

Greens Restaurant is a celebrated San Francisco eatery that features gourmet vegetarian cuisine. Having read the rave reviews, I purchased the Fields of Greens cookbook shortly after its 1993 publication date. While I tried a couple of the recipes, the book pretty much collected dust for the next 20 years. I read through the recipes from time to time, but I felt as though the skill required to prepare them escaped me.

In September 2015, I decided to challenge myself to make every recipe in the book within a 16-month time horizon (which I beat handily). To my surprise, you don't need years of training, fancy gadgets, or access to exotic food suppliers to make every recipe in the book. I found everything I needed at my local grocers and Farmers' Market. Moreover, Chef Annie Somerville's expert instruction provided just the right amount of guidance.

One thing you <u>do</u> need to get through this cookbook is time. Some of the recipes take advanced planning in order to have the ingredients available when you need them (e.g., soup socks). Most of the recipes require a lot of slicing and dicing. Fresh herbs need to be washed, picked, and chopped finely. Nuts need to be roasted or pan seared to bring out their flavors. Tomatoes need to be flash boiled to loosen and peel their skins before being seeded and diced. This style of cooking is not for the faint of heart!

The Fields of Greens cuisine is not low in calories. During the 10+ months of this cooking challenge, we went through more butter, flour, and sugar than we had in the previous 5 years. We both had a bit of trouble maintaining our weight. However, with very rare exception, we liked each of the 284 recipes that we sampled. Several dishes were out-and-out WOWs!

I think of this cookbook as a "fancy meal" resource, not our everyday fare. The soups and salads will inform my ongoing experimentation with cooking. And I'll definitely make my favorite curries and stews from time to time. Otherwise, I'll likely refer to Fields of Greens when preparing for special occasions.

Frittatas, Omelets, and Scrambled Eggs

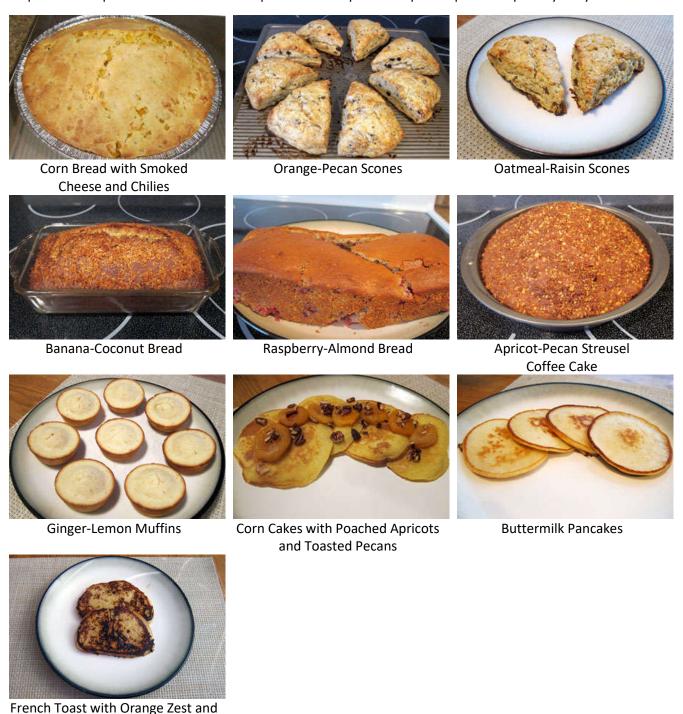
The egg dishes were easy to prepare and added variety to our weekend breakfast extravaganzas. (Our timelines do not favor innovation on weekdays!) We were especially fond of the Green Gulch Special, named for the farm that supplies Greens Restaurant's fresh produce. This delightful egg scramble includes shiitake mushrooms, tofu, and peppery watercress with seasoning by cilantro, ginger, sesame, and soy sauce. We also really enjoyed the Mexican Scrambled Eggs with Tortillas and Smoked Mozzarella Cheese.



