

The Dairy-Free Library: Vegetarian Times Fast and Easy

Every Tuesday we will feature a review from our Dairy-Free Library. This week's selection is Vegetarian Times Fast and Easy: Great Food You Can Make in Minutes from the Editors of Vegetarian Times Magazine (reviewed by jae steele, author of Get It Ripe). Note that this is not a completely dairy-free publication, but we found it to be dairy-free and vegan-friendly - I was attracted to this book as soon as I saw the cover. To me it says warm, simple, vegetabley - just what I love in a cookbook. Vegetarian Times magazine has been around for more than 30 years. And this is the latest in a small handful of books they've published over the years.

Best bits: While I don't generally time my kitchen adventures, all the recipes in this book can be made in 45 minutes or less (each one is labeled with a 15-, 30-, or 45-minute symbol). They give clear, uncomplicated directions (so "fast and easy" lives up to its name!). There are 16 attractive full-colour photographs, for those of you who're visually enticed. I look forward to sharing this book with my boyfriend - we've just moved in together and I'm still not sure what his cooking style is - "fast and easy" maybe be just the thing for him (and save me from making 90% of the weekly meals!).

At the top of my "To Try" list: Summer Salad Rolls with Peanut Dressing (though it calls for reduced fat peanut butter, which I'm not familiar with), Chocolate Bean Cupcakes (which calls for a can of black beans!) and Mango Ginger Pudding.

Less-wonderful bits: I like cookbooks to convey some of the author(s) personality, but it's not something I get from this book. Perhaps because it's been written by a team of people? Some recipes are pretty run-of-the mill sounding (like the Vegetable Lentil Curry), but we all need those recipes where we're starting out. There no mention of organics in recipes that call for dairy, eggs, or produce that tends to be highly pesticide - something that I think is seriously needed.

Whole foods focus?: Somewhat, though there are recipes that rely on prepared ingredients such as angel food cake or faux sausages.

Vegan-friendly?: yes (I'd say most are vegan or have vegan options, though some rely on cheese or eggs)

Eco-conscious?: Only in that it's a meatless cookbook.

Web presence?: yup

To Purchase: Vegetarian Times Fast and Easy is available on Amazon This is a third party review by jae steele, author of the award-winning cookbook and health resource, Get It Ripe: a fresh take on vegan cooking and living. She is also a registered holistic nutritionist who practices in Toronto, Canada. A lover of cookbooks for many years, her collection to date boasts over 120 volumes, and is slowly taking over her kitchen. You can keep up with her food blog at Domestic Affair, and take a peek at her cooking videos.