



Laurel's Kitchen made its debut in 1976 as a hand-bound publication from three dedicated foodies who were as concerned about the health of their patrons as the health of the planet. The diet they support protects against cancer, diabetes, diverticulitis, obesity, tooth decay, and osteoporosis. It does not harm animals, birds, or fish. And it focuses on whole, unprocessed foods.

By 1986, the book had made its way into a publishing house with support by a broad network of enthusiasts. That edition includes a gaggle of scientific data on nutrition, detailed information on the ingredients (e.g., vegetables, grains, legumes) and how they're prepared, and some delightful essays on embracing a lifestyle that extols the value and sacredness of kitchen work.

The recipes come from daily living. We sampled about a quarter of them, largely in deference to my dairy and gluten sensitivities. We found them to be less complex than ones we sampled in other cookbooks, but that's a good thing if you're a cook who wants to master the basics. If you work through this cookbook systematically, you'll learn to prepare delicious foods without having to refer to a collection of recipes.

The food guidelines that underscore all of their recipes include:

- Reduce or eliminate meat, processed foods, and fried foods. Focus on whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and fruits.
- Explore ways to flavor food without fat: parsley, lemon juice, exotic vinegars, citrus peel, yogurt, cottage cheese, shoyu, herbs, horseradish, spices. When planning dinner, allow for 2 teaspoons of oil or equivalent per person maximum.
- Choose lower-fat milk products, and substitute them for higher fat ones in cooking.
- Make your own salad dressings. (*It's not hard!*) Commercial options are loaded with fat and chemicals.
- Reinvent sandwiches by using bean and pea spreads instead of mayonnaise, cheese, and nut butters. They're delicious with fresh or grilled vegetables.
- When planning a meal, aim for balance. If you want to serve a rich dish, make the rest of the items on the menu especially low in fat.

## Lunch

Sandwiches have been the mainstay of American lunches for as long as I can remember. However, they tend to carry a lot of calories in excess fat (butter, mayonnaise, cheese) and marginally nutritious breads. Laurel and friends opt for bean spreads and fresh vegetables. For the sake of convenience, I simply used crackers and celery sticks.



Soy Spread with Crackers



Garbanzo Spread on Celery



Refrito Spread



Soy Pate with Crackers



Tempeh Bars



Avocado Spread with Crackers

## Salads

I love eating salads but rarely get around to making them. So, I'm grateful when my romp through a cookbook affords the opportunity to experiment with some new recipes. The clear winner was the Disappearing Carrot Salad, a delicious concoction of carrots, apples, currants, and walnuts with a ginger-citrus dressing.



Astonishing Salad



Greek Salad



Ceci Salad



Mexican Salad Bowl



California Tossed Salad



Spinach and Mushroom Salad





Slaw Chez Nous



Red Rogue's Delight



Carrot Salad



Disappearing Carrot Salad



Winter Salad

## Soups

I've continued my love affair with soups. They've moved from a Fall/Winter lunchtime favorite to a year-round thing. Favorites from this cookbook include Whole Beet Borscht, Minestrone, and Fresh Corn & Tomato Soup.

P.S. I'd serve Early Autumn Fruit Soup as a refreshing summer meal starter!



Whole Beet Borscht



Minestrone



Old Favorite Green Soup



New Favorite Green Soup



Asparagus Soup



Creamy Cauliflower Soup





Carrot Soup



Kale Potato Soup



Corn Chowder



Gingery Tomato Soup



Fresh Corn and Tomato Soup



Hearty Pea Soup



Black Bean Soup



Early Autumn Fruit Soup

## Vegetables

*“Soon after people become vegetarians, they are likely to make a marvelous discovery: vegetables.”* How true! If you’ve grown up on the Standard American Diet, vegetables were a condiment relegated to a tiny space on the outer edge of the plate. Now they’re front and center in meal planning. By way of introduction, Laurel’s Kitchen provides a lot of helpful information about vegetables in addition to some suggestions on how to prepare them.

We’ve been making the Middle Eastern Vegetables for years and never tire of the tasty mix of ingredients. The Mushrooms Petaluma will be a new addition to our seasonal rotation.



Artichokes Tellicherry



Chinese Asparagus



Green Beans Hellenika





Spicy Green Beans



Whole Golden Beets



King Cole Curry



Brussel Sprouts Squash Casserole



Brussel Sprouts and Bell Peppers



Bubble and Squeak



Greek Cauliflower



Tomato Kale



Crumbly Greens



Sesame-Glazed Parsnips



Zucchini Provencal



Stuffed Acorn Squash



Ratatouille



Middle Eastern Vegetables



Mushrooms Petaluma





Winter Stew

## *Grains and Beans*

As folks who eat a lot of grains and beans, we're always open to new ways to prepare them. This cookbook did not disappoint. The rice and quinoa recipes were quite satisfying. We loved the Tamale Pie, and the Chili con Elote, Black Eyed Peas Virginia Style, and Boston Baked Beans were quite tasty and easy to prepare.



Confetti Quinoa



Spanish Rice



Teresa's Spanish Rice



Wild Rice



Tempeh a la King



Tempeh Cacciatore



Tempeh a l'Orange



Tamale Pie



Chili con Elote



Boston Baked Beans



Black Eyed Peas Virginia Style

## *Dessert*

We sampled a lot of tasty treats in the course of working our way through several cookbooks. Our waistlines have let us know that we've sampled enough! So, we opted to try just a few of the recipes in this cookbook. The winner by far was Diane's Apple Crisp. It's a "go to" recipes that we've made again and again (*with slightly more topping than called for in the recipe*).



Baked Apple



Diane's Apple Crisp



Sunshine Bars