



Crossroads: Extraordinary Recipes from the Restaurant That Is Reinventing Vegan Cuisine

Tal Ronnen, Scot Jones (Contributor)

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“A new kind of flavor-first vegan cooking. . . . Stunning.”

—Food & Wine

“Best Food Books of 2015”

—USA Today

Reinventing plant-based eating is what Tal Ronnen is all about. At his Los Angeles restaurant, Crossroads, the menu is vegan, but there are no soybeans or bland seitan to be found. He and his executive chef, Scot Jones, turn seasonal vegetables, beans, nuts, and grains into sophisticated Mediterranean fare—think warm bowls of tomato-sauced pappardelle, plates of spicy carrot salad, and crunchy flatbreads piled high with roasted vegetables. In *Crossroads*, an IACP Cookbook Award finalist, Ronnen teaches readers to make his recipes and proves that the flavors we crave are easily replicated in dishes made without animal products. With accessible, unfussy recipes, *Crossroads* takes plant-based eating firmly out of the realm of hippie health food and into a cuisine that fits perfectly with today’s modern palate. The recipes are photographed in sumptuous detail, and with more than 100 of them for weeknight dinners, snacks and appetizers, special occasion meals, desserts, and more, this book is an indispensable resource for healthy, mindful eaters everywhere.

Crossroads: Extraordinary Recipes from the Restaurant That Is Reinventing Vegan Cuisine Details

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From Reader Review Crossroads: Extraordinary Recipes from the Restaurant That Is Reinventing Vegan Cuisine for online ebook

Bernadette says

Having enjoyed Tal Ronnen's recipes from his previous book, THE CONSCIOUS COOK, and from the Gardein website, using their products in crafting delicious meals, I was looking forward to this new book, and it more than met my expectations.

Quoting from the book, CROSSROADS features "...all the foods we crave - Mediterranean flatbreads, hearty pastas, creative vegetable dishes, and decadent desserts - just as delicious without the dairy or meat." Very apt description. Written with his restaurant partners, Scot Jones and Serafina Magnussen, the recipes are from their Los Angeles area eatery touted as "...reinventing vegan Cuisine." Though they did set out to be a vegan restaurant, it is not advertised as such. The idea is to show how good vegan food is, and appeal to people who enjoy good food.

The theme is Mediterranean, and the dishes represented reflect this. Recipe ingredients are mainly those that are grown in the Mediterranean region, easily sourced, using traditional preparation techniques as much as possible. So no fusion of cultures, just to keep it vegan as many restaurants do. Basically what one would find in non-vegan restaurants specializing in regional Mediterranean food, just prepared cruelty free and sustainably plant based, vegan. So very few tofu based recipes, since soybeans are not indigenous to that region. Also, only one recipe using a meat analog/substitute, included because it is a restaurant favorite. Reflective of Mediterranean cultural Cuisine, the book gives detailed instructions on making pastas & flatbreads, and using these in recipes. The Pasta 101 section is invaluable! The flatbread doughs are great in place of pizza dough - lighter & less filling; more room for the toppings.

There is also a section on cocktails, spirited and virgin. Good liquid accompaniments to any meal.

And an excellent Basics section, with versatile recipes for stocks, sauces, pesto, toppings and a "cashew cream plus variation" used in many of the recipes & that you'll want to keep on hand, just because.

Favorites, so far:

the above mentioned cashew cream, walnut Parmesan, Scoty's marinara sauce (basics),

Hearts of palm calamari with cocktail sauce & lemon caper aioli,

Butternut squash farinata with arugula salad and pomegranate vinaigrette (I used red leaf lettuce),

Roasted cauliflower flatbread with pistachio kalamata tapenade and frisée (I adore cauliflower),

Butternut squash purée flatbread with mustard greens and fried Brussels sprouts leaves (I used collard greens for the mustards and sweet potato for the squash purée)

Papas Arrugadas (Spanish wrinkled potatoes) with parsley vinaigrette (had been making this dish for years using red, also known as new, potatoes; now it has a fancy name!),

Sweet potato latkes with spiked applesauce,

Grilled garden vegetable lasagna with puttanesca sauce,

Vanilla basil ice cream.

Haven't done any of the cocktails yet.

Everything was as delicious as the dishes pictured in the book, even my variations; using what I have on hand.

Lots of beautiful pictures of delicious food, and prep techniques. Also menu suggestions, and extensive, user friendly index.

