ForeWord Reviews

COOKING

One-Dish Vegan
Robin Robertson
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A veteran cookbook author brings ease to the kitchen with an expert hand.

A revision of her earlier collection, *One-Dish Vegetarian Meals*, Robin Robertson's latest venture includes new recipes—many of which are soy- or gluten-free—that enliven standards of the vegan table, including quinoa, tofu, bulgur, and chickpeas. With Cajun, Mediterranean, Asian, and other influences, these soups, salads, stews, stir-fries, pastas, and more are designed to offer intriguing dinner alternatives.

Longtime vegans and curious non-vegans alike will find a refreshing breadth beyond the handful of expected classics included here, such as three-bean rice salad and Cuban black beans. Through recipes that range from Bombay Beans with Chutney to Bahn Mizza, a fusion of Vietnamese Bánh mì and pizza, Robertson appeals to the imagination and the senses. Sparing use of meat analogues (TVP granules, tempeh, and seitan) should also draw a broader audience in search of healthful ideas.

Robertson's straightforward, friendly approach is complemented by the book's unillustrated pages. Recalling community and firehouse cookbooks that emphasize flavor over styling, more than 150 recipes appear one after another. Though multiple steps are presented in numbered paragraphs, the instructions remain clear and allow for easy preparation. No need for sidebars or embellishment; these recipes stand on their own like passed-down personal favorites.

Formerly a chef and also a *VegNews* columnist, Robertson brings her training to the foreground through an emphasis on fresh vegetables. Allowances for some substitutions offer seasonal flexibility. Spices, herbs, and sauces are readily available in the average pantry, and even the more specialized ingredients—gochujang (a Korean chili paste), filé powder (a Creole ingredient made from sassafras), and agave nectar, for example—are stocked in many city markets. Robertson is careful to note that "one-dish" does not always mean cooked in "one-pot"—still, many of the dishes require little advance work and can be served without fuss. Slow cooker recipes are intentionally absent (Robertson cites her earlier book, *Fresh from the Vegan Slow Cooker*

, as a resource), but handy cooks who prefer the method should be able to adapt the chapter on chilis as well as several of the soups.

This is a welcome tour of the modern vegan palate, providing just enough guidance to avoid overwhelming, and a change from brown rice-and vegetable fare. Recommended especially as an introduction to Robertson's extensive body of work.

Karen Rigby