Morning Breads and Pancakes

The *Corn Bread*, *Banana-Coconut Bread*, and *Apricot-Pecan Streusel Coffee Cake* were welcome additions to the brunch menu when enjoying the company of good friends. While we're scone lovers, we found the effort involved in making our own wasn't up to par. It's pretty hard to compete with the variety, freshness, and cost of the scones that we can get at our local Farmers' Market.

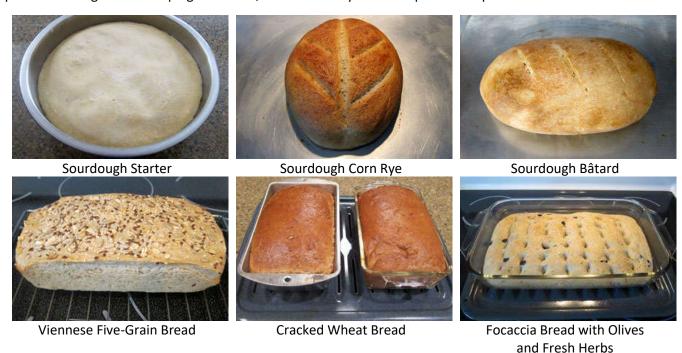
The pancake recipes were wonderful. Corn pancakes with poached apricots proved especially tasty.



Cinnamon

Breads

When my father retired in his middle 60s, he used his leisure time to perfect the art of baking the perfect loaves of whole wheat bread. My folks enjoyed having toast with butter and jam in the morning, and Dad's creations were welcome additions to their routine. Unfortunately, neither the bread baking passion nor the talent appears to have transcended the generational gap. I was faithful to my commitment to prepare all of the recipes in the cookbook, but my breads did not rise to the level of my father's standards of excellence. We enjoyed the end products with generous helpings of butter, but it's unlikely that I'll repeat the experience.



Sandwiches

Though we typically don't include sandwiches in our diet, we enjoyed every single recipe in this cookbook. They're really tasty and easy to prepare.



Grilled Sandwich with Mushrooms, Fontina, and Mustard



Baguette with Roasted Eggplant, Tomatoes, and Pesto



Baguette with Marinated Mushrooms, Roasted Peppers, and Smoked Mozzarella Cheese



Toasted Sourdough Bread with Roasted Peppers, Fontina Cheese, and Spinach



Goat Cheese, Pears, and Walnuts on Toasted Sourdough Bread



Open-Face Sandwich with Gorgonzola Cheese, Tomatoes, and Basil



Polenta Open-Face Sandwiches



Tapenade Toasts

Salads

Greens Restaurant prides itself on the innovative use of fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs. All of this freshness finds full expression in the wealth of salad recipes in Fields of Greens.

The Leafy Greens recipes leverage all kinds of lettuces – romaine, radicchio, arugula, chicory, Belgian endive, watercress, escarole, and spinach, to name a few. They're paired with an assortment of vegetables and tossed in a wonderful collection of vinaigrette dressings. While I'm unlikely to make exact replicas of these dishes in the future, I'll keep the dressings in our salad line-up. My favorites: *Spinach Salad with Tangerines, Red Onions, and Sesame-Ginger Vinaigrette* and the *Late Summer Salad*.

The beans and grains salads combine the lightness of the grains with flavorful beans and seasoned dressings. The *Spicy Black Beans with Chilies and Lime* with be a staple on our household.

We also enjoyed the marinated vegetable salads with the *Spring Vegetables with Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette* topping our list.

