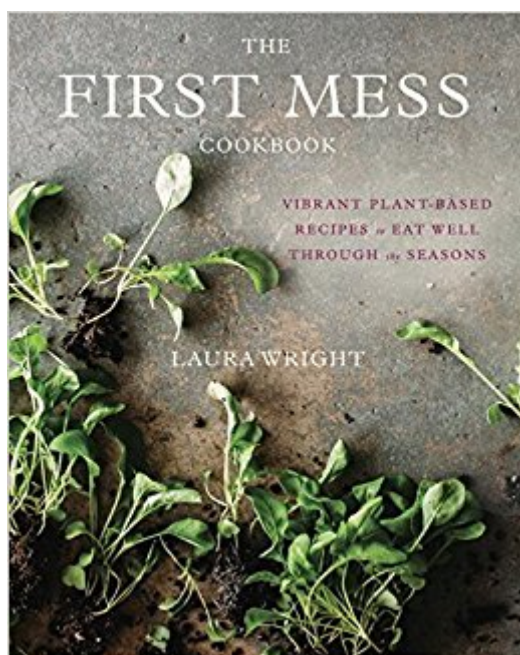


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The First Mess Cookbook: Vibrant Plant-Based Recipes To Eat Well Through The Seasons



Synopsis

The blogger behind the Saveur award-winning blog The First Mess shares her eagerly anticipated debut cookbook, featuring more than 125 beautifully prepared seasonal whole-food recipes. ã Æ Home cooks head to The First Mess for Laura Wright's simple-to-prepare seasonal vegan recipes but stay for her beautiful photographs and enchanting storytelling. In her debut cookbook, Wright presents a visually stunning collection of heirloom-quality recipes highlighting the beauty of the seasons. Her 125 produce-forward recipes showcase the best each season has to offer and, as a whole, demonstrate that plant-based wellness is both accessible and delicious. Wright grew up working at her family's local food market and vegetable patch in southern Ontario, where fully stocked root cellars in the winter and armfuls of fresh produce in the spring and summer were the norm. After attending culinary school and working for one of Canada's original local food chefs, she launched The First Mess at the urging of her friends in order to share the delicious, no-fuss, healthy, seasonal meals she grew up eating, and she quickly attracted a large, international following. The First Mess Cookbook is filled with more of the exquisitely prepared whole-food recipes and Wright's signature transporting, magical photography. With recipes for every meal of the day, such as Fluffy Whole Grain Pancakes, Romanesco Confetti Salad with Meyer Lemon Dressing, Roasted Eggplant and Olive Bolognese, and desserts such as Earl Grey and Vanilla Bean Tiramisu, The First Mess Cookbook is a must-have for any home cook looking to prepare nourishing plant-based meals with the best the seasons have to offer.

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Customer Reviews

“Laura Wright’s plant-based collection of recipes is full of color, good ideas, clever tricks you’ll want to know, and that all-important garden-based sense of the seasons which is one of the things that makes these recipes vibrant. Anyone who cooks stands to learn a lot from *The First Mess Cookbook*.” — Deborah Madison, author of *A Vegetable Literacy* and *The New Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*

“Laura Wright’s passion for cooking shines through every evocative word and gorgeous photograph on her blog — and now, in this lovely cookbook, too. I’ve always loved Laura’s inspiring, seasonal, and wholesome take on plant-based eating. And with unique dishes like Savory Ginger Green Onion Crepes, Butternut and Pesto Cream Lasagna, and Earl Grey Tiramisu, I know *The First Mess Cookbook* will have a place on my shelf for many years to come.” — Angela Liddon, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Oh She Glows Cookbook* and *Oh She Glows Every Day*

“Laura Wright is a rare jewel, and her debut cookbook is no different. Shining with her creative spirit, each recipe is a celebration of beauty and abundance, living well and eating well. Just by flipping through these pages, you are immediately aware of her reverence for fresh, healthy food and that each recipe is an ode to earth’s gifts. Laura will open your eyes to the treasure trove that is nature, the possibilities in the produce aisle, and will get you excited about eating more plants — not because you should but because you want to.” — Sarah Britton, author of *My New Roots*

“Laura is a plant-based culinary genius. Anyone desiring to add exciting new vegan recipes to their repertoire must have this book. The recipes are approachable and healthy, and the photography is stunning. I’m in love.” — Dana Shultz, author of *Minimalist Baker’s Everyday Cooking*

“As a long-time follower of Laura’s work, I’ve been anxious for her creative recipes to be printed in a book that I could use often in my own kitchen. She has a way of making plant-based food appeal to everyone, no matter their diet preferences. I will continue to reach for this book for everything from her amazing dairy-free coffee creamer to weeknight dinner ideas or something special for guests.” — Sara Forte, author of *The Sprouted Kitchen* and *Sprouted Kitchen: Bowl + Spoon*

“Laura Wright’s *The First Mess Cookbook* is a soulful, sumptuous feast for the eyes and belly. Lush photographs and candid storytelling bring a rich collection of creative, plant-based recipes to life. In a warm and welcoming voice, Laura issues us all an invitation to embrace the beautiful mess that is cooking — and life.” — Gena Hamshaw, author of *Food52 Vegan*

“Laura’s no-fuss, simple-but-stylish approach to healthy food is as bold as it

is beautiful. Her warm and inviting spirit, passion for plants, and gift for pairing fabulous fresh flavors take you on an exquisite journey where you feel nourished, nurtured, awakened, and inspired. Her magical mess is a joyful celebration of eating well and living well.