Hardback, so pricey. I borrowed it from my local library, as I do with most books until I decide I enjoy them enough to add to my collection via financial investment. This one is on the add list.

Laura says

This cookbook has few recipes that I'd actually attempt. Most have spices and ingredients that I'd have to order online, and produce that is not carried in any nearby grocery stores. It's too bad, because they've done a great job with the food photography, it got me really excited to make these, and then very disappointed that I can't. I think there are maybe 4 recipes in here that I'll actually try. So glad I got this from the library instead of shelling out cash for it...

Peacegal says

Tal Ronnen's cookbooks are beautiful and elegant. They are a joy to page through. They are also, in my view, completely unrealistic to the situation of most everyday readers.

On one hand, it's great to show people that vegan cuisine can easily encompass fine, gourmet dining. That plant-based eating can accommodate all palates and expectations. I hope that maybe some of our local chefs and caterers will pick up this book and be inspired.

On the other, there's a whole country outside the major metropolitan areas. When you live in Armpit, West Virginia, as I do, many of the recipes here might as well be calling for ingredients from Mars. Ronnen loves his rare and heritage variety veggies, and I snickered several times imagining someone asking for these things at Kroger or Walmart. When someone new to plant-based eating picks up one of Ronnen's books, they might find his recipes too daunting, and assume that all vegan cooking is difficult and expensive, which is a shame.

Critterbee* says

'Crossroads' by Tal Ronnen is a wonderful new vegan cookbook with ambitious, restaurant quality dishes without insipid ingredients.

So many vegan cookbooks focus on the healthy aspects of vegan cooking; Tonnen focuses on taste and texture. Full of mouthwatering photographs and high-level recipes that demand to be attempted. 'Crossroads' also inspires everyone to open their minds to trying new ways of vegan cooking, and maybe to invent a few dishes of their own.

eARC netgalley

lisa says

I received this through a giveaway listed by the publisher on Shelf Awareness. I have never gotten a ARC

cookbook, and am so excited, especially when I saw it was already endorsed by one of my foodie heroes, Roy Choi! I am not vegan anymore, and my husband usually flatly refuses to eat anything made from vegan recipes, (unless I cheat and add meat, or cheese) but as I was flipping through this I found the recipe for Leek Pate. I noticed some yummy-looking leeks at the farmer's market last week, so if I can find them again, I will definitely be trying this recipe on my husband. These recipes aren't bad, and the ingredients are pretty easy to come by, and not too expensive. I would recommend this book to anyone who eats vegan, or who wants to bring more vegan food into their life.

Sandra Lassiter says

I am not a vegan, but this is a gorgeous cookbook!! I would feel very comfortable cooking for a vegan using these recipes, and many I would enjoy on my own. Bloomsdale Salad with Black Garlic Vinaigrette, beautiful breads, Balsamic Roasted Mushrooms with Shallots and Toasted Almonds (oh, my!), Summer Berry Galette...where do you begin?!

There are gorgeous pasta recipes which are great cooked according to the recipe, but can be made for meat lovers by switching out ingredients such as a regular sausage for the vegan sausage in the Bolognese sauce. Salads, flatbreads, desserts and more fill this delightful book.

The book itself is a work of art. It is beautifully bound with gorgeous photos abounding throughout calling out to you to get in the kitchen and start cooking. So, what are you waiting for?!

I received a copy of this book from Artisan for my honest review. All thoughts and opinions are my own.

LibraryDanielle says

This was a really nice cookbook. The pictures were gorgeous, the recipes beautiful, and the format pleasing. It's a vegan cookbook, which I didn't realize at first (I just dive into cookbooks reading whichever recipe catches my fancy before reading through), and you don't miss the non-vegan aspect at all. I docked a star because most of the recipes are finicky and/or have a ridiculous amount of steps. There were so many recipes that looked good, but I would never make just because it took two pages of steps to outline the recipe. I just don't have time for that kind of super picky recipe.

Don says

First of all, it's obvious that the writer got a big budget for this book. It's hardback and has many gorgeous professionally done photographs.

Second, this is not necessarily for the novice cook, but more an experience cook/chef. Still the recipes seem doable and look amazing.

Third, some of the ingredients aren't readily available, such as black garlic, red palm oil, watermelon radishes (I want these!!), oroblanco grapefruit to name a few.

Apparently flatbread and pasta are specialties at this place as there are chapters devoted to each. There's also a chapter on snacks and spreads, soups, salad, desserts and cocktails. There are instructions on making homemade flatbread, as well as pasta. I like whole grains, so I'm not sure how I'll adapt the recipes but they look intriguing and very unique and different.