Leafy Greens



Romaine Hearts with Sourdough Croutons and Parmesan Cheese



Mixed Greens with Beans, Goat Cheese, and Hazelnuts



Salad with Avocado, Mango, and Ginger Dressing



Wilted Spinach Salad with Roasted Peppers



Salad with Avocado, Ruby Grapefruit, Pomegranate, and Pecans



Fall Greens with Marinated Mushrooms, Fennel, and Gruyère Cheese



Citrus Salad with Bitter Greens



Winter Greens with Apples, Pecans, and Cheese



Mixed Greens with Goat Cheese and Sun-Dried Tomatoes



Winter Greens with Pears and Walnuts



Romaine Hearts with Avocado, Jícama, and Orange



Mango Salad with Citrus-Ginger Vinaigrette



Spinach Salad with Oranges, Red Onions, and Sesame-Ginger Vinaigrette



Figs and Melon with Orange Vinaigrette

Beans and Grains



Cannellini Beans with Tomatoes and Basil



White Beans and Flageolets with Beans, Lemon, and Tarragon



Three-Bean Salad with Jícama and Orange



Chick-Pea and Sun-Dried Tomato Salad



Spicy Black Beans with Chilies and Lime



Lentil Salad with Curry Spices and Yogurt



Basmati and Wild Rice Salad with Tangerines and Pine Nuts



Corn and Bulgar Salad with Cilantro and Lime



Dolmas – Grape Leaves Stuffed with Fragrant Rice



Couscous Salad with Apricots,
Pine Nuts, and Ginger

Marinated Vegetables



Spicy Corn with Chilis and Cilantro



Fall Salad with Beets, Fennel, and Scallions



Grilled Potato Salad with Chipotle Viniagrette



Potato Salad with Artichokes and Lemon-Tarragon Vinaigrette



New Potato Salad with Grape Tomatoes, Summer Beans, and Basil



Spring Vegetables with Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette



Tomato Salad with Avocado and Citrus-Chili Vinaigrette



Vine-Ripened Tomatoes with Goat Cheese & Basil Vinaigrette



Tomato Salad with Cucumbers, Feta Cheese, Oregano, and Mint



Baba Ghanouj



Sicilian Salad with Roasted Eggplant, Peppers, and Garlic



Beets with Watercress and Orange



Summer Beans with Cherry Tomatoes and Tarragon



Broccoli with Sun-Dried Tomatoes and Pine Nuts



Marinated Mushrooms and Roasted Peppers with Kalamata Olives



Roasted Peppers with Cheese and Herbs



Chinese Cabbage with Lemon and Ginger



