

Local Bounty - "Great option for adding more produce to your diet"

Local Bounty: Seasonal Vegan Recipes by Devra Gartenstein

If you are seeking a complete cookbook to cooking vegan, then you may want to add another to your collection, but if you are seeking easy yet imaginative recipes that will help you add more seasonal produce to your diet, then you have hit the mark.

The author begins with a good primer, which includes an introduction to the various vegetable "families," solid explanations of various cooking techniques (at last, I understand braising!), and a quick chart on basic seasonings to use (combinations of spices, herbs, and basic pantry items) to create certain ethnic flavors. The latter may have been brief, but I had never seen this in a cookbook prior, and plan to reference it in the future.

The chapters/sections are of course broken down by season, each with a brief one-page intro that lists out the correlating in-season items. Always a useful thing to have on hand! The recipes are refreshingly simple: not too many ingredients, brief yet thorough instructions, just one recipe per page with room for notes, and good sized print for those of us who are visually impaired.

Keep in mind; this cookbook is really about vegetables and fruits, so it isn't filled with grain and pasta dishes, tofu, or meat substitutes. As someone who cares more about adding more of the green and fibrous stuff to my daily regimen than following a particular diet (beyond dairy-free of course!), this was a refreshing change from your average vegan or vegetarian cookbook. I also liked that just a handful of recipes used soy.

So enough about what isn't in this cookbook, there is plenty inside to keep anyone busy … not in the kitchen of course, but rather eating the results! Local Bounty has soups, sauces, salads, and hearty "sides" aplenty. For an extra treat, there are some sweet recipes that randomly appear as bonuses throughout the book. Those who think that vegan desserts should use fruit, unrefined sweeteners, and whole grain flours for a slightly healthier reward, will be doubly pleased.

Really, I was about to start dog-earing the pages for recipes to trial, but I would make less of a mess dog-earing the pages I don't want to make! This is definitely a go to book for when I have gone out on a limb and purchased a "new-to-me" in-season ingredient or an abundance of an old favorite that has been stockpiled from overflowing local farmers, or when I just crave some simple vegetable and fruit dishes … which is just about every day!

Since it is now fall heading into winter in this half of the hemisphere, I plan to start with the Roasted Pumpkin Seeds (perhaps using some in the pumpkin seed stuffing), Gingered Pears, Roasted Root Vegetables, Portuguese Kale and White Bean Soup, and the Braised Carrots with Cranberries (have to try that new technique out!).

Local Bounty is available on Amazon. The above review was written by Alisa Fleming, author of Go Dairy Free: The Guide and Cookbook