



★ **Just Enough: Vegan Recipes and Stories from Japan's Buddhist Temples**

Gesshin Claire Greenwood

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Part memoir, part cookbook, part philosophical musing, *Just Enough* is perhaps the first recipe anthology you'll read cover-to-cover before placing it on your kitchen shelf. In eleven reflective chapters, Gesshin Claire Greenwood uses tales from her life in food to illustrate a Buddhist ontology for non-ascetics, complete with recipe pairings for each theme.

If our lives are the sum of our small actions, then the essential act of eating is a fundamental building block. *Just Enough* is a proposal for eating and living with intention. Every dish mentioned is free of meat, fish, and animal byproducts and is mindfully orchestrated as an expression of the Buddhist "middle way." Balance and moderation are key, right down to the book's suggested meal pairings.

Greenwood's pages are plentiful with learning opportunities, all without a single insinuation of perfection or false humility. A recipe for dashi—the base for many Japanese dishes—reveals a secret key to getting that *something* that makes it taste authentic, setting readers up to produce restaurant-level miso soup and ramen.

Pages build on honest, earthy lessons-in-progress, often learned the hard way. They draw on stories from Greenwood's time as a Buddhist nun in Japan through to her present-day life, in which she is married in San Francisco.

This is honest work, free of orthorexia or spiritual bypassing. Witty, discerning, engaging, and somehow familiar, it is worth indulging in, even if you never try out a single one of its recipes—they are a delicious bonus, laying out new techniques for Western readers in a clear, accessible way. Access to a good Asian market is a plus, but chapters on California "Japanese" cuisine are supermarket friendly and good for weeknight meal inspirations.

Written less as though it's by a spiritual teacher and more as if it's coming from a wise best friend, *Just Enough* is cozy reading, as comforting and familiar as its miso soup recipe. It's a cookbook-cum-memoir that's full of wisdom—a welcome balm for the hard work of being human.

JESSIE HORNESS (July/August 2019)

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