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Opening Extract from...

New

Vegetarian Kitchen

Written by Nicola Graimes

Published by Duncan Baird Publishers

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V



NICOLA GRAIMES

NEW VEGETARIAN KITCHEN

raw / grill / fry / steam / simmer / bake



DUNCAN BAIRD PUBLISHERS
LONDON

For Silvio, Ella and Joel, with love.

NEW VEGETARIAN KITCHEN

Nicola Graimes

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Managing Editor: Grace Cheetham
Editor: Nicole Bator
Designer: Luana Gobbo
Commissioned photography: William Lingwood
Photography Assistant: Isobel Wield
Food Stylist: Bridget Sargeson
Food Stylist Assistants: Jack Sargeson and
Katy McClelland
Prop Stylist: Wei Tang

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in this book.

What is a vegetarian?

A vegetarian is someone who does not eat meat, poultry,
seafood or other animal-derived by-products, such as
gelatine.

Notes on the recipes

• Cheese, especially those made using traditional methods,
may contain calf rennet, so check labels first. Look for
'suitable for vegetarians', the 'V' sign or 'contains vegetarian
rennet' on the label. All cheeses used in the following recipes
are available in a vegetarian form.

Unless otherwise stated:

- Use medium eggs, fruit and vegetables
- Use ripe fruit and fresh herbs
- Use unsalted butter
- Do not mix metric and imperial measurements
- 1 tsp = 5ml • 1 tbsp = 15ml • 1 cup = 250ml

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INTRODUCTION

This book has been a long time in the making. What began as a little seed of an idea many years ago has evolved and developed into a collection of recipes that I couldn't be more excited about sharing. Gone are the old stand-bys long associated with vegetarian food. In their place are fresh, modern recipes that broaden the appeal of meat-free cuisine, giving vegetarians lots of new ideas and tempting even the most adamant meat-eater with adventurous, irresistible flavours.

I came to cookery writing in a back-to-front sort of way, from my time as a food editor with a love of cooking to being given the wonderful opportunity to write my own book many years ago. But vegetarian cooking has always been a passion, and I love the challenge of planning and developing a dish. For me, vegetables are too often considered an afterthought, plonked on the side of the plate, playing second fiddle to the other foods they're served with. And too often, a vegetarian 'meal' is unbalanced, with lots of carbohydrate but little or no protein. That's why this book focuses primarily on recipes that are 'complete' meals in themselves, with both a protein and carbohydrate, rather than a collection of insubstantial side dishes.

Truth be told, I didn't really want this book to be classified as a 'vegetarian' book. It's more a celebration of the ingredients I love, from fresh produce, herbs, spices and pulses to grains, nuts, cheese, eggs and more. It's the quality, nuances and versatility of these foods that I wanted to highlight, and the fact that the recipes happen to exclude meat, poultry, fish and seafood is really just incidental.

I'm actually quite an impatient cook and most of the time I just want to create something delicious and, usually, nutritious, as easily and quickly as possible. Many of the recipes in this book satisfy these criteria, but they're balanced with others that take a little more time and effort. Either way, the principal aim is to get the best out of ingredients by exploring different ways of preparing and cooking them. Presentation is also key. This doesn't mean spending lots of time fiddling with food on the plate but, more importantly, thinking visually and considering how ingredients work together in terms of colour, texture, flavour and

temperature. It can be as simple as sprinkling some fresh herbs or crushed, toasted nuts over a dish to add colour or crunch.

The cuisines of the world are a huge inspiration to me, so you'll find recipes influenced by dishes from as far afield as Japan and Indonesia to Italy and the Caribbean – all with a contemporary, and sometimes a fusion, twist. I created all of the recipes for the home kitchen, and even the most novice cook is guaranteed to succeed with them. If you're already quite confident in the kitchen, the recipes will provide you with a fresh approach and plenty of new ideas to start trying.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Understanding the basics about cooking techniques gives you great freedom to experiment, be creative and bring out the best in the ingredients you use. Choosing to grill, steam or fry an ingredient, for example, will alter its taste, texture and appearance. Take an onion: slow-cooking curbs its pungency and gives it a meltingly soft texture, while stir-frying results in a slightly crunchy and more intensely flavoured taste, and a raw onion is crisp and sharp.

