

Vinaigrettes and Other Dressings: 60 Sensational Recipes to Liven Up Greens, Grains, Slaws, and Every Kind of Salad

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To sell her readers on vinaigrettes and dressings, Michele Jordan must first sell salad, and she does so with a poet's flair: "From a few leaves of just-picked lettuces damp with an evening's rain and a creamy frenzy of earthy potatoes napped in a velvety mayonnaise to a cool mound of silky rice noodles in a tart and fiery dressing, salads ... keep us healthy, happy, and alive." In her lexicon, salad is not defined by a wedge of iceberg lettuce but can be expanded to include grains, pasta, potatoes, any kind of fruit and vegetable, cheese, eggs, fish, and more. And for this multiplicity of combined foods, Jordan offers only the most tried and true vinaigrettes and dressings, but with enough variety to satisfy every palate.

"Call it Vinaigrette" contains twenty-eight classic recipes for continentally minded eaters, including Balsamic Vinaigrette, a whimsical Watermelon Vinaigrette, and the richer Warm Maple Bacon Vinaigrette. "Around the World" follows with twelve dressings to accompany cuisine from India, Southeast Asia, Mexico, South America, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and North Africa. "Classically Creamy," Jordan's chapter on mayonnaise-based dressings, includes eleven unique concoctions with instructions for creating the perfect mayonnaise base. Recipes include American favorites such as Blue Cheese and Ranch, along with more eclectic varieties such as Curry Mayonnaise, Creamy Sesame Ginger, and True Aioli.

The project wouldn't be complete without salad suggestions to pair with these complex dressings, and Jordan does not disappoint. She provides "templates" with suggested variations for a simple green salad, fruit salad, coleslaw, and potato, pasta, rice, and bread salad. At a time when cookbooks are in abundance in bookstores and local libraries, *Vinaigrettes* outshines many of its contemporaries with its delicious color photography (making it practically a pleasurable "coffee table" read) as well as a philosophical treatise on food offered by Jordan who, one senses, is a true culinary craftswoman. Another selling point is the author's rankings of dressings according to taste—she assigns each recipe denotations of savory, sweet, warm, spicy, hot, creamy, rich, tangy, tart, and/or fragrant and defines these categories for the home chef who may be in search of a particular genre of flavor. In addition, each recipe is accompanied by endless variations, which can be used in accordance with the seasonal availability of ingredients or personal preference.

Jordan seems to be a deeply focused chef, honing her expertise and lauding one food at a time for her readers, as evidenced by previous publications (*Salt & Pepper*, *Polenta*, *Ravioli & Lasagne*, *The Good Cook's Book of Oil & Vinegar*). *Vinaigrettes* is a well-developed ode to the way we dress our salads.

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