

Cookbook Adventures - Four Books, One Kitchen

Alisa Fleming - Over the past few months, I must confess that my interest in cooking had all but vanished. Somehow the effort required to seek out ingredients and spend that extra time in the kitchen to discover new recipes just didn't seem worth it. Luckily, a surge of interesting (and well, not so interesting) cookbooks have renewed my curiosity in trialing new dishes. With four new cookbooks in hand, I am once again enjoying the pleasures of a home cooked meal...

Really, the one that did it, the one that truly lit a fire under me was the Whole Foods Allergy Cookbook by Cybele Pascal. I haven't completed my review on this one, as I am still trialing the wonderfully simple recipes. Cybele adds a gourmet touch to this host of food allergy friendly ideas (every recipe is free of milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, peanuts, and tree nuts) for foods that actually sound enticing. Last night I made the Cuban Beans and Rice, they were delicious! I have the Penne w/ Cauliflower & Olives, Chicken Salad w/ Avocado Dressing, Sunflower Lentil Loaf, and Millet Murrainca scheduled for this week's menu. My fridge is stocked with fresh veggies and I am ready to go!

I would say second in line is Vegan Vittles by Jo Stepaniak. Once Cybele urged me to take up cooking again, Jo's recipes took on a new level of interest. Her comfort food style offers wonderful ease and a solid recipe base. I find Jo's recipes to be on the hearty side. Unlike Cybele, she relies more on the flavor of the base foods rather than adding a good deal of spices. I must admit, I am a spice girl, but the recipes in Vegan Vittles are quite easy to customize since the ingredient lists are almost always quite short (just the way I like them)! I trialed her Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookies, and the Traditional Macaroni and Cheese. Next up: Applejacks (or Banana Flapjacks, No-Knead Whole Wheat Herb Bread, Chickpea Oat Burgers, Pad Thai (I have to see how this is made without fish sauce!), Creamy Raw Spinach Sauce, Spicy Peanut Sauce (after trialing the Ginger People peanut sauce, I am really craving this stuff), and Carrot Cake. Okay, I may not get to all of this right away, but really, I am feeling ambitious.

I also got a copy of the Ultimate UnCheese Cookbook, also by Jo Stepaniak, also an excellent book. It pretty much covers everything cheese, and cheese related. This is actually where I trialed the Mac n Cheese recipe from (it was in both books), and also a Chickpea Flour Pizza (really a flatbread, but quite a fun experience). I have my eye on the Blintzes and one of her many Focaccia recipes. Since I was never a huge cheese fan, I may never get to the many wonderful cheese recipes within. She even has hard cheese recipes, and I must admit, the pictures look impressive.

The last book that I attempted to venture was the Raw 50 by Carol Alt. Unfortunately, while Carol got me a bit excited about raw adventures, in the end I wasn't inspired. Well, no need to drag on about it here... you can read my non-trials of the Raw 50 in the review.

Well, three out of four isn't bad! I should have full reviews and pictures up in our cookbook reviews on those three in a couple of weeks.