•Tess Masters, author of *The Blender Girl*, *The Blender Girl Smoothies* book and app, and *The Perfect Blend*

“The First Mess Cookbook” is not just an inspiring view into Laura Wright’s productive kitchen and garden or simply a collection of truly delicious recipes; it is a comprehensive guide to creating healthy and irresistible plant-based meals every day.

•Amy Chaplin, James Beard award-winning author of *At Home in the Whole Food Kitchen: Celebrating the Art of Eating Well*

“The next time someone asks me how vegan food can be filling, satisfying, and delicious I’ll show them this book. Superfood-packed breakfasts, hearty main courses, huge salads full of flavor and texture, and more . . . each page makes me hungrier than the last. I’m already hooked on Laura’s Mocha Hemp Fuel and her Cozy Lentil Soup. Yum!”

•Jeanine Donofrio, author of *The Love and Lemons Cookbook*

Laura Wright is a recipe developer, food photographer, and the voice behind the award-winning blog *The First Mess*, which she created after attending culinary school and working in farm-to-table and strictly vegan restaurants. Her work has been featured in *The Huffington Post*, the *Martha Stewart Living Blog*, *The Kitchn*, and *Food52*, among many other outlets. *The First Mess* was *Saveur*’s 2014 Editor’s Choice winner for Best Special Diets Blog. Wright lives in Southern Ontario.

My first judgment of a cookbook comes from the # of dog-eared pages I have after a first pass (Yes, I’m one of those people that “reads” a cookbook cover to cover). After a first pass of *The First Mess*, it doubled in thickness from all the recipes I marked. We’ve had the book for a couple weeks now, and here’s my experience:

PROS:

1. Gorgeous full page photos! I love seeing what the finished product should look like, as well as many close up photos
2. Recipes are all on one page, no annoying flipping while cooking
3. Fairly simple, easy to follow recipes with helpful tips, i.e. “should appear jammy in texture.”
4. Standard recipes that can be modified to your local veggies, such as Small Batch Roasted Soup
5. There is a pretty elaborate desserts section!
6. “Stocking Your Pantry for Success” section explains the different fats, acids, sweeteners and proteins she keeps on hand. I knew a lot of salad dressing recipes call

for grapeseed or sunflower oil, but I didn't know this was because it stays liquid in the fridge. Great tip!

7. High-quality printing. No annoying dust jacket, and the paper is a thick with a matte finish. This book is a tactile pleasure to flip through.

CONS:

1. Unless you are already a dedicated gluten-free vegan, you might not have all these ingredients on hand, and you'll need them quite often: chia seeds, flaxseed, hulled hempseed, dates, multitudes of different flours (whole spelt, millet, oat), arrowroot, buckwheat groats and cups and cups of almond milk.
2. Organization is a bit weird. For example, she has some drinks in the morning section, but there is an "Energizing Drinks" section (which is combined with "Small Bites"?). There are "Salads and Dressings," "Hearty Meals" and "Vegetables and Grains" sections, but the whole book is veggies, so these don't feel all that different. My guess is that when you write a vegan book, organization is hard because everything is a veggie recipe. My guess is I will be using the table of contents more often for this book than most others.

In terms of specific recipes: Taking Laura's advice, "I would recommend this one the most," we started with her Cozy Lentil Soup. It was a solid entry point, but I'm not a tarragon lover. Instead, I recommend you start with the one-pot Root Vegetable Dal, with tempered spices stirred in at the end (which makes it not-quite "one pot" but the pan fried spices are worth the extra effort! As a spice blender, I'm obviously biased, but you'll soon be a convert to tempered spices, too!). The non-dairy creamy Winter Stew was creamy, that even the kids liked it. For sides, I particularly liked the Caramelized Onion Potato Salad and the Master Cleanse Kale Salad; both had great dressings. The most inventive side I tried was the Smoky Eggplant Bacon, which tastes nothing like bacon, but it's smoky-salty-deliciousness (and, gasp, it was an excellent burger topping). The super clumpy granola recipe is perfect. The baby loved the Peanut Butter No Bakes. I'm left excited for all the recipes I have yet to try. The First Mess would be a good compliment for veggie sides when you do your next Whole30, as even though you are eating meat • you can't have gluten, sugar or dairy. If you're not familiar with Wright's blog, there is a nice introduction explaining her progression to vegan eating and cooking. Personally, I am not vegan, but we are trying to cut down on our dairy consumption. I've found, changing our favorite recipes into gluten-free, vegan versions takes a lot of trial and error. I don't have the time for that, so unless I have confidence that the recipe I'm about to make will come out great,

it's not high on my priority list (there are just too many great things to cook!). The First Mess (and The Minimalist Baker) are my go-to ladies when I want something dairy and gluten-free. I know I can pick up one of their recipes, and they have done all the trial and error to arrive at the best tasting / simplest version possible. To make all the recipes in this book, you will need:

