



Vegetable Literacy: Cooking and Gardening with Twelve Families from the Edible Plant Kingdom

Deborah Madison

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In her latest cookbook, Deborah Madison, America's leading authority on vegetarian cooking and author of *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*, reveals the surprising relationships between vegetables, edible flowers, and herbs within the same botanical families, and how understanding these connections can help home cooks see everyday vegetables in new light.

For over three decades, Deborah Madison has been at the vanguard of the vegetarian cooking movement, authoring classic books on the subject and emboldening millions of readers to cook simple, elegant, plant-based food.

This groundbreaking new cookbook is Madison's crowning achievement: a celebration of the diversity of the plant kingdom, and an exploration of the fascinating relationships between vegetables, edible flowers, herbs, and familiar wild plants within the same botanical families.

Destined to become the new standard reference for cooking vegetables, *Vegetable Literacy* shows cooks that, because of their shared characteristics, vegetables within the same family can be used interchangeably in cooking. It presents an entirely new way of looking at vegetables, drawing on Madison's deep knowledge of cooking, gardening, and botany. For example, knowing that dill, chervil, cumin, parsley, coriander, anise, lovage, and caraway come from the umbellifer family makes it clear why they're such good matches for carrots, also a member of that family. With more than 300 classic and exquisitely simple recipes, Madison brings this wealth of information together in dishes that highlight a world of complementary flavors.

Griddled Artichokes with Tarragon Mayonnaise, Tomato Soup and Cilantro with Black Quinoa, Tuscan Kale Salad with Slivered Brussels Sprouts and Sesame Dressing, Kohlrabi Slaw with Frizzy Mustard Greens, and Fresh Peas with Sage on Baked Ricotta showcase combinations that are simultaneously familiar and revelatory.

Inspiring improvisation in the kitchen and curiosity in the garden, *Vegetable Literacy*—an unparalleled look at culinary vegetables and plants—will forever change the way we eat and cook.

Vegetable Literacy: Cooking and Gardening with Twelve Families from the Edible Plant Kingdom Details

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Author : Deborah Madison

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Eh?Eh! says

<http://www.serioouseats.com/2015/10/ho...>
my favorites, things that made my eyes widen when I tasted them

soy-braised tofu with five-spice powder
anise shortbreads with orange flower water
sautéed Jerusalem artichokes with rosemary and smoked salt*
*chervil-chive butter***
sorrel sauce with yogurt***
Rice with Spinach, Lemon, Feta and Pistachios
Peanut Butter Cookies
cauliflower salad with goat cheese
Roasted Rutabaga Batons w/ Caraway and Smoked Paprika
Carrot Soup w/ Tangled Collard Greens
*White bean and fennel salad*****
Summer Squash Tartines w Rosemary and Lemon
Kale and Potato Mash with Romesco Sauce (almond and hazelnut)

*I didn't have smoked salt so used kosher + some smoked paprika. I didn't think these would brown like Deborah said they would (BECAUSE HOW THIN IS THINLY SLICED LIKE DO YOU WANT ME TO GET OUT MY MANDOLINE CUZ I'VE GOT ONE), but I trusted and it worked.

**Chervil! Who knew!

***I didn't have full-fat yogurt so used lowfat. I think the full-fat would cut the sharpness a little bit more.

****I confess: canned beans

Debbi says

This is a beautiful book. Deborah Madison is one of my favorite cookbook writers. She consistently creates a clear path to a delicious destination. Her ideas are innovative, yet down to earth. Vegetable Literacy is carefully researched and well organized, an interesting read for plant lovers as well as cooks. My reservation about the book is that it is too beautiful. I don't feel inspired to bring it into the kitchen, it doesn't beg to be splattered and stained. It sits on my coffee table where I dip in and read about carrots and artichokes between other things I'm reading. That said, I have tried Red Lentil and Coconut Soup with Black Rice, Turmeric and Greens...fantastic. There are at least another dozen recipes I plan to try. I only wish the 4 lb book was a bit more kitchen friendly.

Laura Leaney says

This is a big beautiful book with a perfect title. Deborah Madison is like your mom (if she taught Home Ec, or as I used to call it Home Ick). The book is divided by vegetable family, such as "The Cabbage Family," and then further divided by type - like red cabbage, kale, brussel sprouts, and cauliflower. The information on each vegetable isn't all that groundbreaking for me - although it's nice to be introduced, I guess. Carrot, this is Laura - Laura, this is Carrot, who did not get his orange color until the 16th century. Still, I like the list of all the varieties (even though I probably couldn't find most of them). How would you love to cook up the Violet de Provence heirloom artichoke? I know I would. Where the hell can I get one?

Still, the recipes are fantastic and relatively simple, keeping the flavor of the vegetable at its most true. I especially like the "Seared Beets with Walnuts over Wilted Kale with Micro Greens" and the "Cauliflower with Saffron, Pepper Flakes, Plenty of Parsley, and Pasta." Today I'm making the "Summer Squash Tartines with Rosemary and Lemon for tonight's appetizer. The recipes are relatively simple, with a short ingredient list, which helpfully avoids what I call the "Bon Appetite Factor," that sensation of despair you get when the recipe column extends pretty far down into the next page.

