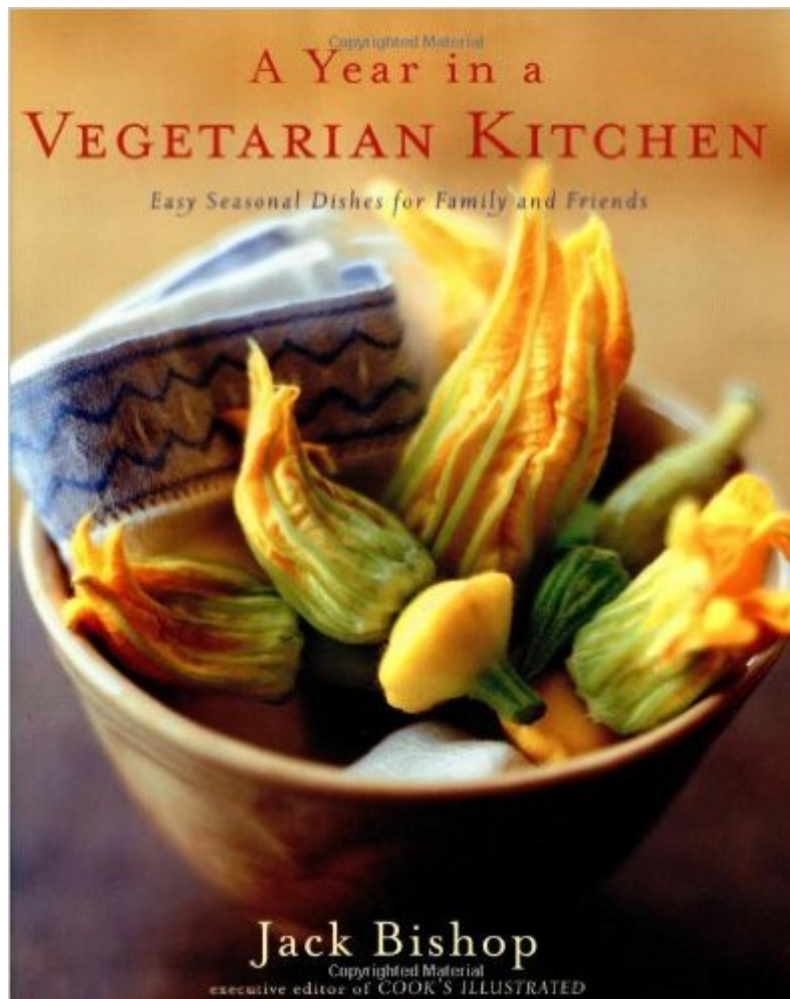


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# A Year In A Vegetarian Kitchen: Easy Seasonal Dishes For Family And Friends



## Synopsis

Simple, seasonal, real-time vegetarian recipes for everyday and every occasion. As a busy husband, father of two young children, and full-time writer, Jack Bishop demands a lot from the meals that make it into his family's repertoire. In *A Year in a Vegetarian Kitchen*, he guides you through the seasons with 248 of his favorite everyday recipes, which deliciously embody his philosophy of "shop locally, cook globally, and keep things easy." Cooking with seasonal produce, he says, is the best way to bring a welcome variety to the table. In spring, dinner might be Stir-Fried Rice Noodles with Asparagus and Eggs. Summer brings Savory Corn Griddle Cakes and Fresh Tomato Pizza with Avocado. For fall, Root Vegetable Tarts with Rosemary and Orecchiette with Spicy Broccoli are on the menu. And in winter, when most farmers' markets are a distant memory, Pan-Glazed Tofu with Thai Red Curry Sauce and Caribbean Black Beans with Sautéed Plantains await. With ten years of experience working with *Cook's Illustrated*, he's also able to provide expert guidance on how to choose a good vegetable broth, select the right potatoes for mashing, and more tips tailored just for vegetarian cooks.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

On several counts, this is a better than average vegetarian cookbook by veteran author and *Cook's Illustrated* executive editor, Jack Bishop. The most outstanding virtue of the book is that, true to the title, the recipes are organized by season. This is a popular notion these days and several books have done it already, but it is doubly appropriate to a vegetarian cookbook. Mr. Bishop decides to divide things into the four seasons rather than splitting things up more finely as others such as