New Vegetarian Kitchen highlights the six core techniques you'll use to make outstanding meals: raw, grill, fry, steam, simmer and bake. Each one has its own benefits and idiosyncrasies. Most ingredients are better suited to certain cookery techniques than to others, so the basics of each technique are explained in the following pages and the recipes show you which ones to use when. Of course, many recipes are a combination of different techniques that work in harmony to create a finished dish. When more than one method is used in a recipe, the recipe is found under the primary technique.

This is not a handbook to cookery techniques but rather a showcase of the possibilities that each technique presents. It's about being adventurous and playing around with flavours, colours and textures to make sensational meat-free meals. I've also included guidance on how to cook certain ingredients, such as rice and dried pulses, and there's a handy glossary you can refer to if you're baffled by any of the more unusual ingredients featured in the recipes.

RAW

Bright and vibrant in colour, crisp and crunchy in texture, and quite different in taste to cooked dishes, meals created with uncooked ingredients can be surprisingly diverse and inspiring. By experimenting with marinating, grinding,

blending, chopping, slicing and freezing foods, you can create a stunning array of dishes that are colourful, fresh and nutritious. This chapter focuses on getting the best out of uncooked ingredients, whether it be a garlicky Chilled Almond Soup or a Savoury Cheesecake with Red Pepper and Coriander Relish.

It's common sense, but so often forgotten, that variations in texture and consistency influence taste and also affect the way an ingredient integrates with others on a plate. For example, preparing a raw carrot in myriad ways can produce varying end results: a thickly sliced carrot tastes quite different from one that is coarsely grated, puréed or juiced.

Being adventurous with presentation contributes to a dish's overall success, too. Preparing fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices in different ways enhances their visual impact on the plate.

Many of the dishes in this chapter adhere to the principles of the raw food diet (broadly defined as foods that are uncooked or warmed to a temperature no greater than 40°C/104°F). Others feature a main ingredient that is uncooked but may be combined with cooked foods, such as canned beans or cheese to add extra substance and complement the raw ingredients. Even though there's no full-on cooking in these recipes, they will offer you new ways of combining raw ingredients to make delicious meals.

GRILL

Grilling relies on applying intense, dry heat from above to the surface of a food and is used to quickly brown or caramelize. It lends a dish a slightly smoky, toasted or barbecued flavour, depending on what you are cooking. In fact, the grill is sometimes used as an alternative to the barbecue.

Successful grilling is influenced by two things: temperature and the distance the food is placed from the heat source. The dry, intense heat of a grill is perfect for a number of things. You can brown the top of a gratin or pie or finish cooking dishes such as a frittata or Spanish tortilla. Grilling is also great for melting cheese and giving a golden glaze to marinated vegetables, fruit and tofu. Grilling also provides a healthier, low-fat alternative to frying foods such as burgers and fritters.

Certain cheeses, particularly halloumi, mozzarella, goat's cheese crottin and feta, are especially suited to grilling since they melt, soften or brown but

still retain their shape. Aubergines, peppers, courgettes, mushrooms and tomatoes are just a few of my favourite vegetables for grilling. I slice them fairly thinly, brush them with oil and grill until softened and charred in places. Grilling vegetables this way is often much faster than it would normally take to roast them.

Apples, pears, peaches, pineapple, mango, bananas and many other fruits – perhaps with the exclusion of berries – are suitable for grilling as well, since the dry heat helps to caramelize the sugars found naturally in the fruit. Preheat the grill until very hot, then sprinkle the fruit with caster sugar or drizzle with honey and arrange it in a single layer on baking paper. Position the baking sheet about 7cm/3in from the heat and grill until softened and golden – deliciously simple.

FRY

There are many variations of frying, each dependent upon the quantity of oil, the level of heat, the type of pan used and the amount the food is stirred or tossed in the pan during cooking.

Sautéing is great for cooking small, evenly-sized pieces of food quickly in a little oil or butter, tossing them regularly until browned. A wide, shallow pan with straight sides is perfect for this technique. The fat should be preheated in the pan over a medium-high to high heat until it is 'shimmering' but not smoking (butter will become foamy). If the fat is too cool, then whatever you are sautéing will not brown and may absorb the fat, becoming greasy. Use just enough oil to coat the base of the pan and when hot, add your ingredients and toss until golden and beginning to crisp – if they start to burn, reduce the heat slightly. For the best flavour, try using a combination of oil and butter but, depending on the style of cooking, adapt the type of fat you use, using olive oil in Mediterranean dishes, for instance.

Pan-frying uses slightly less heat than sautéing (medium to medium-low) and only a small to moderate amount of fat. It is more suitable for larger pieces of food that don't require constant stirring but are simply turned over occasionally.

