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Rails Recipes

Rails 3 Edition

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Rails Recipes

Rails 3 Edition



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What Makes a Good Recipe Book?

If I were to buy a *real* recipe book—you know, a book about cooking food—I wouldn't be looking for a book that tells me how to dice vegetables or how to use a skillet. I can find that kind of information in an overview about cooking.

A recipe book is about how to *make* food you might not be able to easily figure out how to make on your own. It's about skipping the trial and error and jumping straight to a solution that works. Sometimes it's even about making food you never imagined you *could* make.

If you want to learn how to make great Indian food, you buy a recipe book by a great Indian chef and follow his or her directions. You're not buying just any old solution. You're buying a solution you can *trust* to be good. That's why famous chefs sell lots and lots of books. People want to make food that tastes good, and these chefs know how to make (and teach *you* how to make) food that tastes good.

Good recipe books *do* teach you techniques. Sometimes they even teach you about new tools. But they teach these skills within the context of and with the end goal of *making something*—not just to teach them.

My goal for *Rails Recipes* is to teach you how to make great stuff with Rails and to do it right on your first try. These recipes and the techniques herein are extractions from my own work and from the “great chefs” of Rails: the Rails core developer team, the leading trainers and authors, and the earliest of early adopters.

I also hope to show you not only *how* to do things but to explain *why* they work the way they do. After reading through the recipes, you should walk away with a new level of Rails understanding to go with a huge list of successfully implemented hot new application features.

Who's It For?

Rails Recipes is for people who understand Rails and now want to see how an experienced Rails developer would attack specific problems. Like with a real recipe book, you should be able to flip through the table of contents, find something you need to *get done*, and get from start to finish in a matter of minutes.

I'm going to assume you know the basics or that you can find them in a tutorial or an online reference. When you're busy trying to *make* something, you don't have spare time to read through introductory material. So if you're

still in the beginning stages of learning Rails, be sure to have a copy of *Agile Web Development with Rails* [RTH1 1] and a bookmark to the Rails API documentation handy.¹

Rails Version

The examples in this book, except where noted, should work with Rails 3.1 or newer. All of the recipes that were part of the first edition of this book have been updated to Rails version 3.1, and several recipes cover new features that became available with that release.

Resources

The best place to go for Rails information is the Rails website.² From there, you can find the mailing lists, IRC channels, and blogs of the Rails community.

Pragmatic Programmers has also set up a forum for *Rails Recipes* readers to discuss the recipes, help each other with problems, expand on the solutions, and even write new recipes. While *Rails Recipes* was in beta, the forum served as such a great resource for ideas that more than one reader-posted recipe made it into the book! The forum is at <http://forums.pragprog.com/forums/8>.

The book's errata list is at <http://books.pragprog.com/titles/rr2/errata>. If you submit any problems you find, we'll list them there.

You'll find links to the source code for almost all of the book's examples at <http://www.pragmaticprogrammer.com/titles/rr2/code.html>.

If you're reading the PDF version of this book, you can report an error on a page by clicking the "erratum" link at the bottom of the page, and you can get to the source code of an example by clicking the gray lozenge containing the code's filename that appears before the listing.

Acknowledgments

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1. <http://api.rubyonrails.org>
2. <http://www.rubyonrails.org>

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