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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ COOKING

Vegan Planet: 400 Irresistible Recipes With Fantastic Flavors From Home and Around the World

Robin Robertson
Harvard Common Press (January 2003)
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Dietary principles can be confusing. Some vegetarians don't consume animal flesh; some (ovo-lacto vegetarians) will eat eggs and dairy products; others (pesco-vegetarians) will eat fish but not other meats. Vegans consume nothing animal-no butter, cheese, milk, eggs, fish, or meat. Homecooks, when faced with a vegan diner for the first time, may pull their hair in dismay. This lush, weighty new cookbook delivers help with style. Chocolate cake, kibbeh, jambalaya, French toast, and lasagna are dishes that vegans may think they'll never eat again. The author proves that these dishes and more can be transformed into lusty vegan cuisine.

Readers who experienced the seventies' Moosewood-style vegetarian food will find this book a modern, streamlined delight. Robertson, who is a veteran vegetarian cooking instructor and cookbook writer, divides her extravagance of recipes into twenty categories that borrow from cuisines as diverse as Cajun, Japanese, Thai, Italian, and Indian. Chapter One expertly covers Vegan Basics, with information on veganism, handling staples like tofu and seitan (wheat gluten), stocking a pantry, oils, sea vegetables, and more. The remaining chapters burst with sophisticated soups, salads, sauces, vegetable dishes, grain dishes, pasta, beans and chilis, stir-fried and sautéed dishes, fashionable pizzas, wraps and burgers, refined desserts, and even polished breakfasts. All are created with no eggs, cheese, milk, butter, meat, or seafood.

Robertson proves the adage that "limits yield intensity." The recipes, mostly simple, vibrate with color and excitement. Her food combinations make them shine: Sweet potato gratin with pineapple and coconut milk, Lemon risotto with peas and scallions, Three-way sesame-coated tofu strips with spicy broccoli, or Asian pear and baby spinach salad with warm walnut dressing. Robertson relies heavily on tofu, and sometimes employs vegetarian no-no's like white sugar, white rice, and white flour, but overall she achieves something that was missing in the early days of vegetarianism: colorful, tasty, fun food.

A sprightly primer on vegan cooking, this is the perfect cookbook for that new vegetarian or vegan in the family-or for a loved one who needs to change a high-cholesterol diet. Every page yields a useful, pleasurable recipe. Opening it, cooks will vibrate with excitement and feel pulled into the kitchen. Although many people may think that vegans are from another planet, Robertson demonstrates that it just might be a planet they would enjoy visiting.
NANCY K. ALLEN (March / April 2003)

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