

**The Breakaway Cook: Recipes That Break Away from the Ordinary**  
Eric Gower. Morrow, \$29.95 (240p) ISBN 978-0-06-085166-8

Though **Gower** (*Eric's Kitchen*; *The Breakaway Japanese Kitchen*) defends his inventive, improvisational cooking against charges of "fusion," his lively combination of cuisines from Japan, Mexico, India and Italy (among others) is exactly that—a fusion. For the adventurous home cook who delights in intense and surprising flavors—and who doesn't want to labor for hours in the kitchen—this book will provide endless ideas for invention. **Gower's** pantry basics are exotic yet accessible: tart pomegranate molasses, ginger and galangal, miso, yuzu (citrus valued for its zest) and umeboshi (Japanese pickled apricots). **Gower**, currently a private chef, lived for 15 years in Japan; his explanations of Japanese ingredients are especially informative, and though he is clear on typical practices, he doesn't shy from presenting his own unconventional combinations such as Frittata Giapponese, baked eggs with umeboshi, green beans, ginger and maple syrup, Mole Tofu with Spiced Bread Crumbs or Minty Boozy Chicken marinated with rum and lime. Even home cooks familiar with **Gower's** kind of staples will be pleasantly shocked by some of these recipes—in a way that culinary adventurers are always seeking. (*May*)