



Vegetarian Epicure

Anna Thomas , Julie Maas

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A friendly informal tone and some splendid recipes have made this a perennial bestseller. For all who love the fruits of the earth and the art of cooking. A classic with almost a million copies sold to date.

Vegetarian Epicure Details

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Author : Anna Thomas , Julie Maas

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Tim says

Back when I was a youngster first exploring vegetarianism, I was given this book for Christmas, making it the first cookbook I have ever owned. I have hung onto it all these years, partly for sentimental reasons, and partly due to the book being a nicely made artifact. From what I see looking around, this was a key book in the vegetarian/natural foods movement, and it has sold over a million copies and is still in print. The Vegetarian Epicure helped pave the way for a number of cookbooks and that followed it. As such, it is a little dated and I don't find myself using it much anymore. Some of the recipes are still quite good, and Thomas tries to not make things too complicated. She draws on several different cuisines - e.g. Eastern European, Italian, and Indian - and provides a range of dishes for many occasions. This would still be a good choice for someone new to vegetarian cooking.

Ellen Falls says

Used it so much over the years, it is in shreds. Perennially useful.

Lisa Vegan says

Well, way back when, when I was a lacto-ovo vegetarian, before I went vegan, this and its sequel were my favorite cookbooks. I don't cook that often, but I actually made many of the recipes in this book and they were delicious. I have not picked up the book since my first attempts to go vegan in 1988 as there were so many vegan cookbooks to try, but for a decade, this book was indispensable. The few omnivorous friends I subjected to my cooking, very much enjoyed the food as well. I guess it's dated now but I'll bet the results taste just as good as they did thirty years ago.

Linda Watson says

When I was sixteen, my parents let my sister and I each pick one book to buy for our three-week camping vacation. I picked The Vegetarian Epicure. I read it cover to cover and over and over again that summer. When we got back home, I used it to cook vegetarian meals for my family. They had let me quit eating meat as long as my mother didn't have to do any extra cooking. My mother is part Polish, so these recipes were not only delicious but familiar, which helped us all adapt to my new eating style.

The Vegetarian Epicure book remains one of my favorites and a standard for what a good cookbook should be. I've worn out one copy and bought another. Thanks, Anna Thomas, for all the great recipes, warmth, and encouragement.

Jonathan Kauffman says

Anna Thomas was the first vegetarian cookbook author to write about meatless meals hedonistically, with no

mention of health or nutrition or spiritual purity. Even today, the food's rich (really rich) but delicious.

Carole says

My dad gave this book to me, which is kind of weird, what with the pot references, but I have to say that, although I've only actually tried a few recipes in this book, I give it 4 stars because it has my absolute most favourite EVER cornbread recipe. I don't generally eat large portions of much of anything, but I could eat the entire batch of that cornbread. It's just *that* good.

Darn it. Now I'm going to have to bake some.

Bobbi says

Most people would not put a cookbook in a list of books to read. However, Anna Thomas includes narrative of her relationship with food, entertainment, and life that is really a good read in itself. The food (recipes), by the way, is fabulous. She has the best hummus recipe ever.

Cynthia Paschen says

This was one of our first cookbooks and very useful for a young cook. I just had to replace our copy, as it was in dozens of pieces.

Favorite recipes:

Pizza Rustica

Cheese Souffle

Eggplant Parmigiana

Sharp Vinagrette Salad Dressing

My only criticism of these recipes is they tend to be cheese and butter-heavy. I know the later edition of Vegetarian Epicure lightened up a bit, but I still rely on this edition on a regular basis. I made the cheese enchiladas so often as a newlywed that I was asked to cease and desist with the cheese enchiladas. It might be time to bring them back.

Jessica says

As a vegetarian cookbook, it's fine in an unreconstructed hippie sort of way, but the best part of this book is the introduction, in which the author offers suggestions on how to entertain, noting that certain dishes are wonderful for snacking "if grass is smoked socially in your home" and your guests develop "the munchies."

UPDATE: Some friends and I just started a project where each week we are going to cook from a different cookbook in our collections and try to get through all of them in a year. The first book on my top shelf was the Vegetarian Epicure, so I gave it another read. Lots of tasty-sounding recipes that don't skimp on dairy products, with a particular emphasis on Greek, Middle Eastern, and Eastern European dishes. I made the

"Blonde Lentil Soup" and found it nice and a little different -- it has basil and lemon flavors, unusual for lentil soups -- though it could use being kicked up a notch. I have a feeling many of the recipes could use a good shove into the 21st century, flavor-wise.

Evie says

Even though half of the book are recipes I wouldn't use, I have to give this book four stars because I love grassroots publications from the 70s. There's something about a book with charming illustrations of natural living, printed in brown ink on unbleached paper that warms my heart. I also appreciate when the ink budget is so tight that only three colours are used (which usually end up being brown, green, and orange). References to smoking grass don't hurt either.

I look forward to trying many of the recipes, especially some of the deserts, which sound simple, fresh and light. I would have appreciated this book much more if the recipes weren't so heavy on eggs, butter, and cheese. Part of my shift to vegetarianism is to focus on lightening up my diet and adding variation, not just taking out the meat.

Kathy Satterfield says

One of my first cookbooks as a newlywed in the 1970s, which set us off on a seven year vegetarian odyssey. Keep in mind this was pre-cookbooks with photos. You have to use your imagination!

Josephine says

Just another vote for "amusing trip down memory lane"; boy, haven't we come a long way in terms of tasty vegetarian food, now! That said, it's still worth owning, although by no means suggesting it be the only vegetarian cookbook, much less the first. I inherited my mother's copy, and treasure it for her rating system of "spots"--i.e. how stained that recipe's page got in the course of returning to it.

Dane says

As it's totally a hippie '70s cookbook, it's right up my alley, but I found very little in it that I'm interested in making. The recipes are fairly unimaginative (ok, admittedly, they're decades old, so they aren't going to be cutting edge) and she seems committed to making the ingredients the hardest to get versions as possible and to making the recipes as difficult as possible.

She's fairly pretentious, too. All told, it's pretty off-putting and I'll be unloading this book asap.

Denise Joy says

I love this book. I've read sections again and again over the years. The recipes are great for creating really

delicious vegetarian food that rivals non-veg dishes. Both this book and the second volume contain several recipes that I've used as again and again, or that I've used as a starting point for my own creations. One of the best things about this book is that you get some little bit of understanding of the different cuisines in each section. I love that there's enough here to learn to create a basic Indian or Mexican or Italian, etc. meal. The reason for the four stars rather than five is that I do have a strong preference for cookbooks with photos...but I have to say, these recipes are written well enough so that you don't need the photos. My old copy got ruined and I promptly searched out a used replacement since this book is out of print.

Tama says

I agree that the grass smoking references in this book were pretty d---- funny...You're not going to see THAT in any other entertaining section of a cookbook anytime soon, folks.I love the artwork as well,and I'm looking forward to making the spinach lasagna....Oh, the book is very small-I expected it to be quite large, but it's packed with some good stuff...and no, i don't smoke, but thanks for asking...