Eggplant Caviar

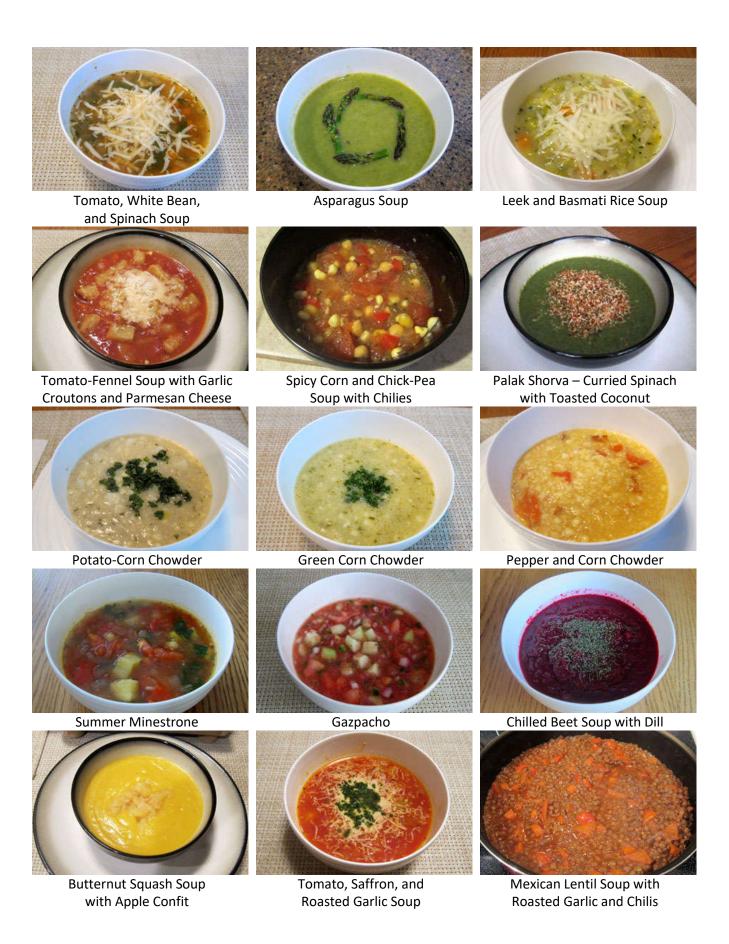


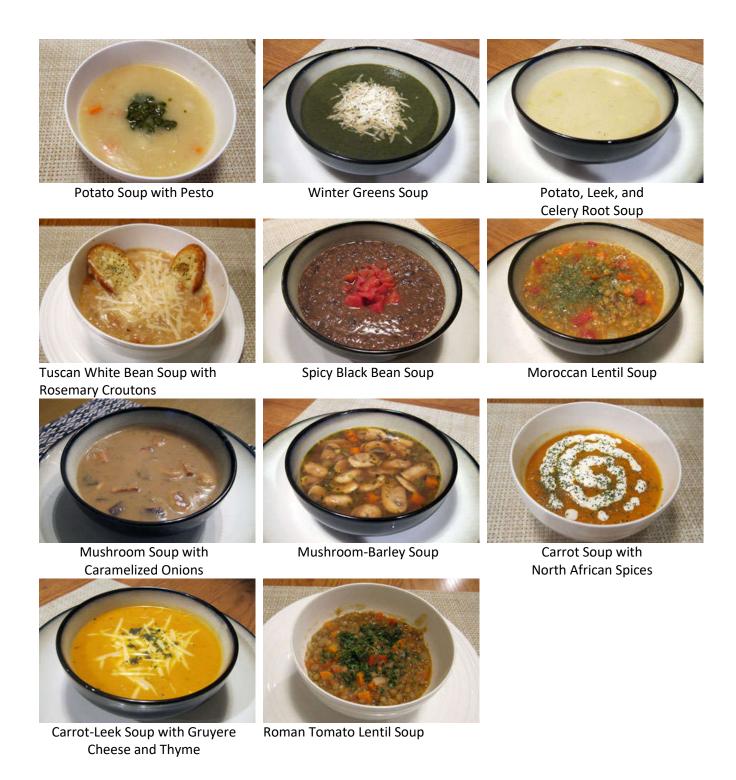
Jícama-Orange Salad

Soups

I love eating hot soup on a cold Fall or Winter evening. So, I was delighted to be introduced to a whole new set of recipes to warm the cockles of my heart. I highly recommend going to the effort of preparing homemade soup stock (for which there are several outstanding recipes). It provides a fresh and flavorful base that makes each soup really savory. Where tomatoes are included, I used fresh versus canned. The latter adds a flavoring that overwhelms the subtlety of its neighboring vegetables and herbs. All of the soup stocks are low sodium, and the remnants are good food for our compost pile.

My favorite soup dishes include: Potato-Corn Chowder (using fresh ears of corn), Winter Greens Soup (using kale, chard, and spinach – a.k.a., super foods), Butter Squash Soup with Apple Confit, and Mushroom Soup with Caramelized Onions. It takes a bit of effort to prepare the caramelized onions, but the resulting mushroom soup can be an impressive addition to a dinner party.





Curries and Stews

I am a BIG FAN of the Annie Somerville's curries and stews. Admittedly, they're rather intimidating at first blush. My favorite – *Summer Vegetables with Red Curry* – takes a fair chunk of time to prepare. Sweet red peppers must be simmered with chilies, coconut milk, spices, and homemade lemongrass stock. The stew features a host of sliced-and-diced fresh vegetables as well as spices that take a bit of time to toast. But the end result is something of which dreams are made.

The Winter Vegetable Pie is another "high maintenance" dish that is well worth the effort. One makes a butter and flour roux on the stovetop to which a reduction of homemade mushroom stock is added gradually. This sauce provides rich flavoring for a collective of prepared vegetables which includes celery root, dried porcini mushrooms, white mushroom, fennel, carrots, onion, garlic, and fresh herbs. This mixture fills a pie dish and is capped with flaky tart dough. While each slice proved a bit runny on the plate, it hardly affected our enjoyment.

