



## Vegan with Bite: Because Taste Matters

**Shannon Martinez**

Hardie Grant (Nov 3, 2020)

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Direct, brash, and ribald, Australian chef Shannon Martinez is food's punk rock aunt, unfussy and enviably hip. Her latest cookbook, *Vegan With Bite*, is a discursive, personal romp that emphasizes food for "eaties," not "foodies."

Martinez is familiar with the failings and inaccessibility of veganism. She's both a famous vegan chef and someone who eats meat and doesn't see this as a contradiction. Rather, she believes we can all do better if we eschew thinking of vegan eating as an all-or-nothing diet, and her cookbook is "less about clean living and more about TASTY living, with a lower impact on the world around us."

The cookbook approaches vegan food from a "survive and thrive" perspective that isn't hell-bent on outlawing animal proteins, but rather on shifting the ways that people cook with and consume them. The recipes move animal products from stars of the show to optional supporting roles that are easily substituted with vegan alternatives. Martinez maintains this harm reduction ethos in ways that radically change the parameters of who and what's included in vegan cuisine.

The only drawbacks to Martinez's approach are the substantial pantry and multistage cooking that's required to build layers of texture and flavor into vegan options. Because of this, Martinez makes sure every last ingredient and bit of effort is rewarded with food that's robust and flexible, as in her meatless meatball recipe, which can go any direction from Swedish to curried to Italian.

These recipes aren't vegan translations of nonvegan food. They stand as their own cuisine. While they might not be a natural transition for the meat-and-two-veg household, Martinez's attitude that anything goes as long as it's delicious shows vegan eating in a whole new light that might be enough for many "meaties" to make the leap.

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