FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Foreword Review COOKING

The New Southwest: Classic Flavors with a Modern Twist

Meagan Micozzi
Hippocrene Books (Oct 15, 2013)
Hardcover $35.00 (236pp)
978-0-7818-1315-0

Accessible layout and focus on hearty homestyle dishes help you spice up your repertoire of Southwestern cuisine.

Sonoran, New Mexican, Tex-Mex: Southwestern cuisine includes many variations, conjuring fiery, rustic comfort foods. Drawn from Mexican, Spanish, and Native American influences, the cuisine often features chiles, corn, tomato, a variety of meats, and unexpected innovations, as boundaries expand to include elements beyond the region. In *The New Southwest*, Meagan Micozzi forgoes traditional dishes in favor of home-style selections, an unusual angle that favors rich indulgences. For aspiring cooks looking to spice up their repertoires, this is a highly inviting introduction to flavors of the desert; for cooks already versed in Southwestern cuisine, the book provides useful ideas for potlucks and party accompaniments.

An East Coast transplant and current resident of Scottsdale, Arizona, Micozzi is a self-taught cook who immersed herself in her new environment. Curiosity led her to create scarlettabakes.com, a blog that has been cited in major media outlets that include the *Huffington Post* and the *Phoenix New Times*. Micozzi's vibrantly designed debut brings popular fare to the average kitchen with an approachable tone and personalized tips. An especially informative chapter, "Building Blocks," highlights a few of the cuisine's staples. The book also offers sections on drinks, snacks, condiments, appetizers, sides, and breakfast foods. There is an absence of salads and soups, but the book is not intended to present a multi-course menu.

Each recipe is accompanied by a stylish color photograph of the completed dish. A clear, columnar layout separates the ingredients from the instructions and permits readers to gauge the complexity at a glance. Caloric splurges predominate, with recipes featuring butter, cream, eggs, coconut milk, and chorizo. One recipe calls for chicharrónes (fried pork skins), while another is unapologetically dubbed Fancy Pants Frito Pie. Adobo Potato Gratin takes a spin on the classic, and the recipe for Sweet Glazed Avocado Donuts pairs the natural creaminess of the fruit with the decadence of the baked treat. Healthier options include grilled fish as well as a stacked, roasted vegetable pie. Micozzi also features her own unconventional embellishments: the addition of hummus to tacos, fideos (a type of pasta) to the single-burrito recipe, and peanut-butter-and-jelly empanadas with kid appeal.

With strong emphasis on hearty dishes that are easy to serve family style, *The New Southwest* is timely for the holidays. Micozzi successfully makes the transition as part of the growing online-to-print food-blogger phenomenon.

KAREN RIGBY (Winter 2014)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.