



★ **The Mexican Vegetarian Cookbook**

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The Mexican Vegetarian Cookbook is a dazzling, rich text that highlights the skill of *maestras* throughout Mexico's diverse regions, relating how vegetables and herbs are the foundation of disparate dishes in the national cuisine.

The book covers favorites like tamales and enchiladas alongside intriguing versions of soups, mains, snacks, and starters. Some of its breakfast dishes include eggs, while others involve plump tortillas packed with nopales and potatoes in smoky guajillo pepper sauce, in addition to a recipe for Oaxacan Mushroom Turnovers. Its soups include vegetarian ceviches, fresh tomato soup with fried potato balls, and Chihuahuan Patron's Pecan Soup, a creamy concoction spiced with cinnamon and clove. Forget eggs and mayo in potato salad; try Arronte's visual symphony of white and green with new potatoes, watercress, and avocado in a refreshing lemon dressing.

Mexico's ancient cultivation of corn, beans, and peppers makes them the natural stars of many dishes, alongside a resplendent variety of other plants, including chayotes, zucchini flowers, prickly pears, wild greens, corn fungus, jicama, and oyster mushrooms. And the Mexican love of fruit and sweets is evident in chapters on breads, drinks, and desserts, including a festive showstopper cake of sliced figs over a chilled froth of whipped cream and homemade meringues.

This culinary opus concludes with basic recipes for tortillas and sauces, as well as clear instructions for prepping vegetables. Its bilingual chapter and recipe titles, snippets of food history, vibrant photographs of food and marketplace scenes, and a colorful design contribute a sense of Mexico's culture. The recipes note regional origins, vegan, dairy-free, and gluten-free designations, and whether dishes can be made in one pot, in thirty minutes or less, or with five or fewer ingredients.

The Mexican Vegetarian Cookbook does a brilliant job of transforming formidable vegetable bounties into sophisticated cuisines.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (September / October 2022)

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