



# **Herbivoracious: A Flavor Revolution with 150 Vibrant and Original Vegetarian Recipes**

*Michael Natkin (Visual Art)*

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Some of the most creative new minds in the kitchen and the most exhilarating new voices in food writing come from the world of blogs. Michael Natkin, creator of the wildly popular [Herbivoracious.com](http://Herbivoracious.com), indisputably fits both of those descriptions. In *Herbivoracious: A Vegetarian Cookbook for People Who Love to Eat*, Natkin offers up 150 exciting recipes (most of which have not appeared on his blog) notable both for their big, bold, bright flavors and for their beautiful looks on the plate, the latter apparent in more than 80 four-color photos that grace the book. This is sophisticated, grown-up meatless cooking, the kind you can serve to company—even when your guests are dedicated meat-eaters.

An indefatigable explorer of global cuisines, with particular interests in the Mediterranean and the Middle East and in East and Southeast Asia, Natkin has crafted, through years of experimenting in his kitchen and in loads of intensive give-and-take with his blog readers, dishes that truly are revelations in taste, texture, aroma, and presentation. A third of the book is taken up with hearty main courses, ranging from a robust Caribbean Lentil-Stuffed Flatbread across the Atlantic to a comforting Sicilian Spaghetti with Pan-Roasted Cauliflower and around the Cape of Good Hope to a delectable Sichuan Dry-Fried Green Beans and Tofu. An abundance of soups, salads, sauces and condiments, sides, appetizers and small plates, desserts, and breakfasts round out the recipes.

Natkin, a vegetarian himself, provides lots of advice on how to craft vegetarian meals that amply deliver protein and other nutrients, and the imaginative menus he presents deliver balanced and complementary flavors, in surprising and utterly pleasing ways. The many dozens of vegan and gluten-free recipes are clearly noted, too, and an introductory chapter lays out the simple steps readers can take to outfit a globally inspired pantry of seasonings and sauces that make meatless food come alive.

## Herbivoracious: A Flavor Revolution with 150 Vibrant and Original Vegetarian Recipes Details

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# From Reader Review **Herbivoracious: A Flavor Revolution with 150 Vibrant and Original Vegetarian Recipes** for online ebook

## **Maze Branch Oak Park Public Library says**

The What's Cooking group was able to taste quite a selection of recipes from this book. They included...

- Sesame & Orange Sable Cookies - a crowd pleaser and recommend that they be enjoyed with tea
- Chickpea Fritters - "Excellent"
- Spicy Nori Seasoning for Popcorn - "Fabulous"
- Stout Chocolate Malt - "Great Taste" "Interesting pairing"
- Chickpea Salad with Feta - "Full of Flavor"
- Real Home Fries
- Spicy Corn and Potato Stew - "Love the spices and texture"
- Potato and Green Bean Salad with Pesto
- Caribbean Lentil Bread

We enjoyed the recipes in this book and thought the instructions were written well. We appreciated the photographs but wish that the page numbers would have been a larger black font.

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## **Martyn says**

A great book, filled with fabulous sounding recipes and enticing photography - the downside being that I spent the whole time saying to myself "sounds good; I won't make it". In the end a majority of the recipes are just too left-field and fussy, although everything *sounds* wonderful. Maybe this would be a good concept recipe book for a restaurant, where someone else could make the dishes for me!

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## **Aimee says**

Haven't cooked anything from this yet (thus 4-stars), but ate a few dishes prepared by the author himself which were all super and the book is enticing, beautiful and inspiring. I devoured it cover-to-cover when I got home and can't wait to start cooking from it myself!

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## **Ann Keller says**

Inspired source for vegetarians or those cooks who might like to try something a little different for dinner. The author guides the reader through the various types of vegetables, such as avocados, coconut milk, mirin, miso, sumac, panko, onions, and saffron, to the equipment and small appliances needed.

From there, this cookbook is organized into great appetizers, such as tea-smoked lychees and grilled Treviso radicchio, to salads - grilled eggplant salad certainly has eye appeal - to main courses from the stove top and oven, to side dishes, such as Jamaican rice and peas or lemony celery root (apio) and finally to mouth

watering desserts, such as rustic peach and nectarine crostata or chocolate chunk bread pudding.

This was quite a learning experience and I enjoyed exploring some of the tasteful options to share with my family.

