

★ **How to Grill Vegetables: The New Bible for Barbecuing Vegetables over Live Fire**

Steven Raichlen

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Steven Raichlen's *How to Grill Vegetables* is an instant classic that brims with imaginative treatments of fruits and veggies, whose natural sugars reach “supernatural sweetness” when altered with smoke and fire.

Plant ingredients muscle their way into this most meatcentric cooking style, whether they're popped whole into embers, thrust on a spit, or roasted in foil, though Raichlen underscores that this book is not vegetarian, so much as “vegetable forward.” The recipes include instructions for both wood and gas grilling, and most denote variations for prepping ingredients ahead of time, or grilling hacks if one does not have all of the gear.

Most of the dishes seem easy to prepare, though a handful of time-intensive, accessory-necessary show stoppers are tucked in for serious grillheads. Inventive flavor combinations make the recipes distinctive. There's delicious nerdiness in the book's deconstructions of particular grilling techniques or ingredients, as with its rhapsodizing over the chartreuse fractals and mathematical structures of Romanesco broccoli.

There are twists on familiar dishes, like Grilled Baba Ganoush, where eggplant, “that self-contained plant-based smoking system,” shines as a dip for homemade grilled flatbreads and crackers. However, most of the book is made up of more unusual recipes—for grilled lettuce salads, bacon and date kebabs, and the weird but appealing eye-popper inspired by South Asian street hawkers, grilled eggs skewered in their shells. These tempting grilled vegetable recipes trot the globe, culling flavors and techniques from Armenia, Brazil, and Morocco, and also round the clock with ideas from breakfasts to desserts. Their dry, humorous, staccato style replicates Raichlen's tone on television cooking shows.

How to Grill Vegetables is the perfect barbecue cookbook for when we can all safely rejoice in each other's company again, sharing conversation, love, and vegetables seared to perfection.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (May / June 2021)

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