

## Fresh Cooking: A Year of Recipes from the Garrison Institute Kitchen

**Shelley Boris**

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The Garrison Institute, a hugely respected and influential meditation center focused on peace, poverty, the environment, and other troublesome issues of the day, is based in an old Capuchin friary overlooking the Hudson River. Thousands of people a year pass through for a few days or weeks to reflect, wrangle with ideas, or simply be, quietly. And others come for the meals prepared by a humble, sagelike woman named Shelley Boris. The culmination of her ten years at Garrison, *Fresh Cooking*, Shelley's new cookbook, is an important achievement in her mind because it has offered her a tangible way to show her appreciation to Garrison and to give something back. The Institute instilled in her a "philosophy that doesn't dictate answers but asks you to pay attention to what you're doing." She advises, "Stay as focused as you can, and when you lose your focus, as we all do, simply start paying attention again."

So what is meditation-friendly food? "Food that doesn't try too hard," she says. Her menus for the month of May feature Polenta with Spinach, Spring Onions, and Parmesan; Black Eyed Peas and Thyme; Spring Vegetable Curry with Brown Cardamom alongside Rice with Sorrel, Garlic Chives, and Mustard Greens; and Whole Roasted Chicken with Green Garlic and Sassafras.

In fact, the monasterial constraints inspire her: "I think of our relatively limited budget as a creative force rather than an impediment." Consequently, her menus are usually accompanied by cabbage, root vegetables, onions, beans, and grains.

In a foreword, chef Rozanne Gold writes that *Fresh Cooking* is a worthy heir to the like-minded *Chez Panisse Menu Cookbook*, Perla Meyers's *The Seasonal Kitchen*, and the Moosewood cookbooks: "All game-changers in the way that people connect to food and cooking in a larger context—where taste and ethics are not at odds."

MATT SUTHERLAND (Summer 2014)

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