Griddling differs from other methods of frying in that the food, rather than the pan, is oiled, which ensures the characteristic seared or charred marks and the wonderful slightly smoky flavour of griddled foods. When buying a griddle pan, make sure it is made from heavy cast iron so it can be heated to a very high temperature without buckling. It should be heated before adding food so that the heat sears the outside almost straightaway but retains moisture inside. Vegetables take on a new dimension when griddled, as do tofu, tempeh and halloumi, which hold their shape

during cooking. Thick slices of griddled bread drizzled with oil, rubbed with garlic and topped with tomato make the perfect bruschetta.

Shallow-frying is used for browning the outside of foods such as vegetable fritters or burgers, while sealing in moisture and flavour. It uses more oil than sautéing, pan-frying or stir-frying. The food being cooked is half-submerged in hot oil and is normally turned over halfway through cooking. It's a good idea to cook the 'presentation' side first for the best appearance. A heavy-based frying pan is best for shallow-frying since it ensures even heat distribution.

Deep-fried foods should have a crisp, golden exterior and tender centre – they should never be greasy or soggy. Deep-frying is ideal for cooking foods such as doughnuts, fritters, gyoza and potatoes, and for things coated in batter or breadcrumbs. In this quick method of cooking, the food should be completely submerged in the hot oil. The right type of oil is crucial: sunflower, groundnut and rapeseed oils are ideal because of their mild flavour and high smoking point, which means they remain stable when heated to a high temperature. The oil temperature is also important to ensure that the centre of the food is cooked and the exterior crisp but not burnt. Use a kitchen thermometer to monitor the temperature as you heat the oil, or try the bread test: heat the oil until it gives off a smoky haze, then drop in a cube of day-old bread and time how long it takes to brown. The list below explains the approximate time it takes to brown the cube of bread.

- LOW HEAT: 60 seconds = 170°C/325°F
- MEDIUM HEAT: 40 seconds = 180°C/350°F
- HIGH HEAT: 20 seconds = 190°C/375°F

The size of the pan you use when deep-frying is also important. Choose one that has deep sides but isn't too large. Importantly, do not fill it more than two-thirds full with oil. If using a basket, dip it in the hot oil before adding the food to prevent the food from sticking to it. After cooking, remove the food from the oil with a slotted spoon and drain well on kitchen paper. Deep-fried food is best served immediately, but if you need to keep it warm before serving, avoid covering the food or it will become soggy. Instead, put it in a single layer on a plate or baking sheet and keep it in a warm oven with the door ajar to allow air to circulate.

Stir-frying is an excellent, quick method of cooking food. It preserves valuable nutrients and retains the food's flavour, colour and texture. If you expect to do a lot

of stir-frying, it's worth investing in a good wok, which is usually fairly inexpensive. The best modern woks are made from lightweight carbon steel, which is a good heat conductor and becomes non-stick when 'seasoned' properly and looked after. You can also deep-fry, steam and braise in a wok, so choose a good size that suits a wide-range of cooking methods, such as a 30–35cm/12–14in wok.

Preparation is key when stir-frying: make sure the vegetables are cut into uniform-sized pieces so they cook evenly, and measure all liquid ingredients before you begin. Choose an oil with a mild flavour and high smoking point, such as those recommended for deep-frying. Heat the wok over a high heat before you add the oil, then add the foods that take the longest to cook, such as onions and carrots. Leave other ingredients, such as leafy greens, bean sprouts and flavourings to the end to ensure that everything cooks evenly and reaches the right temperature. If you don't have a wok, a large, heavy-based frying pan is also suitable for stir-frying.

STEAM

Steaming allows foods to retain their texture, shape and flavour and can also revive dried ingredients by adding moisture. An important technique in Asian cooking, steaming is highly regarded for its relative ease and restorative qualities. Because foods are cooked in moist heat, rather than in fat or oil, it is one of the healthiest cooking techniques and is particularly good for delicate foods, vegetables, fruits, puddings, dumplings, grains and foods steamed in parcels.

There are two methods of steaming: direct and indirect. Direct steaming is the most common and involves placing a perforated basket over bubbling water and then covering it with a lid. The food cooks in the rising steam without coming into direct contact with the liquid. The steam must be able to circulate freely during cooking, so avoid overfilling the steamer basket or the food close to the lid will discolour and become soggy as the condensation that forms on the lid drips on to it. Half-full is ideal. Tiered bamboo steamers, found in Asian food shops, are specially designed for this purpose and can be placed over a wok. Vegetables, dumplings and other parcels are usually cooked by this form of steaming.

