

The 30 Minute Vegan: Over 175 quick, delicious, and healthy recipes for everyday cooking

The 30-Minute Vegan by Mark Reinfeld and Jennifer Murray (Book Review)

I'm not vegan, but I do love vegan recipes. As someone who is dairy-free and who loves their veggies, I am always looking for new and creative ways to enjoy them. Vegetarian cookbooks are typically filled with cheese and milk … I have never understood why such authors feel the need to drown their produce that way! Vegan cookbooks tend to rely more on using seasonings, fresh pairings, and unique cooking techniques to bring out the flavor in natural foods. That said … so many vegan cookbooks spend the majority of their recipes trying to recreate non-vegan foods by using various soy products and faux meat and cheese alternatives, but not The 30 Minute Vegan. Honestly, this cookbook was breath of fresh air.

First, it is packed with recipes. But second, there doesn't seem to be a specific agenda beyond good vegan food. Yes, there are some recipes that use dairy or meat alternatives and yes, there are some recipes that are variations of “old favorites,” but there are also countless recipes that pair delicious seasonings with fresh produce, and even numerous unintimidating raw recipes. In other words, there really is something for everyone in this cookbook … and the recipes really do take less than 30 minutes! At first pass, I encountered so many recipes that captured my attention that my copy was already riddled with dog-ears within 24 hours of receiving it.

I started with the Seasoned Spuds.

Rather than roasting, these taters are steamed and then bathed in a unique mixture of seasonings and a little bit of oil just before serving. This different technique intrigued me, especially since you could actually use high quality oil without fear of its smoke point or breaking it down. The seasonings included fennel, rosemary, soy sauce, fresh garlic, salt, pepper, and paprika. I was amazed by the resultant smoky taste. Though my husband and I tend not to like fresh garlic, when crushed and added to the hot potatoes, it cooked just enough to keep it from being too strong, which was nice. Also, I loved the instructions and cooking technique. I am very slow in the kitchen, but their steps of “put this on,” “do this while that is warming up,” and “do this while that is cooking,” really worked. The dish, along with the rest of our lunch, came together in no time.

For my second recipe, I made the Chocolate Sesame Bonbons.

These babies could be in The 5 Minute Vegan cookbook (if it existed of course)! I wasn't sure how they would turn out, so packed full of seeds and with so little sweetener, but they were positively delicious. The sesame seeds gave these little snacks a delightful rice crispy-like crunch. I will definitely be making these, and variations, again.

In the end, what impressed me most about The 30 Minute Vegan was how well thought out and executed the recipes were. The ingredient amounts and instructions were spot on and well-tested, no adjustments needed (surprisingly rare among the sea of cookbook errors and untested recipes). Mark Reinfeld and Jennifer Murray have really delivered in this cookbook.

Other cookbooks by these authors include:

- The Complete Idiot's Guide to Eating Raw (Mark Reinfeld and Jennifer Murray)
- Vegan Fusion World Cuisine: Healing Recipes and Timeless Wisdom from our Hearts to Yours (Mark Reinfeld)
- The 30-Minute Vegan's Taste of the East (Mark Reinfeld and Jennifer Murray) - available in July, 2010

This is a third party review by Alisa Fleming, author of Go Dairy Free: The Guide & Cookbook. The 30-Minute Vegan is available to purchase on Amazon