

## 5 Cookbooks I'm Most Excited About in 2015



When January rolls around, I have to confess that one of my favorite things to do on the cold, gray nights, is to read cookbooks and to then plan

warm and hearty meals around the best meals I find in them.

I'm always looking for cookbooks that might be less well-known, but are full of plant-rich recipes full of flavor and mystery. My favorite cookbooks are those that play upon ethnic and traditional cuisines, hence the three regional cookbooks found on this list.

When the famous chef, Jamie Oliver took on the challenge of changing the eating habits of families around America and the UK, he started with teaching people how to cook.

*"I want to inspire you to get in the kitchen and cook meals for yourself and your family from scratch, whether you're a complete beginner or a good cook who likes simplicity. With some basic skills under your belt and a handful of recipes, you'll be able to prepare nutritious meals on any budget."* ~Jamie Oliver

Like Jamie, I feel that learning to cook is the number one best thing you can learn (or teach) to improve health. Real cooking almost always ensures you're using fresh and real ingredients and I've yet to see a recipe that calls for "maltodextrin" or "polysorbate 80" or "sodium benzoate."

Thus, on to the five (not necessarily new) cookbooks that are on my wishlist for 2015:

### **Comfort Food by Jamie Oliver**

This one came out in late 2014 and has been on my wish list since the day it released. Like I mentioned above, Jamie is all about learning to cook. His recipes are straightforward, yet unique and delicious. This particular book includes favorite comfort foods such as curry, homemade ramen noodles, dessert tarts, puddings and plenty of egg recipes.

### **Plenty: Vibrant Vegetable Recipes by Yotam Ottolenghi**

This is an extraordinary cookbook, absolutely packed with VERY unique and delicious vegetable recipes that you won't find anywhere else. The dishes are inspired by many regions of the world, but the main focus is on Middle Eastern cuisine. My favorite part is the chapter headings, which are laid out as follows:

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Roots  
Funny Onions  
Mushrooms  
Courgettes and Other Squashes  
Capsicums  
Brassicas  
The Mighty Aubergine  
Tomatoes  
Leaves Cooked and Raw  
Green Things  
Green Beans  
Pulses  
Cereals  
Pasta, Polenta, Couscous  
Fruit with Cheese

I think you'll adore this book and its more than 100 vegetarian recipes.

### **The Vegetarian Table: North Africa by Kitty Morse**

When I first started looking into this cookbook, I wasn't sure I wanted to add it to my list based on the name of the author. I wanted an ethnic cookbook that was written by someone from the region. "Kitty Morse" sounded like the name of someone who was from Britain or North America. After further research, I found that Kitty Morse is actually descended from Sephardic Jews and grew up in Casablanca. The reviewers gush about her take on the recipes of her homeland and they're all

plant-based! You'll find hearty dishes like Stuffed Pizza, Vegetarian Meatballs with Eggs and Tomato Sauce, and plenty of stews, traditional tagines, and fresh veggie salads. I can't wait to try this one!

### **Around My French Table: Over 300 Recipes From My Home to Yours by Dorie Greenspan**

Dorie Greenspan has won the coveted James Beard Award three times and has been called a "culinary guru" by the New York Times. She's written several cookbooks, most of them having to do with baking, and a few, like this one, dealing with main dish meals. I've had Greenspan and her books on my wishlist for a couple years now, and can't wait to try the recipes in this one since I have a special place in my heart for French cooking. (She's also quite active on social media and has a wonderful website full of recipes, as well!) You'll find recipes in this book, such as, Spanish Potato Tortilla, Cheese and Olive Quick Bread, and a simple and traditional recipe for Roast Chicken.

### **Melt in Your Mouth: Sweet Treats You Can Freely Indulge In by Melissa Chappell**

Before you say anything about my boldness in adding my own cookbook to my wish list, let me explain.

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I worked on this cookbook for a good four years before it was finally complete. The process, though exciting for me, consisted of developing, testing, developing, testing, tasting, developing, testing, and then moving on to the next recipe and doing the same. I made the recipes over and over, but never got to just make a recipe, (not scrutinize it) and enjoy it with friends and family. It was always about the scientific process of making the recipe work. Of course, there was A LOT of passion and intuition that went into the development of the recipes, but in a word, it took a lot of *work*, a lot of *mental* work. I've added this book to my list because I'm excited to approach the recipes in a more relaxed and celebratory state. I'm excited to make the Banana Cake for a party or to take a plate of the Chocolate Covered Pomegranates to my neighbors. I can't wait to make the Lavender Bread Pudding again -- to eat it with a drizzle of vanilla yogurt and a mug of peppermint tea, and I can't wait to finish a meal with the Chocolate Pots de Creme served in individual ramekins to my guests. If you don't have it already, I think you'll like it too, as it's filled with delicious desserts that use whole food ingredients.

Here's to a year of learning to cook better and cooking more from scratch! Happy 2015!

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