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### **Rachel says**

I found out about this cookbook through stumbling upon the author's website while looking up information on Middle Eastern spices, and then was again recommended it by the lady in charge of the "Savory Sweet Life" blog, whose cookbook I also recently reviewed. I thought the author had a wealth of new and interesting vegetarian dishes that even meat-eaters could appreciate. Some of them were a bit over the top, but there were a good solid 13 or so recipes that I would love to try. Recipes such as the Garlic Miso Broth, Ten-Minute Chickpea Salad with Feta and Basil, Potato and Green Bean Salad with Arugula Pesto, Vietnamese Bun with Ginger-Grapefruit Sauce, Stuffed and Baked Polenta and several more all looked very tasty. Highly recommended, 5 stars.

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### **Kim says**

I've had mixed luck with cookbooks written by bloggers. All too often, the approach that worked for short blog posts is unwieldy in book format or we lose the unique perspective that someone brings to their blog when constrained by a book. However, this book really delivers! It's my go-to vegetarian cookbook right now. Lots of fantastic recipes, mostly doable by a reasonably proficient home cook. Some of the recipes go a bit over-the-top in steps or details or ingredients, but those recipes are the exceptions. Highly recommended to anyone who is vegetarian or interested in vegetarian cooking.

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### **L Rowan says**

I am not a vegetarian, but this is one of my favorite cookbooks of all time. I followed Michael's blog for a long time, and when he announced he was publishing a cookbook I got very excited.

This book is beyond beautiful. Huge, gorgeous photographs, a divine layout, and delicious food for any occasion.

I tend to think of this as "fancy" vegetarian food, as many recipes call for ingredients that a casual cook like myself doesn't often have on hand, but a trip to the store clears that up.

Try the lasagna. I was lucky enough to get to test that recipe before publication, and it's fantastic.

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### **Crystal says**

I'm not going to say that this was the most pretentious cookbook I've ever read--it's sadly not. but I do think this is exactly the sort of thing to which the authors of Thug Kitchen referred in their cookbook. I blame the

mismatch between cookbook and reader partly on my own inability to check out the blog before requesting the book from the library (Great rejoicing that I did not purchase immediately.) Here's the thing--the recipes all sound pretty good. there's even a few recipes I'm interested in trying (Spicy Nori Seasoning on popcorn? Yes, please.). But recipes like Tea-smoked Lychees, Grapefruit and Avocado Crudo, King Oyster Mushroom Lettuce Wraps with Ssamjang, and Mango Puffs with Lemongrass-coconut Pudding and Black Sesame, while I'm sure they are delicious, are completely out of my league, both financially and time-wise, not to mention inclination. If I were at a nice vegetarian restaurant with plenty of money to blow, I'd probably want to give a bunch of them a try. But will I ever make such super-complicated recipes with obscure, undoubtedly expensive ingredients? (That also tend to be pretty high in fat/ be surprisingly unhealthy?) Not at all likely. Mostly I laughed hysterically while reading through the increasingly complex and seemingly pretentious recipes, reading them aloud to my husband. Occasionally I said, hmmm, that sounds good. then I'd find another recipe to make me laugh. I appreciated that he labeled vegan and gluten-free recipes, and notated others that could be adjusted to be gluten free and/or vegan. But it wasn't enough to make this the cookbook for me.

Maybe that makes me low-brow. a low brow vegan with a taste for simple ethnic fare and healthy, plant-based recipes? that's OK. I can deal with that. Not so much with this cookbook.

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### **Misty says**

I had never read so much of a cookbook until I borrowed this one from a friend. I think this was a true labor of love from Michael Natkin. The author shared his personal history as it coincided with particular recipes, background information of the region from which a certain dish originated, and added useful side notes on the chemistry of cooking (the role of salt, fat, etc.).

Aside from the sheer volume of knowledge, the recipes I have tried have been delicious and range in effort from simple to complex. The book is beautifully photographed as well.

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### **Cat says**

Full of beautifully photographed recipes. Some are a bit beyond my reach at the moment but it's good to aim high, right? I checked this out from the library and after giving it a once over I promptly decided to buy it. There are enough everyday recipes that it will come in handy on a regular basis and enough elaborate recipes (and ones that would be on the pricier side) that it'll be good to pull out for special occasions too. I can't wait to give it a test run!