The indirect method of steaming is used for cooking steamed sweet and savoury puddings as well as rice. The sealed pudding basin is placed on a trivet or upturned saucer in a large pan, then enough boiling water is added to come halfway up the sides of the basin. This method tends to be quite slow since it takes a while for the heat to reach the centre of the basin, but it does give a light, open texture to a

pudding. Two points to remember when steaming a pudding: avoid lifting the lid off the pan during the first 30 minutes because the drop in temperature may make the pudding sink. Also, keep an eye on water levels and occasionally top up with more boiling water, if necessary.

SIMMER

Simmering is the technique used to cook food in gently bubbling liquid, be it water, stock, wine or juice. It allows the flavours of the ingredients to merge and enhance each other, while still retaining their individual character.

Poaching is a perfect method for cooking certain fruits, vegetables and eggs. Poaching is normally done at a lower temperature than simmering: submerge the food in liquid and cook over a low heat so that the liquid barely trembles. It's great for slightly under-ripe fruit—in fact, avoid using very ripe fruit, which will disintegrate during cooking. Vegetables such as fennel, carrots, potatoes, courgettes and leeks also poach well in stock and make a lovely light stew or soup.

Poaching softens and sweetens fruit and is particularly suited to cherries, pears, peaches, nectarines and apricots. Submerge the fruit in a sugar syrup, wine or fruit juice, which can be flavoured with spices, such as cinnamon, ginger, cardamom or vanilla. If the fruit is likely to discolour, add a splash of lemon juice to prevent this.

To poach an egg, first crack it into a cup, then lower it into a sauté pan or small saucepan filled with about 5cm/2in of barely simmering water. (Some recommend swirling the water first to make a whirlpool, which encourages the egg to form a neat round.) Raise the heat slightly so that the water is gently bubbling and cook for 2–3 minutes until the white is set but the yolk remains runny. Remove the egg from the water with a slotted spoon and allow it to drain slightly, then serve warm.

Stewing is similar to poaching but uses less liquid. It is suitable for most fruits, transforming items such as apples, rhubarb, apricots and plums, for example, into a thick sauce or compôte. The fruit can then be passed through a sieve to make a purée or coulis.

Both poaching and stewing are particularly useful if you have a glut of fruit you want to preserve, either as whole fruit, a thick compôte or jam for future use. Stewing is also the ideal method for cooking hearty winter fare, such as savoury stews, casseroles and soups. Some curries also benefit from stewing over a low, gentle heat, increasing the heat of the chilli and helping to meld the complex individual flavours of the spices. The beauty of this cooking technique is that

dishes can be fully (or partially) cooked ahead of time and then reheated – remarkably often tasting better with time since the flavours are slowly and gently coaxed out.

Braising involves slow-cooking food that is half-submerged in liquid. The food is cooked in a covered pan for an extended time and absorbs most of the cooking liquid, producing a tender result. Leftover liquid can be used as a sauce.

Finally, boiling is vigorous and fast, with the heat set at a high temperature. When cooking pasta or noodles, it's important to keep them at a rolling boil to prevent the strands sticking together. Similarly, dense vegetables, such as potatoes and other root vegetables, often require boiling to soften them. Eggs, on the other hand, should not be boiled hard but simmered gently in just-bubbling water as vigorous boiling can crack the shells, toughen the whites and discolour the egg yolks.

Some of the recipes call for a vegetable to be blanched. This involves partially cooking it by boiling, then refreshing it under cold running water to stop the cooking process. It can then be cooked to completion just before serving.

BAKE

There is nothing more appealing than the intoxicating aroma of freshly baked bread. More than any other cooking technique, baking tells you when a food is ready by filling the kitchen with wonderful aromas.

The terms 'bake' and 'roast' are often used interchangeably, and there's really no hard and fast rule that distinguishes them. In both cases, food is cooked in the dry heat of an oven at temperatures usually above 150°C/300°F/gas 2. Rather loosely, 'baking' tends to be used to refer to breads, cakes, biscuits, pastries and pies. But then there are baked potatoes, fruit, stews, gratins and pasta dishes. 'Roasting' usually involves the use of fat to encourage a crisp or golden exterior and moist interior and is usually used to refer to savoury foods – although, again, there are many exceptions to this generalization.