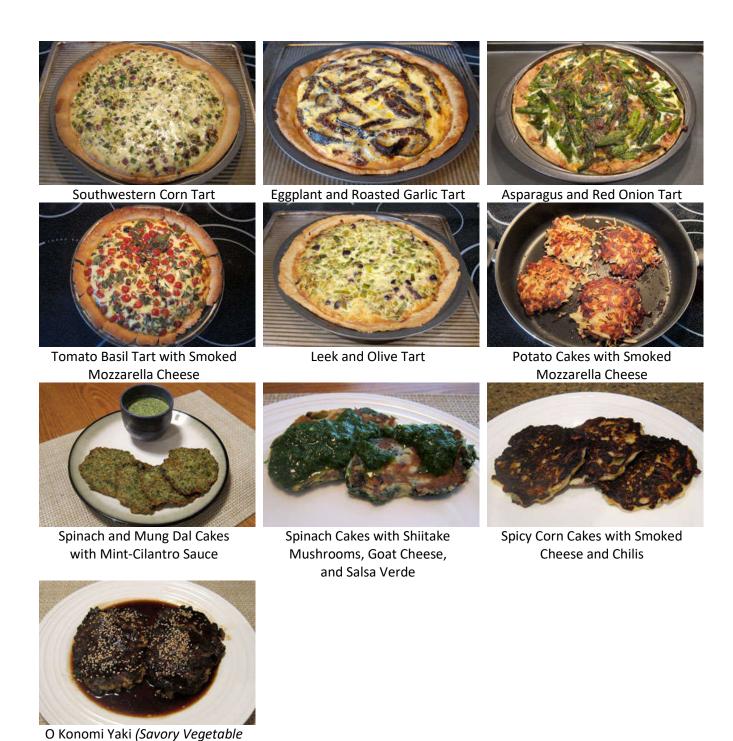
For a less labor-intensive meal, I'd recommend the Southern Rio Stew.



Tarts, Fritters, and Savory Cakes

Our first foray into tart making proved to be our most successful. The *Tomato-Basil Tart with Smoked Mozzarella Cheese* was absolutely delicious even though my tart dough didn't lay out perfectly in the pan. Alas, taste is everything.

We weren't terribly high on the fritters. While the recipes are well-conceived, it's just not a style of cooking that we find particularly appealing. That being said, our favorite dish was the *O Konomi Yaki* with a ginger, sesame oil and soy dipping sauce.



Turnovers, Filo, and Tortillas

Cakes) with Dipping Sauce

I've never cooked with filo dough and felt quite intimidated by the prospect of working with it. I also feared that it would be difficult to find. But, lo and behold, there it was in my WalMart Neighborhood Market!

The filo sheets are quite delicate and need to be processed with all due haste lest they dry out. I found it quite useful to have an abundance of filo sheets so as not to worry about the ones that tore due to my clumsy handling. (I got better at working with it over time.) The filo casseroles were absolutely delicious and real crowd pleasers. They made me look as though I know my way around a gourmet kitchen!

The turnovers proved a bit too rich and starchy for our blood. The enchiladas were tasty but unremarkable.



Pizza

As a former aficionado of take-out and frozen pizzas, the homemade fare was a welcome challenge. Annie Somerville's pizza dough recipe is outstanding and came out perfectly every time. (My presentation could use improvement, but the taste and texture were great.) We invested in the freshest ingredients we could find as well as top-quality cheese. Both really made a difference in the end products. I was surprised by how much I enjoyed using gorgonzola cheese on a pizza – an ingredient that would not otherwise have gone on my pizza radar. The Mexican Pizza was our favorite.



Pasta and Risotto

Spike and I do not eat a lot of pasta. It's just one more food group that can contribute to expanding waistlines. But we found real pleasure in sampling the vegetarian fare from Greens Restaurant. The *Linguini with Spring Vegetables and Orange-Saffron Butter* was our favorite followed by the *Chinese Noodle Salad* and *Chinese Noodles with Green Curry*. The latter was visually stunning on our large Mexican serving platter.

I'd never met a chanterelle mushroom before starting the Fields of Greens cooking challenge. Whole Foods obliged in making our acquaintance. Turns out these little darlings are a bit peculiar looking and somewhat

spendy. They're also "delicate" in that bits of dirt must be removed with a brush or damp cloth. (If washed, they soak up the water and lose their flavor.) Bless their hearts, they sacrificed their lives for the Linguine with Chanterelles and Leeks.

