

## The Vegetarian Mother's Cookbook – "A Natural Food Inspiration"

By Alisa Fleming, [www.GoDairyFree.org](http://www.GoDairyFree.org) - For anyone seeking to expand his or her culinary repertoire of all natural foods, this cookbook is an absolute gem. The author, Cathe Olson, has created an enormous collection of simple, flavorful, and healthy recipes using a wide range of basic ingredients. Most of which are quite easy to locate. Her target audience is mothers and mothers-to-be, but as someone who is not expecting, I can vouch that this cookbook is truly for everyone.

Of course, The Vegetarian Mother's Cookbook contains several helpful sections addressing mothers' only needs, such as food cures for common pregnancy discomforts. However, beyond the wonderful array of everyone-friendly recipes, I found a ton of useful information for myself. There are grain and bean cooking charts, a vegetarian substitute guide, notes on high calcium recipes, timesaver suggestions, cravings tips, vitamin and mineral primers, and more. Realistically, this is a cookbook and guide for healthful eating, period. As an added bonus, all of the recipes are vegetarian, while most are dairy-free and vegan.

I am approaching veganism in reverse it seems. Like Cathe Olson, most people go vegetarian, cutting out meat, fish, and gradually eggs. From there, many opt to wean off of dairy gradually, until they make the final cheese-free leap to a vegan diet. Cathe offers excellent options to assist this transition within her cookbook.

For me, giving up dairy was extremely rewarding and relatively easy. Yet, cutting out every last bit of animal protein seems to be a stumbling block. Don't get me wrong; I always enjoy a good vegan meal, side dish, or snack. My biggest challenge with going completely vegan is feeling satisfied. Any time I eat a pure veggie meal that doesn't contain tofu, I just don't feel full. As much as I love the bean curd, having it with every meal just isn't viable.

Needless to say, I was excited to trial some of the entree worthy recipes from Cathe Olson. Though her cookbook isn't 100% vegan, it is very close. She seems to make excellent use of various beans, grains, and vegetables to create hearty meals and snacks. After all, her recipes are intended for feeding two.

For my first delve into The Vegetarian Mother's Cookbook, I chose to prepare a lunch of Gingery Black Beans and Sweet Potato Salad with Peanut Butter Dressing. Since both had a ginger component, and the colors looked so nice together, it seemed like a natural compliment. I know; trialing two new recipes at once is a definite formula for disaster. Luckily, both were relatively easy and involved some down time. While the sweet potatoes were cooking I cut up the veggies and got the gingery beans started. While the beans were cooking, I prepared the peanut butter dressing. All in all, it took me about 1/2 hour to prepare, but if you had some pre-steamed or roasted sweet potatoes, this meal could be ready in 15 or 20 minutes with a clean kitchen to boot!

Oh yes...so how were they? The taste was absolutely delicious. Both dishes were full of flavor on their own, but I began commingling them for a really jazzed up entree. A little side salad rounded out the color mix, and gave me a touch of the green stuff.

As for the satiety, I ate just one serving of each and was positively stuffed! We aren't just talking Chinese food filler either, this meal kept me going for hours. Now I was left wondering how to experiment with the leftovers...burrito filling anyone? Yes, the beans inspired me to use the leftovers (green stuff and all) as a tasty stuffing for some leftover tortillas the next day. Though I had never had a sweet potato burrito before, it turned out to be a natural fit. It seems Cathe agrees with me. After I had created what I thought was a new invention, I discovered her recipe for black bean and sweet potato enchiladas!

Though I do not qualify as a vegetarian mother, this cookbook is easily one of my all time favorites. My copy has nearly doubled in size from all of the pages I have earmarked to trial. I have already been inspired to purchase a few new-to-me ingredients, such as wheat berries, for Cathe's Wheat Berry Pilaf, and some coconut oil to prepare the wheat-free Coconut Almond Shortbread. I do hope that Cathe opts to produce a second vegetarian / vegan cookbook titled for everyone. After all, we don't want the men to feel shy about purchasing and using her nutritious book of recipes!

### My Extra Notes & Tips

- This cookbook contains over 300 recipes, all of which are vegetarian, most of which are vegan/dairy-free or have vegan/dairy-free options
- The recipes are fairly easy to follow, with more than half containing 10 ingredients or less. They range from extremely simple options, like basic oatmeal and homemade ginger ale, to the slightly more complex tofu quiche and gluten-free bunt cake.
- This is an attractive book, suitable for gift giving to women who are expecting. It is a unique and intelligent baby shower gift, that will likely stay in their collection long after the baby is born.

- This cookbook deserves five stars for layout. The font is large enough and very easy to read, recipes are typically one per page, and the format is very simple to follow.
- Though the entire book is not a one-size-fits-all for special diets (with the exception of vegetarian), there are many wonderful gluten-free, soy-free, egg-free, and nut-free recipes throughout. It is up to the reader's discretion to pick the recipes that are suitable for their diet.

Where to Purchase:

- United States - Amazon
- Canada - Amazon
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