Successful baking demands certain practices. Firstly, the oven needs to be preheated. This allows the food to start cooking at the correct temperature as soon as it is put in the oven, which is key. If you have a fan oven, check the manufacturer's recommendations for how to adjust baking times accordingly. Next, make sure you use the right size tin or baking dish, otherwise the cooking time and texture of the food may be affected. For some dishes, such as casseroles and gratins, this may not be crucial, but cakes and other delicate baked foods certainly require accuracy.

It's worth investing in good quality, heavy-duty trays and tins, too. They will last longer, conduct heat evenly and do not warp at high temperatures.

Fruit is great for baking and can be used in savoury dishes as well as sweet ones. The heat of the oven softens the cells of the fruit and intensifies its flavour by drying it slightly. Fruit can also be dry roasted to preserve it as well as to intensify its sweetness. This requires a low temperature and can take some time to extract the moisture from the fruit. Tomatoes also work well cooked in this way, and it's a great method for preserving a summer glut.

It's important when baking/roasting fruit and vegetables that they fit comfortably in an even layer in the tin, without overcrowding, to ensure they become golden and slightly caramelized, rather than cooking in their own moisture. Piling them on top of each other will trap in steam and cause them to become soggy instead of golden. If the baking tray is crowded, use two trays instead of one and swap their positions in the oven halfway through cooking. Foods with a high moisture content, such as tomatoes, courgettes, aubergines and garlic, will need more space than relatively dry foods, such as potatoes and root vegetables.

Vegetables and fruit can also be baked 'en papillote', or in a parcel, which seals in juices and helps to retain the nuances of any added flavourings.

PULSES, RICE AND SPROUTS

Here are some basic instructions for cooking dried pulses and rice, and for sprouting your own pulses or seeds.

PULSES

Pulses make an invaluable contribution to a meat-free diet and are versatile and nutritious. The recipes in this book call for 'cooked' beans, which can either be cooked from scratch or tinned. The former need a little advanced preparation but are more economical and taste better. There is much debate as to whether soaking dried beans before cooking is necessary. Lentils do not need soaking, but soaking certainly reduces the cooking time for other beans, including split peas, and can enhance their flavour because it starts the germination process.

Begin by rinsing the dried beans, then soak them in cold water for at least 4 hours or overnight if more convenient (soaking them for more than 4 hours has little influence on the cooking time). Drain and rinse the beans, then put them in a saucepan and cover with 2.5cm/1in cold water. Bring to the boil and boil rapidly

for 10 minutes, then reduce the heat and simmer the beans, partially covered, until tender, about 45 minutes–1 hour and 30 minutes, depending on the bean.

If you are short of time, the long soaking process can be speeded up: first cook the dried beans in boiling water for 2 minutes, then remove the pan from the heat, cover and leave to stand for about 2 hours. Drain, rinse and cover with fresh cold water before cooking, as described above.

Avoid adding salt or any acidic ingredients to the beans during cooking as this will prevent them from softening. Some cooks add bicarbonate of soda to the water to help soften the pulses, but this can reduce their nutritional value.

Dried pulses roughly double in weight and volume when cooked, so bear this in mind when following the recipes. All of the recipes call for 'cooked' beans, so if you are using dried beans, reduce the quantity called for by half and prepare as above. A drained 425g/15oz tin is roughly the equivalent of 150g/5½ oz/¾ cup dried beans. If using tinned beans, rinse and drain them before use.

RICE

There are many methods of cooking rice, depending on personal preference and the type of rice being used, but the classic method for cooking boiled rice with fluffy, separate grains is the absorption method.

Use a long-grain white rice, such as basmati, and rinse the rice in several changes of water until it runs clear. Put the rice in a heavy-based saucepan and cover with about 1½ times the quantity of water or stock (it should be covered by about 1cm/½ in fluid). Bring to the boil, uncovered, then turn the heat down to its lowest setting, cover with a lid, and simmer for about 10 minutes or until the water is absorbed. Remove the pan from the heat and leave to stand, covered, for 10 minutes, then fluff up the grains of rice with a fork to separate.

SPROUTING PULSES AND SEEDS

Sprouted beans are incredibly nutritious and add flavour and crunch to a dish.

To grow your own, soak a good handful of dried pulses or seeds, such as mung beans, lentils or alfalfa, in lukewarm water overnight. Drain well, then transfer to a clean, sterilized jar. Cover the jar with a small piece of muslin and secure with a rubber band, then leave to stand in a warm, light place. Rinse, in the jar, twice a day under cold running water, draining well each time. The sprouts will be ready in 3–5 days. Transfer to an airtight container and store for up to 5 days in the fridge.