I'd love to have had more photographs, but then again the book is heavy enough. Hmm. I guess I could use the internet to see a photograph of a Chioggia beet.

Debra Daniels-zeller says

I put this book on my list nearly a month ago, and this whole time I've been cooking and slowly savoring all the tips and information about the 12 vegetable families covered in it. It's too big to take anywhere to read, so I read it at night have delicious dreams. Initially I got this book because I'm a big fan of Deborah Madison's recipes. I always learn something new from Deborah's descriptions or explanations. When I first ordered it, I hadn't expected anything so huge and wonderful. The cover is understated beauty, and though this looks like a beautiful coffee table book, it's so useful, I'll use it over and over again for reference and recipe inspiration. After reading just a few pages, I could tell how much passion and work went into this book. One of my favorite aspects of this book is that Deborah shows us how to use parts of the vegetables that many people often toss out like radish greens and carrot tops. And I also love the tips for good companions for the vegetables in recipes. If you want to learn all about vegetables from gardening to stove, this is the book to get. You won't be disappointed.

Miriam says

Sample recipe: Cabbage Panade

Yield: 4 servings

Cook Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Garlic Stock

5 cups water

6 whole, peeled garlic cloves

12 fresh sage leaves

1 dried bay leaf

Panade

1 garlic clove, halved

3 tablespoons unsalted butter plus 1 tablespoon at room temperature

1 yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced

½ teaspoon juniper berries, crushed

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped sage leaves

1 small head green cabbage or Savoy cabbage (about 2 pounds)--quartered, cored and cut crosswise into ½-inch-wide ribbons

1 tablespoon kosher salt, plus extra if needed

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

4 slices dark or light rye bread

1 cup grated Swiss, Gruyère or Teleme cheese

1. Make the garlic stock: In a large saucepan set over medium-high heat, add the water, garlic cloves, sage leaves and bay leaf and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 25 minutes. Strain the garlic stock through a fine-mesh sieve and discard the solids.

2. While the stock cooks, start the panade: Preheat the oven to 350°. Rub a 2-quart gratin dish with the halved garlic clove and the room-temperature butter. In a large, deep skillet set over medium heat, melt the remaining 3 tablespoons of the butter. Add the onion, juniper berries and sage and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion begins to brown and soften, about 10 minutes. Add the cabbage and ½ cup of the garlic stock to the skillet. Season with 1 tablespoon of the salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage is tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Season the cabbage with the pepper and more salt if needed.

3. Transfer half of the cabbage to the prepared gratin dish. Layer with the rye bread slices and sprinkle the cheese over the top. Top with a single layer of the rye bread slices and sprinkle the cheese over the top. Add the remaining cabbage and pour the remaining garlic stock over the top. Transfer the baking dish to the oven and bake until the cabbage is bubbling and the edges of the cabbage leaves are browned, about 45 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and cool for 5 minutes before dividing the cabbage onto plates or into bowls. Serve drizzled with any remaining juices from the baking dish.

Becki Iverson says

I bought this book on a whim (which I NEVER do), for two reasons:

1) From working with one of her earlier cookbooks shortly after becoming a vegetarian, I know that Deborah Madison surely knows her shit when it comes to vegetables;

2) I enjoy using lesser known, hard to find, or hyper-local/foraged ingredients in cooking, and although I know how to find them I seem to have a difficult time knowing what to do with them.

This book is miraculous for anyone looking for a primer on every kind of vegetable, grass, cereal, herb, vine or anything else under the sun (sadly, it does not really treat fruits and I hope to god that she releases a companion that is fruit-based). It's almost too encyclopedic at times, including ingredients you wouldn't see unless you lived in a specialized bubble such as, say, Anson Farms - but one can hardly say that is a bad thing.

The recipes are clean and simple, providing both health and easy assembly for those daunted by difficult cooking techniques. Furthermore, thanks to the book's organization by classes of veggies, it's very easy to see that one could substitute almost any ingredient in each class for another, making the recipes infinitely more variable than they would appear on the surface.

This is a wonderful, wonderful book, and a great intro to the plant kingdom for absolutely everyone. Highly, HIGHLY recommend it - and don't library this one, BUY IT. You'll be referencing it a lot.

Tim says

torn - ultimately, i think it's pretentious. it never quite reaches an encyclopedic level, though she nicely interweaves personal stories and background about the various individual vegetables. i like the categorical separation - interesting for knowledge-sake, but ultimately this does not make a fine cookbook. the recipes don't make sense in this order, so you would never use this book regularly, or for spontaneous cooking. she claims these recipes are easy, but they are each filled with the unique (random) ingredients about which she is educating us. there will always be something you don't have readily available - smoked salt, lovage, burdock, sorrel, black quinoa, crumbled coconut butter...! and she says things like, "of all the whole grains, i think i like oat groats best." and she includes a recipe for corn cookies. this really isn't practical, and she drives it home when she requests you to source your eggs as locally as possible - like from your next door neighbor's chickens. not any more literate after this compendium.

