

One World Vegetarian Cookbook

Troth Wells

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Filled with the vegetarian recipes sent in from around the world from friends of Oxford's *New Internationalist* magazine, this cookbook has the cozy, chatty feel of those fundraiser recipe books churches pull together, but with much better photographs.

In the introduction, author Troth Wells lines up the main arguments of the vegetarian position: eating meat is neither healthy for the planet nor for individual human health. Meat consumption is rising quickly in the “Majority World,” particularly India and China, as disposable income rises, but meat production is not sustainable. While her analysis suffers the same flaw of many vegetarian and vegan tracts—it fails to consider or understand the value animals bring to an integrated farm in terms of soil fertility—the introduction reads reasonably well, and offers a rather optimistic tone. While vegetarians are a small minority in most nations, it is getting easier to find non-meat dishes virtually everywhere. In addition, gardening, as a frequent outgrowth of the vegetarian lifestyle, is not only a source of good food, but a source of pleasure.

The recipe collection features dishes from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Australasia, and the Americas, loosely organized into four main sections: Starters, Soups and Snacks; Main Dishes; Salads, Side Dishes and Sauces; and Desserts, Drinks and Cakes. While lumping soups together with cheese pies may seem odd at first, a combined index of ingredients and meal types makes it easy to find what one wants. The recipes are uncomplicated, and the instructions add to the book's easy, breezy tone. When making nut loaf, for example, “the easiest thing is to bung all the ingredients...into a food-processor.” While dairy is indicted in the introduction, there are plenty of cheese- and dairy-friendly recipes here; similarly, corn, an energy-intensive crop, is no stranger. Well's vegetarianism seems to be leavened by a relaxed attitude about what foods are okay by her, and her overriding goal is to represent all corners of the world.

All in all, this book succeeds best at making cooking vegetarian dishes seem a simple and pleasant affair: light on the rhetoric, inclusive in the foods and regions represented, easy on the cook, and pleasing to the eye and the palate. This book will be helpful for cooks looking for an introduction to vegetarian cooking, or cooks seeking a little more global variety in their menus.

Troth Wells, an editor at the *New Internationalist*, is the author of two previous cookbooks.

TERESA SCOLLON (January / February 2011)

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