INGREDIENTS

Some recipes in this book use ingredients that you may be unfamiliar with or have heard of but not used. Here is a brief list of some of the more unusual.

- BARBERRIES – These small, dark red dried berries have a sharp, sour flavour and are popular in Middle Eastern cuisine. They're available in Middle Eastern shops.
- CHICKPEA FLOUR – Also known as gram flour or besan, this pale yellow flour is commonly used in Indian cooking. It gives a distinct flavour and texture to foods.
- CHINESE BLACK BEANS – These fermented, salted black soya beans are available canned, in packets or dried at good Asian speciality shops. They need to be rinsed before use, and dried beans must be soaked in hot water for 20 minutes and rinsed well before use. They become very soft after soaking and can be used whole or ground to a paste as a substitute for bottled black bean sauce.
- CHIPOTLE PASTE – A spicy paste made from smoked dried jalapeño peppers that is popular in Mexican cooking. Also look for dried chipotle chillies, which can be used dried in stews or soaked in hot water until softened and ground into a paste.
- CURRY LEAVES – These small pointed leaves have a spicy flavour and often feature in Indian cooking. They can be frozen – use straight from the freezer – or dried.
- ENOKI MUSHROOMS – Native to Japan, these long-stemmed mushrooms grow in clumps and have tiny white caps.
- HARISSA – A chilli paste made with piri piri chillies, spices and tomatoes.
- KABOCHA SQUASH – This Japanese winter squash has a dark green skin and vibrant, sweet orange flesh.
- KECAP MANIS – This dark, thick, sweet soy sauce used in Indonesian and Malaysian cooking is now widely available, but if you can't find it substitute with dark soy sauce sweetened with a little sugar.
- MIRIN – This sweet rice wine is used mainly in Japanese cooking in sauces, marinades and dressings.
- MISO – A paste made from fermented soya beans, varying in colour from white and yellow to brown and red; generally, the lighter the colour, the milder the flavour.
- MOOLI – A large, white root vegetable with a radishy flavour. Also known as daikon.
- NORI – Seaweed that is formed into paper-like sheets, then dried. It is used as a wrapping for sushi or sold in flakes for sprinkling over dishes.
- POMEGRANATE MOLASSES – A thick, dark, tangy syrup from the Middle East. It can be used in marinades and dressings or mixed with water to make a drink.

- PRESERVED LEMONS – Popular in Moroccan cooking, these lemons are preserved in a salty brine, sometimes with added herbs and spices. They can be used in tagines and stews or finely chopped in salads and dressings.
- QUINOA – This protein-rich, gluten-free grain has a mild, slightly bitter flavour.
- RAMEN NOODLES – These Japanese noodles, made from wheat flour and egg, are often served in a broth of the same name.
- RAS-EL-HANOUT – A popular North African blend of herbs and spices that is traditionally used in tagines. Some varieties contain as many as fifty ingredients.
- RAW CACAO – Also known as raw chocolate, this is an antioxidant-rich, relatively unprocessed alternative to regular chocolate. Available in nibs and powder form.
- RICE PAPER WRAPPERS – Dried, fragile rounds of paper-thin rice paper. These need to be soaked briefly in just-boiled water before use.
- SHAOXING WINE – A Chinese fermented rice wine with a slightly sweet taste, reminiscent of dry sherry.
- SOBA NOODLES – Made from buckwheat flour or a mixture of wheat and buckwheat, these Japanese noodles are popular served warm or cold.
- SUMAC – A sour, slightly astringent, reddish-brown spice that comes from the dried berries of a bush that grows in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.
- TAMARIND – A large, brown bean-like pod commonly sold as a paste, a block of compressed pulp (often with seeds) or puréed. It adds a sweet-sour flavour to Asian, Middle Eastern and Caribbean dishes.
- TEMPEH – Made by fermenting soya beans with a cultured starter, rather like cheese-making, tempeh has a nutty, savoury flavour and firm texture.
- TOGARASHI (SHICHIMI) – A Japanese spice blend made with ground chillies, orange peel, ground sansho, sesame seeds, poppy seeds, hemp seeds and nori.
- TOFU – Made from ground soya beans, tofu is available in various textures, from firm, which holds its shape during cooking, to silken, which is very soft, smooth and creamy. Abura-age is a deep-fried golden tofu pocket that can be stuffed.
- UME PLUM SEASONING – A tart, tangy seasoning made from the juices left over from the pickling of Japanese ume plums.
- VEGETARIAN FISH SAUCE – Usually a combination of soya beans, salt, sugar, chilli and citric acid. Found in Thai and Vietnamese food shops.
- WAKAME – This curly-leaf, brown seaweed is sold dried. After rehydrating, it has a soft texture and mild vegetable flavour.
- WASABI – A pungent condiment made from Japanese horseradish.



