate.
8. Reduce the braising liquid until it forms a thick sauce. About 10 minutes.
9. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the final tbsp of mustard.

Mustard gets a very distinctive flavor when cooked, which is much more mellow than raw mustard. By cooking some and adding the other at the end you get a very round, full flavored mustard sauce that has both qualities.

10. While the mustard sauce is reducing, place the meat into the preheated oven. Let cook for ten minutes or until the ribs have some color.
11. When everything is done, give the sauce a good stir to incorporate the fat and onions. Spoon the sauce onto a plate and place some of the ribs on top.