Cannelloni and lasagna preparation proved to be familiar territory. I've been making those dishes for years, although I reaped the benefit of an introduction to fresh pasta sheets. They provide a more subtle flavor and take less prep time than dried noodles. Homemade raviolis represented a new frontier and proved far less difficult to make than I'd feared.



The "home runs" for this collection of recipes were the risottos. I'd never made risotto before, but I'll certainly make it again! The cooking instructions yielded perfect dishes every time. Keys to success include use of fresh tomatoes in the *Tomato-Mushroom Stock* and serving the meal immediately after the Arborio rice finishes cooking to capture just the right texture.

Pasta



Fettuccine with Tomatoes, Fennel,
Olives, and Walnuts



Linguine with Spring Vegetables and Orange-Saffron Butter



Linguini with Mushrooms, Red Onion, Capers, and Olives



Pasta and White Bean Stew with Summer Vegetables



Spinach Fettuccine with Artichokes, Sun-Dried Tomatoes, and Capers



Fettucine with Broccoli, Roasted Peppers, and Olives



Spinach Fettuccine with Tomatoes, Crème Fraîche, and Basil



Buckwheat Noodles with Shiitake Mushrooms, Bok Choy, Ginger, and Scallions



Fettuccine with Swiss Chard, Currants, Walnuts, and Brown Butter



Linguini with Onion Confit, Goat Cheese, and Walnuts



Linguine with Chanterelles and Leeks



Fettuccine with Spring Vegetables, Lemon, and Chives



Spinach Fettuccine with Shiitake Mushrooms, Spinach, and Sun-Dried Tomatoes



Pasta with Roasted Tomatoes, Golden Zucchini, and Basil



Penne with Marinated Tomatoes and Basil



Chinese Noodle Salad with Citrus and Spicy Peanuts



Chinese Noodles with Green Curry

Cannelloni, Ravioli, and Lasagna



Cannelloni with Spinach, Goat Cheese, Walnuts, and Roasted-Garlic Tomato Sauce

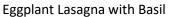


Cannelloni with Mushrooms and Fennel



Ravioli filled with Eggplant, Roasted Garlic, and Romano Cheese







Artichoke-Leek Lasagna



Lasagna with Mushroom-Port Sauce

Risotto



Spring Risotto with Asparagus and Peas



Risotto with Beans, Tomatoes, Peppers, and Basil



Fall Risotto with Chanterelles and Late Harvest Tomatoes



Mushroom Risotto with Leeks and Fennel



Risotto with Artichokes, Tomatoes, Spinach, and Thyme

Gratins

I made the *Potato, Fennel, and Leek Gratin* years ago when we were invited to a friend's house for Thanksgiving dinner. Scalloped potatoes, fennel, and leeks are adorned with spices, Niçoise olives, a creamy white sauce, and two kinds of cheese before baked to perfection. It's a rich dish that rises to the occasion of holiday excess!

The polenta gratins provided an interesting presentation while also delighting our taste buds. I especially enjoyed making the *Polenta Gratin with Salsa Roja* with fresh tomatoes from the Farmers' Market. I'll use these recipes as the basis on which to experiment with other ingredients.



Peppers, and Garlic



Polenta Baked with Tomatoes, Corn, and Basil



Polenta Baked with Artichokes, Tomatoes, and Olives



Potato Gratin with Artichokes and Smoked Cheese



Potato, Fennel, and Leek Gratin



Polenta Gratin with Salsa Roja

Hot Off the Grill

After careful research, we purchased our new Weber kettle grill to serve as the vehicle through which we experimented with grilling vegetables and breads. We absolutely LOVED grilling fresh corn and smothering it with a Reduced Balsamic Vinegar dressing. Veggie kabobs, eggplant "steaks," and marinated tofu also captured our imagination.



Our New Weber Grill!