Fresh and vibrant, these creative recipes show how easy it is to coax the best out of uncooked ingredients. They rely on techniques such as soaking, marinating, blending or slicing foods into paper-thin, translucent slivers and elegant 'noodles' to create a tantalizing combination of flavours, textures and colours.

RAW

VIETNAMESE RICE PAPER ROLLS WITH PEANUT NUOC CHAM

Nuoc cham is the classic accompaniment to most savoury snacks and starters in Vietnam. This dipping sauce is traditionally a mix of hot, sweet, sour and salty flavours and enlivens whatever it is served with, such as these delicious vegetable-filled rice paper rolls.

SERVES 4–6

6 spring onions, shredded
1 yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into thin strips
1 carrot, cut into matchsticks
75g/2½ oz/¾ cup finely shredded Chinese leaves
2 tbsp peeled and finely chopped ginger
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 handfuls of bean sprouts
2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
2 tbsp light soy sauce
2 tsp sesame oil
24 medium rice paper wrappers
4 long chives
110g/3¾ oz enoki mushrooms, trimmed and split into 4 or 6 bundles

NUOC CHAM DIPPING SAUCE

½ small cucumber, deseeded and diced
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tsp palm sugar or soft light brown sugar
1 bird's eye chilli, finely chopped
2 tbsp vegetarian fish sauce
juice of 1 lime
2 tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped

- 1 Put the spring onions, yellow pepper, carrot, Chinese leaves, ginger, garlic and bean sprouts in a large mixing bowl. In a small bowl, mix together the chilli sauce, soy sauce and sesame oil. Pour the mixture over the vegetables and toss well.
- 2 Fill a heatproof bowl with just-boiled water. Put 2 rice paper wrappers on top of one another (you will need 2 per roll as they are very fragile) and soak in the water for 20 seconds or until they are pliable and opaque. Use a spatula to carefully remove the wrappers from the water, drain for a second and place flat on a plate. Pat dry with kitchen towel, then spread a spoonful of the vegetable mixture vertically down the centre of the top wrapper. Fold the bottom edge over to enclose the filling and make a base, then roll the wrapper over the filling from left to right, leaving the top open. Repeat with the remaining wrappers and filling to make 12 rolls in total.
- 3 Tie 1 chive around each bundle of enoki mushrooms.
- 4 Mix together all of the ingredients for the nuoc cham dipping sauce and divide it into four small bowls.
- 5 Serve 2 or 3 rice paper rolls per person, accompanied by the dipping sauce and an enoki bundle.





TRIO OF CASHEW NUT CHEESES

Soaked and blended cashews make a remarkably creamy soft ‘cheese’. Garlic and lemon, herbs and nuts are just a few of the many flavourings you can use.

SERVES 4
300g/10½ oz/2 cups cashew nuts
½ tsp salt
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 tbsp lemon juice
a large pinch of smoked paprika
5 tbsp shelled pistachios, finely chopped
5 tbsp chopped mixed herbs, such as thyme, oregano and chives
freshly ground black pepper
savoury biscuits, to serve

- 1 Put the cashews in a bowl, cover with warm water and leave to soak for at least 2 hours, then drain and transfer the cashews to a food processor or blender. Add 185ml/6fl oz/¾ cup water and blend into a coarse paste. (For a softer ‘cheese’, add a little more water and blend into a coarse purée.) Add the salt and season with pepper.
- 2 Divide the nut cheese into 3 equal portions. Stir the garlic, lemon juice and paprika into 1 portion and spoon it into a ramekin. Put the chopped pistachios on a plate. Using your hands, divide another portion of the nut cheese into teaspoon-sized balls, then roll each ball in the pistachios until evenly coated. Roll the last portion of the nut cheese into a log and roll it in the herbs to coat. Serve the flavoured nut cheeses with biscuits.

NECTARINE, BOCCONCINI AND BASIL SALAD WITH VERJUICE DRESSING

Verjuice is the unfermented juice of unripe wine grapes and makes a refreshing alternative to lemon juice or wine vinegar in salad dressings. If you can’t get hold of bocconcini (baby mozzarella cheese), you can use a single ball of mozzarella cheese sliced into rounds. Serve with crusty bread.