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### **Marya Kowal says**

The recipes are solid, everything I made from the book turned out well. The photography is gorgeous enough to make you drool! I picked this one up at the library hoping to find inspiration for a vegetarian Thanksgiving I was worried about cooking this year...instead I find myself buying the book for myself, and planning at least one vegetarian dinner a week for the foreseeable future. This was a great cookbook, and one I'm pleased to add to my collection and recommend to others. Yum!

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### **Kate Selner says**

I was fortunate to receive a complimentary copy of this book at a local book signing by Michael, and was thrilled to crack it open and see all the wonderful, inventive and delicious recipes. Although I'm not against eating meat, I prefer to eat more plant based foods as it just makes me feel better. I've discovered that most cookbooks I come across for vegetarians are boring and routine, but the recipes in Michael's book are fresh and bright and very unique. We'll be eating some good meals in the months to come.

Michael's style of cooking mirrors my own in that it's completely up to the individual to create something they love from a set recipe. The first recipe I made from the book, the Gold Beet Tartare was delicious, simple and easy, even though I didn't have all the exact ingredients. Michael touches on this in the book, and in every recipe by making suggestions on modifications and encouraging the home cook to deviate for their tastes and for what is on hand. He offers a lot of helpful suggestions along the way, sources for ingredients and encouragement to the home cook. The book has many types of recipes too, covering a lot of varied cuisine and tastes. There is nothing boring about this vegetarian cookbook.

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### **Champaign Public Library says**

Everything about this cookbook is gorgeous – the cover, the colors, the layout, even the font – but the photographs! And the descriptions before each recipe! Look at the Red Curry Delicata Squash on page 190, try the Mango Puffs with Lemongrass-coconut Pudding and Black Sesame on page 277, and don't tell me you're not drooling.

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### **Linera says**

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this vegetarian cookbook. I'm a flexitarian (occasionally eat fish and poultry) and I eat a lot of vegetables just because I like them. Good recipes, good photos, and a nice manner and style to the text. Oh, the author has a blog of the same name, if you want to get a feeling for his recipes. I haven't cooked them all, but the ones I've done have been accurate, not always the case with cookbooks. Many vegetarian cookbooks produce rather dreary results, as if somehow we needed to suffer for not eating flesh. Or they are preachy, or don't use butter or any fat. Hmmpf! Not my style. Michael Natkin is interested in food that tastes wonderful, and just happens not to have any meat in it. Reminds me of the good old days at Greens Restaurant in San Francisco, very tasty stuff.

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### **Claire says**

I am intimidated to cook these recipes, because the photography looks so amazing! There is not a picture for every recipe but nearly every single one, and each looks tempting (unlike some other recipes - even recipes with ingredients I don't like look good!). I am drooling over vegan and lacto-ovo vegetarian recipes (no pescitarian, sorry!) and am eager to try them.

This cookbook has a lot of the things I look for in a cookbook: pictures, readable instructions, well laid-out ingredients, cooking time, servings count (amount would be nice), introduction for recipes, notes, summary of times, educational sections and guidance in the margins. I appreciate that he labels vegan recipes (or convertible) or gluten-free options [but note that he has forgotten to put that label on a few recipes, so do not dismiss a recipe for lack of labeling]. From what I've read, the recipes seem accurate but what I trust even more that they have all been blog-tested (and if you think blog-readers won't comment, you'd be wrong).

And the few recipes I have tested have been a hit with my family. While I cannot seem to make them as fast - sometimes sauces just won't thicken until they've sat for an hour - they have been a success. My family loves that smokey Mac & Cheese.

One disappointment is that I did not find any commentary on make-ahead recipes, leftovers, portability, etc. I may have missed some, but it felt as if every recipe had to be made right before eating - save a few "make this recipe first to put in" meals. This does not mean I will not be cooking from this cookbook (just save for weekends until I am more familiar with it). Also, despite their readability, the recipes can be labour intensive or similarly finicky - I think these recipes might be too difficult for every day, but I am thinking of how that beauty and effort would be good for a dinner party or something special.

Overall, I am happy with my purchase and am looking forward to cooking with it. I appreciate that he has included a few menus organized around different themes as well, such as star ingredient (e.g. beans, pasta) or region (of course Mexican, but I love that he separated North and South Indian - yes, there is a difference). Despite a little intimidation to start, I know I will be dreaming of these recipes (you should see all my flags!) and will not be able to resist trying them!

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