- Arrowroot
- Bay Leaf
- Black Salt (Indian Kala Namak)
- for
- “eggy”
- flavor
- Caraway (seeds)
- Cayenne
- Cinnamon (ground)
- Chili (flakes)
- Chili (powder seasoning)
- Coriander (ground and seeds)
- Cumin (ground and seeds)
- Curry (powder)
- Garlic (powder)
- Ginger (ground)
- Mustard (seeds and powder)
- Nutmeg (ground)
- Nutritional Yeast
- Old Bay (seafood seasoning)
- Oregano
- Paprika (smoky)
- Paprika (sweet)
- Pepper (ground)
- Peppercorns
- Saffron
- Sesame (seeds)
- Sea Salt (flaky)
- Sumac (ground)
- Tandoori
- Tarragon
- Thyme
- Turmeric (ground)
- Za’atar

Laura encourages people to use whole spices and grind them when needed, and to buy small amounts of spice to use up within 6 months. And, of course I blush when, “once I started placing my bulk bin items in dedicated containers that I kept in my line of sight, I started cooking with them more,” as this is literally the foundation of our spice jar company, Gneiss Spice Everything Spice Kit: 24 Magnetic Jars Filled with Standard Organic Spices / Hanging Magnetic Spice Rack (Small Jars, Silver Lids). It's what keeps our customers from having three open jars of ground cumin. Thanks, Laura!

In general, Laura lets the seasonal veggies shine, and only uses spices when needed to enhance the dish, not compensate for the lack of something else (as many other vegan recipes do). Of the few things I made, next time I might make them a bit spicier (or in the Tofu Broccoli, less spicy!) and I will experiment more with the exotic seasonings. As a final note, she lists “A Vegetable Garden” under kitchen equipment, commenting, “We eat well because of my vegetable garden, but it makes me a better person.” I love this!

It doesn't matter if you're vegetarian, vegan, or omnivore - Laura's cookbook is one you'll delight in cooking from over and over again. Her writing feels like a good friend is standing in the kitchen,

explaining precisely how to make her favorite recipe for something, giving the bits of advice (e.g. "it should appear quite soupy", "you'll see bits of chia and that's okay", etc) that so many recipes lack. The majority of her recipes (with the exception of some of the Big Plates) are contained on a single page, facing a lovely close-up photo of the finished dish, so it's clear what the outcome will be and you generally don't have to flip pages mid-cooking. Laura's header notes and instructions give the reader enough detail to understand why certain steps are taken, how those steps contribute to the final texture and taste, and what to look at key steps along the way. I've already made the Vegetables, Chickpeas, and Dumplings (as well as the relatively similar Savory Chickpea Stew with Black Pepper Biscuits from the pre-order pdf), the Brussels Sprouts Salad with Lime and Miso, and I've started tomorrow's breakfast with her genius technique for lazy Steel-Cut Oatmeal. All three savory dishes were excellent, satisfying meals for the current cold weather, full of flavor, and easy to make. Overall, the recipes in the First Mess Cookbook are written well-enough that they can be followed by the novice home cook, they don't require too many "exotic" ingredients or kitchen tools (aside for things like a high-speed blender & chia seeds, hemp seeds, nutritional yeast, miso, quinoa, and whole or gluten-free grains). While I'm not sold on all the recipes in this cookbook, there are plenty here I'm excited to try, like the Protein Pancakes that don't rely on protein powder, Quick Almond Milk, Creamy Quinoa and White Bean Risotto, and of course, the gorgeously colorful Thai-ish Cabbage Salad. I do wish the recipes in the First Mess included prep and total time in the header, but none of the recipes are particularly complicated or involved, so it's relatively simple to get a sense for time by glancing at each recipe. Happily, those recipes that require extra time (for soaking, etc) have that noted in the header.

Top to bottom, everything about this book is perfection. We've loved everything we've made and just paging through it is an experience. Lovely.

Lovely cookbook visually. I do like the recipes and they are very healthy. I will enjoy cooking from it.

This book is beautiful! Everyday since I've had it, I've made something out of it. So far we've loved them all. Last night I made the vegetable, chickpea and dumplings and it turned out great. Today I made the cookie for breakfast. Two days ago I made the plant powered protein pancakes. It had me satisfied for hours. I'm looking forward to making more recipes out of this book.

Have tried several recipes so far, and they've all been terrific.

Very inspiring. New combinations. For the novice or experienced cook.

Love love love all the delish recipes from this wonderful book. ÆfÂ Æ Å,Ã ÆœÃ Æœ

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