SERVES 4
3 tbsp pine nuts
3 nectarines, halved, stoned and sliced
300g/10½ oz bocconcini (baby mozzarella cheese), drained
1 handful of basil leaves, roughly torn

VERJUICE DRESSING
3 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp verjuice
salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 Toast the pine nuts in a dry frying pan and over a medium heat for 3–4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned. Watch carefully so they do not burn. Remove from the heat and set aside.
- 2 In a small bowl, mix together all of the ingredients for the dressing and season with salt and pepper.
- 3 Arrange the nectarine slices in a shallow dish and top with the bocconcini. Sprinkle with the basil leaves and drizzle with the dressing. Top with the pine nuts and serve.

BEETROOT CARPACCIO WITH GOAT'S CHEESE AND ORANGE—BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

SERVES 4
2 tbsp orange juice
½ tsp balsamic vinegar
4 tbsp olive oil
¼ tsp salt
1 beetroot, peeled
½ tsp lemon juice
2 large handfuls of mixed leaves, such as watercress and rocket
100g/3½ oz goat's cheese, thinly sliced into rounds
2 tbsp pumpkin seeds
freshly ground black pepper

- 1 Put the orange juice, vinegar, oil and salt in a bowl and whisk or blend with an immersion blender until well mixed and thickened, then set aside.
- 2 Using a very sharp knife or a mandolin, cut the beetroot into paper-thin rounds. Put them in a bowl with the lemon juice and add just enough cold water to cover.
- 3 Divide the mixed leaves on to four plates, then top with the drained beetroot and goat's cheese, alternating the two in a horizontal row across the mixed leaves. Sprinkle with the pumpkin seeds and drizzle with the vinaigrette, then season with black pepper and serve.

BLACK OLIVE TAPENADE, DOLCELATTE AND PINE NUT WRAPS

SERVES 4
3 tbsp pine nuts
4 large multi-seed tortillas
1 large handful of baby spinach leaves, tough stalks removed
1 small red pepper, deseeded and cut into thin strips
70g/2½ oz/heaped ½ cup creamy dolcelatte cheese, cut into small chunks with the rind removed
salt and freshly ground black pepper

TAPENADE
85g/3oz/¾ cup pitted black olives
1 garlic clove
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves

- 1 To make the tapenade, put the olives and garlic in a food processor and process until coarsely chopped. Add the olive oil and lemon juice and process again to obtain a coarse purée. Transfer to a bowl, season with salt and pepper, and stir in the parsley.
- 2 Toast the pine nuts in a dry frying pan over a medium heat for 3–4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned. Remove the pine nuts from the pan, then put 2 of the tortillas in the pan and warm them over a medium-low heat, turning occasionally, for about 20 seconds. Repeat with the remaining tortillas.
- 3 Spread 1 tablespoon of the tapenade down the centre of each tortilla and top with the spinach, red pepper, Dolcelatte and pine nuts. Season with salt and pepper and roll up, tucking in the ends, then cut in half crossways on the diagonal and serve.

CHILLED ALMOND SOUP WITH FRUIT AND OLIVE KEBABS

A version of the classic Spanish *Ajo Blanco*, this chilled garlicky soup is served with a kebab of apple, olives and grapes for dunking. In Spain, the soup is traditionally served as a first course at Christmas lunch.

SERVES 4
4 thick slices of white bread, crusts removed
200g/7oz/1⅓ cups blanched almonds
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp salt
150ml/5fl oz/scant ⅔ cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 tbsp verjuice or white wine vinegar
1 green apple
1 tbsp lemon juice
16 green grapes
12 pitted green olives
ice cubes, to serve

- 1 Soak the bread in water for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, finely chop the almonds in a food processor or blender. Add the garlic, salt, olive oil, verjuice and 250ml/9fl oz/1 cup water.
- 2 Squeeze the bread in your hands to remove as much water as possible, then add it to the food processor. Process until smooth and creamy, then add another 250ml/9fl oz/1 cup water and process again. Cover and chill the soup for at least 2 hours.
- 3 Just before serving, make the kebabs. Peel, core and cut the apple into bite-sized chunks, then toss in the lemon juice to prevent them from discolouring. Thread the apple chunks, 4 grapes and 3 olives on to each of four skewers. Ladle the soup into four bowls (if it is very thick, add a little more water first) and add a few ice cubes to each portion. Top with a kebab and serve immediately.