

# DESIGN SOUNDTRACK

## ▶ IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT . . . BY IVY GRACIE

The kitchen is hot – in every way. Let's face it; we all get a woodie for something in the kitchen, whether it's commercial grade appliances, the latest gadgets or the coolest finishes. Sometimes it's a woodie for somebody – remember the food fight in *9½ Weeks*? The kitchen is where we spend most of our decorating dollars and it's where we spend most of our time. And when we're not in it, we're watching television shows about it. HGTV and Fine Living are diligent about updating us on the latest must-haves for the kitchen; FOX's Chef Gordon Ramsay has turned it into a living hell. After weeks of high drama, Bravo designates a new Top Chef every year, and The Food Network has turned food prep into a softcore orgy – think Giada De Laurentiis slowly licking a spoon or Nigella Lawson clutching a mixing bowl to her ample bosom. Whatever the case, the kitchen is simultaneously sexy and fun... So why not use it once in a while?

This isn't about popping something in the microwave; it's about the up-to-the-elbows experience. Chopping, peeling, paring and grating. Creating something complex and satisfying from simple ingredients. And seeing the kitchen for what it is – a sensate explosion. Summer vegetables scream their yellows, reds and greens; garlic's earthy must lingers on the fingertips; cheeses seduce with wafting aromas; fresh herbs and spices taunt and tease; and freshly caught fish or free-range poultry offer up their cool, firm flesh to meet carnivorous desires.

Okay, cooking doesn't have to be perverse, but all the senses are heightened in the kitchen. And if preparing dinner isn't going to approach *Last Tango in Paris*, at the very least it should be fun. Setting the process to music only adds to the experience. Both music and food have been used as aphrodisiacs, they've set moods, they've offered comfort and given people reasons to gather ever since we've walked upright. They're made for each other.

A cooking soundtrack can be anything that feels right at the moment, but music that complements the cuisine is a no-brainer surefire win – a little Chucho Valdez is bound to inspire some fiery salsa; likewise, Anoushka Shankar (Ravi's daughter) might create the craving for curry. Pick a great rhythm for chopping; a great melody for encouragement. There's soul food and there's soul music. Coincidence? Probably not.

So the next time you end up in the kitchen on a weeknight wondering what the hell to do, get out the garlic press and the Wüsthof Tridents, crack open your favorite cookbook and bottle of wine, and see what happens. And set the stage with tunes that amuse and inspire. ■



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#### **XAVIER RUDD, *Food in the Belly***

**Australian artist, musician and surfer dude brings Dobro, didgeridoo and slide banjo together to create a simultaneously soothing and grooving organic sound.**

#### **WEIRD AL YANKOVIC, *The Food Album***

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