

The Modern Hippie Table: Recipes and Menus for Eating Simply and Living Beautifully

Lauren Thomas

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Boho chic and South Floridian, blogger Lauren Thomas's *The Modern Hippie Table* dispenses recipes, advice, menus, and decorating ideas with her trademark "laid-back elegance." Featuring comfort foods, easy dishes, memorable decorations, and plenty of preparatory advice, her book takes the angst out of inviting others over.

In the book's plentiful color photographs, its self-proclaimed hippie vibe is established as stylish and artful. Thomas's hospitality philosophy is to make guests feel at ease with uncomplicated food and drinks and relaxed, festive ambiances. The key, she says, is to plan details like traffic flow, mood lighting, music, food, and decorations well in advance, so that the host can concentrate on welcoming guests, seeing to their comforts, and enjoying their own party.

The "lost art" of tablescaping is given special consideration, with many ideas about sumptuous tablewares and linens, and creative arrangements of flowers and foliage. And the chapter on charcuterie boards—which can be used to plate up the traditional meats and cheeses, but also mixes of portable desserts, like doughnuts, fruit, and cookies—is eye-catching with visual compositions, highlighted with flowers and edibles tucked into the empty spaces.

There are suggested menus for various kinds of entertaining, including brunch, sports crowd buffets, date nights, and homey weekday family meals. The majority of the book's seventy-plus recipes are geared toward beginner cooks and those looking for healthy, easy, and quick dishes. Many feature gluten-free ingredients, and others involve short-cut ingredients for busy cooks. Two of the more unusual recipes are the vibrant Roasted Red Cabbage topped with Gorgonzola, toasted hazelnuts, and a drizzle of honey; and a Fresh Grapefruit Paloma cocktail garnished with dehydrated and sugared grapefruit slices.

The Modern Hippie Table shares a fashionable, fresh, and relaxed entertaining aesthetic with plenty of noteworthy sources of inspiration.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (September / October 2022)

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