Albert Portale have done in one of his books. The second virtue of the book may actually be a requirement for a seasonally organized book. This is an additional table of contents organized by type of dish. The categories so organized are Soups and Stews; Lighter Salads; Main-Course Salads; Sandwiches and Tortilla Dishes; Pasta and Noodles; Rice, Grains, and Couscous; Beans and Lentils; Eggs; Tofu and Tempeh; Pizzas and Tarts; Vegetable Main Courses; Side Dishes; and Accompaniments. I am not up on all the finer distinctions in the vegetarian / vegan world, but the presence of distinctly eggy dishes such as omelets, frittatas, and souffles tells me that Mr. Bishop is on the liberal end of the vegetarian spectrum. The third virtue of the book is the great variety in foods used in the dishes and in the great variety of ethnic influences. Italian pastas, frittatas, beans, and veggie dishes are cheek and jowl with lots of Middle Eastern, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Chinese, Japanese, and Latin dishes. Tofu, miso, grains, and couscous are given prominent roles in ethnic dishes. I have seen some vegetarian cookbooks that claimed to declaim classic dishes with virtually no rice dishes represented. True to his 'best recipe' background from 'Cooks Illustrated', Mr. Bishop's techniques are dead on in every case I checked. His rice technique is especially keen on the finer points of difference between cooking simple long grain rice and rice for 'sticky rice'. The fourth virtue of the book is set of sidebars on ingredients and techniques. In one, for example, he echoes a finding in 'Cooks Illustrated' that points out that American imitations of Indian Basmati rice simply don't cut it. The sidebars plus headnotes leave no mistaken impressions that this is fast or simple cooking. One's first experience in preparing a dish from fresh artichokes or fava beans will demonstrate that some veggie delicacies can be very finicky and time consuming to prepare. The fifth virtue of the book is in the pantry recipes or, more accurately 'Everyday Basics' with recipes for stocks, doughs, basic rice preparations, basic potato preparations, and basic corn meal preparations. These are all 'seasonless' recipes, as good rice, potatoes, and corn meal are available the year around. The best finds in this chapter are the three different vegetable stocks, one traditional, one Mediterranean with basil and potato, and one Asian with dried shiitake and ginger. Bishop demonstrates great respect to his veggie ingredients by simmering for no more than an hour. The last virtue I consider valuable for you, dear reader, to know is the fact that Bishop is neither preachy nor rigid about his vegetarianism or seasonality. He freely confesses to using imported materials out of local season and makes recommendations for supermarket replacements for stocks and such (look for stocks in cardboard aseptic containers). This liberality extends to the fact that several recipes are not strictly from their seasonal chapter. I am especially happy that Mr. Bishop did not bring along the 'Cooks Illustrated' dialectic of examining lots of unsuccessful methods, which cooks have known to be bad ideas for centuries. I do believe there are some recipes

that are less than stellar. There are times when `simple' leaves you with the feeling that something is missing, but then, maybe this just means your palate needs some education. Overall, I found lots of sound ideas, albeit few with which I was unfamiliar. Sometimes, I think certain culinary ideas, even ideas which may be centuries old, suddenly acquire a currency among culinary writers. All of a sudden, everyone is talking about adding Parmesan rinds to soups and broths. Mr. Bishop uses this very simple idea in the most novel manner by adding it to the broth to be added to risotto in place of the conventional chicken stock. Thank you, Jack. Highly recommended for the vegetarian and all others searching for reliable seasonal recipes and nutritious dishes. Intermediate skills required. Few expensive or truly hard to get ingredients.

This book is organized into seasons, so the author is assuming that you won't be interested in buying produce that is not at its freshest (meaning most of the produce from a supermarket in the winter). Most people are very aware that tomatoes in the winter are terrible and there is no point in buying them. This is the basis behind this cookbook. If you are the type of person that loves shopping at specialty markets like Whole Foods and love to visit local farmer's markets or have a garden in the summer this book is perfect for you. The recipes are fairly straight forward and uncomplicated, and they don't tend to call for a lot of ingredients so what is absolutely imperative for having the recipes turn out wonderful is using the best ingredients possible. For instance if a recipe lists fontina cheese, don't use the cheap \$7 a pound stuff sold at the supermarket. You need to go to a reputable cheese counter (like Whole Foods) or a cheese shop and pay the \$15 a pound for the real stuff, Fontina Val d'Aosta. If you aren't the type of person that is willing to do that type of shopping, these recipes may seem bland to you. I will add that when he uses expensive ingredients he doesn't tend to call for a lot of that item, so a little goes a long way. So far I have prepared quite a few of the winter recipes and a few of the fall ones. All of them have been very good and a few have been spectacular and have become new family favorites like the caramelized onion pizza with blue cheese and walnuts and also the vegetarian chili that uses chipotles in adobo sauce and a good 12oz beer. I can't wait for spring and summer when my own garden and the farmer's market are in full swing so I can try recipes from the other seasons. I strongly recommend this book for vegetarians who like to use fresh seasonal ingredients. I was so impressed with what I have prepared so far from this book that I recently purchased his Italian cookbook and have been trying out some of the recipes in that one.

This is one of the cookbooks I pull out every few days, and have no hesitation in cooking from

iteven for the first time for guests -- Ingredient lists are simple, so you will have an idea of the tastes to expect from just reading the recipes. And yes, that means you use top quality fresh ingredients as another reviewer mentioned because there are no rich sauces etc usually to hide mediocre produce. Its great everyday healthy fare, that you don't mind repeating, and truly kid pleasing as well. Because its arranged seasonally, I usually realize that I've picked up some ingredient which stars in a nearby recipe that week at the farm market and thats a great way to combine menus when we have extra folks at the table and also to please picky eaters who may not like a particular flavor...And his salads have such lovely unique flavors, everyone at the table is asking for seconds and recipes to take home. I also love his menu combinations listed at the beginning which are a fool-proof way to combine for entertaining friends. I find that I turn to his cookbooks the most because the base ingredients like olive oil are heart friendly. I used to love Mollie Katzen and then Deborah Madison, but while I still turn to Deborah Madison for the truly wow cooking occasions, I stick to this for everyday because of the light, family friendly approach and the fact that you can usually put a meal on the table in a couple of hours.

This is the best vegetarian cookbook I have bought. The recipes are all based on what vegetables are in season and the recipes are really tasty. The recipes are easy to prepare and appeal even to picky eaters like myself. You need this cookbook!

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