Grilled Mushrooms



Grilled Eggplant with Spicy Peanut Sauce



Grilled Fennel



Grilled Corn and Sweet Potato with Basil Aïoli Sauce



Leeks with Port Beurre Sauce



Grilled Summer Squash, Green
Garlic, and Scallions



Grilled Endive and Radicchio



Delicata Squash



Grilled Tofu with Sweet Ginger Marinade



Grilled Bread and Polenta

Companion Dishes

The cookbook provides innovative suggestions for preparing and presenting a variety of side dishes. The *Wilted Spinach with Lemon and Pine Nuts* comes together quickly and provides a palate-pleasing way to ingest one of nature's super foods. *Brussel Sprouts with Chestnuts and Maple Butter* may actually pave the way for this vegetable to become a more frequent visitor to our household. We were also particularly fond of the *Balsamic Roasted Red Onions*.

As for the beans and grains, we gave our "thumbs up" to the Warm Black Beans with Chilies and Cilantro and the Pinto Beans with New Mexican Chilies. Though not generally tofu fans, we enjoyed the Tofu with Sweet Ginger Marinade on the grill.

Vegetables



Roasted Potatoes with Garlic and Fresh Herbs



Potatoes and Mushrooms
Baked in Parchment



Winter Greens with Currants, Pine Nuts, and Brown Butter



Sautéed Apples, Fennel, and Radicchio with Calvados



Wilted Spinach with Lemon and Pine Nuts



Sautéed Summer Beans and Cherry Tomatoes



Roasted Tomatoes



Brussel Sprouts and Chestnuts with Maple Butter



Roasted Shallots



Balsamic Roasted Red Onions



Baked Squash filled with Wild Rice, Golden Raisins, and Pine Nuts



Eggplant Filled with Mushrooms, Sun-Dried Tomatoes, and Pine Nuts



Zucchini Filled with Corn, Chilis, and Smoked Cheese



Roasted Peppers Filled with Eggplant, Zucchini, and Basil

Beans and Grains



Sauces

Sauces provide wonderful accents to many of the recipes included in this cookbook. While I captured photos of some of them individually, several made "guest appearances" elsewhere.



Chutneys, Relishes, and Condiments

These selections provided bursts of flavor to accompany the other dishes in this cookbook. The *Apricot*, *Pineapple*, and *Mango-Papaya Chutneys* served as accents to my favorite curry dishes. The *Pearl Onions* and

Pickled Red Onions perked up a couple of meals served to guests. The *Cranberry-Pear Relish* may become a staple of our Thanksgiving Feasts. And we loved using the *Spicy Peanuts* and *Fire-Dried Pecans* as condiments.



Desserts

Truth be told, Spike and I do not make a habit of eating dessert. Neither of us has a metabolism that can absorb all those calories. But when we choose to indulge, several of the selections in this cookbook are worthy of the morning-after bump on the bathroom scale.

If you love chocolate, the *Gâteau Moule* (a.k.a., Steamed Chocolate Cake) will not disappoint. It's delicate and moist, so it's a bit fragile when apportioning individual slices. No one will complain!

I made the *Cranberry Lattice Tart* for my mother's birthday. My older brother declared it to be among the top 3 pies that he'd eaten in his lifetime. Considering the place of honor that my family accords fruit pies, it was high praise indeed!

Praline Cookies were a bit of an adventure. I made the *Praline* from scratch, following Annie Somerville's expert instructions. It came out as expected, although it was a bit of a mess when chopping into bite-sized pieces. However, the praline blended nicely with the shortbread dough, and the cookies were a bit hit with my ISing Choir compatriots.

I very nearly skipped making the *Meyer Lemon Ice Cream* and *Mandarin Orange Sorbet* for want of an ice cream maker. A friend came to the rescue with a loan of her easy-to-use Cuisinart appliance. Both recipes were so delicious that my mouth still waters at their memory.

The *Honey Mousse* deserves the final mention. The sweet richness of the mousse pairs nicely with fresh berries. Great honey is the secret to success. I purchased mine from my favorite beekeeper at the Beaverton Farmers' Market. It's well worth the added expense and, of course, supports a valued local business.