Julie Davis says

This is a beautifully written book which nicely weaves gardening and cooking anecdotes with factual information. Having read several other books which fill a similar niche I was interested to see how this one stacked up.

I really liked the writing and author's voice. However, none of the recipes appealed to me. To be fair, Madison is speaking to vegetarians whenever she writes and I am not in that group, though I do enjoy a good vegetable recipe as much as the next person. These recipes may all be quite stellar but the titles and descriptions never looked enticing. I tend to enjoy vegetable recipes coming from ethnic sources, especially Asian, and there is something about her recipes that always looks a bit forced in the way that many vegetarian cookbooks have done in the past.

I should add that there are some very basic recipes for most vegetables which anyone would enjoy, however, I have been cooking long enough that many of these are in my regular repertoire. Thus I must depend on the

other recipes to make a cookbook valuable.

Chalk it up to a disconnect between Madison and me. Others with different taste will probably get a great deal out of this book, not to mention the basic vegetable family knowledge which Madison conveys. I'll stick with Nigel Slater (Tender) and Bert Greene (Greene on Greens) as well as various Asian and Middle Eastern recipes.

Nicole says

Before cooking any of the recipes, I read Vegetable Literacy every night before bed. It's a sweet read, anecdotal more than educational, and the recipes are deceptively simple looking. But deliciousness lies within these pages. Just looking at the recipes without making any of them, I was skeptical that they would be anything special. But making them--boy, Madison has serious skill in the combination of basic ingredients to create a mouthwatering meal. I've made three recipes so far--the quinoa cakes with beets, the cauliflower pasta with saffron and parsley, and zucchini with mint and pine nuts, and all three have been wonderfully tasty. What I love about them is that if you have a moderately well-stocked kitchen and herb garden, you won't have to make special shopping trips to get many of the ingredients used in Madison's book. Sure, she gets a little picky about olive oils, and smoked salt is a bit pricy, but for the most part, chances are you can find a recipe that you have all the ingredients for without looking too hard. In addition to this many of the recipes are also very quick and easy to make. These features are rapidly making this my go-to cookbook for everyday meals. I highly recommend this cookbook for anyone even moderately interesting in cooking.

Martha says

This is an amazing book. I had it from the library and only managed to get through the section on carrots and other family members and had to skim the rest of this not small book. I'll have to get it again, though it would be an excellent book for a serious cook to have in a personal library. The author takes a fresh (and very thorough) approach to growing, selecting, and preparing vegetables. One of the things I liked best was a list with each vegetable of what condiments or spices complement the selection. This is a cookbook but also a reference book of great value.

Robert Hudder says

Look, I picked this up at the library and within minutes was immersed in it. The approach of looking at the families where these vegetables live and their similarities opened doors for me. Simple ideas such as the fact that Queen Anne's Lace is a wild carrot got me to thinking on whether you could eat the tops and bottoms of that plant in the same way as a carrot.

So aside from the botanical, there are straight forward recipes. But the proximity of the recipes to relatives just screams for reinterpretation of the recipe using some of the relatives. I will be blogging a review of this book and putting the more interesting facts in there but for anyone who is just starting to explore vegetables in a serious way, this is an amazing book to help you to approach the vegetable.

I really don't know what to say. I have several books on vegetables already but this one has me thinking in a

different way. It has taken me a long time to finish the book because every section set off hours of thoughts. This is a good thing.

Kirsten says

This gorgeous book is especially essential for CSA members and farmer's market lurkers. It's arranged by vegetable families, and would be a wonderful reference when one is confronted with a relatively unfamiliar vegetable or a glut of whatever's in season. The writing is beautiful and somewhat chatty, like hanging out in the kitchen of an accomplished and warmly friendly chef. The author suggests flavor pairings for each vegetable family and also offers information as to which parts of the plant are edible -- can you sauté up the greens as well as eating the root? What bits should be saved for stock? I have yet to make any recipes from this book, but I think it's lovely and I suspect I will end up purchasing a copy of my own.

Jeff says

Deborah Madison is well-known for vegetarian cooking. This book actually breaks vegetables down into their related families of plants, allowing us to see interconnections between different kinds of plants. I have made a number of the recipes in this book, and in other cases have improvised my own variations, following Madison's model, always with excellent results. I especially appreciate her sometimes sly suggestions for going beyond a strictly vegetarian diet, as when she notes that shrimp might be great in a dish for cauliflower and pasta. I've made it both ways, and it's delightful in both versions. With summer farmer's markets now in full swing, Madison's book is my bible of how to come up with wonderful meals from what's fresh at the moment. Anyone who is vegetarian and wants to expand their repertoire, or cooks who want to do more with vegetables than steam or boil them, will benefit from this beautiful book.

Stephanie says

I liked having a book that put things in families. However, I would have liked to see more photos of finished dishes. And, more photos of the unusual things listed. I don't need a photo of a carrot, but asafetida would have been something new.

Gertie says

I got this on sale for \$2.99 via BookBub, some of the recipes and information looks interesting. It's NOT a vegetarian book, though I believe it mostly is, and I am confident I can veganize anything in it.

Looking forward to trying a few new simple recipes, and learning a bit about vegetable "families".