Virginia Campbell says

Noted chef, restaurateur, and cookbook author Tal Ronnen states: "As a lover of food, I realized it wasn't the animal products I actually longed for, but the texture, the flavor, the heartiness, and the satisfaction I feel when I indulge in a favorite food." His focus is to not take vegan foods and recreate them into copycats of non-vegan fare, but to let them have their own moment in the spotlight by making the most of their inherent goodness. I very much agree with his food philosophy. I am not vegan, or even vegetarian, but I am blessed with beloved friends who are vegetarians and vegans, and I am also a curious cook. Great food is great food, no matter how it is categorized. Making the most of what's readily available, seasonal, locally grown, and supports local markets is a sensible, sustainable, and satisfying way to shop and eat. "Crossroads: Extraordinary Recipes from the Restaurant That Is Reinventing Vegan Cuisine" by Tal Ronnen and Scot Jones features vegan cooking with a Mediterranean flare. The Crossroads restaurant, located in Los Angeles, serves the same fare. Here's just a sampler of the imaginative, inviting plant-based dishes you will find: "Harissa Potato Chips with Smoked White Bean Hummus"; "Pickled Vegetables"; "Spicy Tomato-Pepper Jam"; "Spring Chopped Salad with Whole-Grain Mustard Vinaigrette"; "Flatbread Dough" with a number of topping combinations; "Summer Minestrone with Basil Pesto"; "Sweet Potato Latkes with Spiked Applesauce"; "Cauliflower with Olives and Sun-Dried Tomatoes"; "Sweet Corn Risotto with Buttered Leeks, Cherry Tomatoes, and Tomato-Sherry Cream Sauce"; "Pasta Dough" with numerous sauces; "Dark Chocolate Rice Pudding with Sugared Pine Nuts and Raspberries"; "Pumpkin Parfaits"; and "Decadent Dark Chocolate with Figs and Hazelnuts". There is also a lively set of liquid libations: "Respectable"; "Hard Times"; "Parisian Standard"; "Happy Harlequin"; and "Sophia". The wonderfully tempting recipe featured on the cover of the book is "Acorn Squash Ravioli with Kale and Black Garlic Butter Sauce". Tal Ronnen, founder and chef of Crossroads Kitchen in Los Angeles and author of the New York Times bestseller *The Conscious Cook*, became known nationwide as the chef who prepared the meals for Oprah Winfrey's 21-day vegan cleanse. He has made his culinary mark at a number of high-profile events, having catered Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi's wedding, Arianna Huffington's party at the Democratic National Convention, and U.S. Senate dinners. A graduate of the Natural Gourmet Institute, Ronnen is the co-creator of Kite Hill Cheese, the first nondairy cheese sold at the high-end cheese counter at Whole Foods, and is a collaborating chef at the Wynn and Encore hotels in Las Vegas.

Review Copy Gratis Artisan Books/Workman Publishing via Shelf Awareness

Cynthia Corral says

I received an advance copy from NetGalley in exchange for a review.

Holy Cannoli, I've just gone through this gorgeous book and I cannot wait to start cooking. My mouth is watering as I write this. I've finished the book, but I want to try a few recipes before I submit an official review.

Be back soon!!! (After I gain a few pounds)

Later...

I've had a difficult time with this review, not because I didn't like the book but because every time I return to it I start making ingredient lists and envisioning what I can include for Thanksgiving dinner, and deciding if I should plan an earlier dinner party because I cannot wait to get started with these amazing dishes!! And then the review is forgotten and I'm lost in cooking dreamland.

This is a gourmet book, make no mistake. Even for long time vegans there are some new ingredients and possibly some difficult to find ones (black garlic??). Many of the recipes do not look like they can be whipped up in five minutes, or even 30 minutes, but then again most of these dishes do not look like something you'd throw on the table for the family on a Tuesday night. This is food to impress people.

In the early edition I was shown, there was a gorgeous photo for every single dish - and again, that's what makes it so difficult to get through, you just get stuck on the beauty of the pictures and wondering what these magical dishes will taste like.

Early in the book Ronnen talks of his Crossroads restaurant, and he makes a big deal about not using meat substitutes, just pure whole foods. When I told a vegan friend of mine about this book she says she went to Crossroads for her birthday last year and the menu was heavy on the Gardein dishes. I cannot verify this, perhaps she was confused about the restaurant, but I can tell you this cookbook has no Gardein anywhere to be found.

I was quite impressed with the book. This is gourmet vegan cooking like I've never seen before. I would not recommend this for a beginner cook, especially anyone not used to vegan cooking, but anyone experienced in the kitchen would likely love it. Beginner cooks will love finding dishes to aspire to - and they won't be left out, there are less complicated dishes as well. It would be a wonderful, original addition to your vegan cookbook shelf and an inspiration for many dinner parties (and dinners for two) in your future.

Heather says

I wanted to loooove this cookbook! It sounded so good. I loved the concept. The photography was beautiful! The recipes look like what I'd love to eat in a restaurant. The trouble is I don't want to cook them at home. There are too many ingredients, too many tools, too many steps. I just don't have the patience for this kind of cooking. That's why I eat out! I would recommend this to people who don't mind putting effort into dinner! So I'd probably put it at about 3.5 stars.

Aja Marsh says

Everything looks pretty fancy but the recipes and instructions are very approachable. Nice appetizing photos, and always fun to see "high end" vegan food!

Deanna says

I received this from netgalley for review.

This cookbook is a true gem. It is not only a cookbook, but a primer of all the secret methods that professional chefs use to create great food. For instance, I don't hate the taste of okra, just the slimy texture, so I never cook with it. Tal Ronnen gave a simple method for making okra without it turning to slime. Just core the center of the membranes that cause the slimy feel. It worked and I am ready to cook with Cajun and Creole dishes again. I had always wondered why my potatoes were soggy and starchy, and restaurants provide this lovely, soft potato. Put a cup of kosher salt in the water, and voila; I had incredible potatoes.

The book is filled with these great tips. He holds none of his secrets back. We get them all.

Ronnen has created a great cookbook for the home cook. Very few of the recipes have any ingredients that would not be available to the home cook. And they are darn easy, too. The instructions are very precise, but are usually no more than three or four paragraphs. I tried a few random recipes, they came out absolutely beautiful, and really delicious.

He has also made it remarkably easy to substitute ingredients. I would like to tackle pasta one day, but he makes it very clear that it is OK to substitute a good grade of gourmet pasta and marinara pasta. But even his marinara sauce is easy to make, and really tasty, too.

This is a vegan cookbook, but I had no problem using non vegan ingredients. I am vegetarian, so I do use dairy products from pasture raised animals. He recommended using almond ricotta, but I used my homemade ricotta, and it was absolutely incredible.

But even the vegan ingredients were easy to make. The cashew cream was simply cashews soaked overnight, and then blended, with water, in my Ninja. Yummy in desserts.

His recipes for tomato jam, and the best refrigerator pickles I ever tasted; were easy and fast. This is not a cookbook that would require a trained cook. Even a beginner could tackle most of the recipes.

This cookbook is one of the most visually beautiful books I have ever seen. The photography is stunning. Each of photographs will make you very hungry. But what made me really happy was that the dishes I made looked that good, too. Everything I made looked just like the pictures. There was some pretty happy people around my house, and everyone gave my dishes high marks. Definitely Sunday cooking for everyday.

This cookbook is a keeper. The one that becomes the most used book on the cookbook shelf. I really enjoyed this one.

Christine says

I received an ecopy from NetGalley in exchange for a review.

Oh wow, this was a gorgeous book. The photographs were inviting and colourful. I always appreciate a cookbook with great photos, especially when one may not be familiar with how the dish (or the ingredients)

should look. Everything looked appetizing, I'm hungry just thinking about the pasta chapter...

I especially appreciated the "Basics" section. There are a few items like Cashew Cream and Walnut Parmesan that would really elevate other recipes and having them in your back pocket is a real treat. There are also a few really great hints, not just on vegan baking/cooking but cooking in general.

Another thing I really liked was that the recipes were all about enjoying food. I've read so many vegan cookbooks that are just not appetizing. The recipes in Crossroads show that one can eat vegan without suffering. I will definitely try out a few of these recipes with my family. I'm a real baking fiend, so it's nice to have a few awesome looking desserts to try too.

Allie says

This rating/review is based on an ARC from the publisher. MEGA BIG thanks to them for it. It's in color too!!

This cookbook looks really really impressive. I never know where to start with vegan Mediterranean food. This cookbook is definitely more complicated than the recipes I usually use, but I could definitely simplify some of them. And these recipes are totally perfect if I were ever to entertain. As usual though, I'll refrain from an actual star rating until I've made some of the recipes.
