



Dreena Burton Focuses on Tasty, Everyday Recipes in 6th Plant-Based Cookbook

By Megan Edwards
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For many plant-based foodies, vegan cookbook author [Dreena Burton](#) is a household name. Her sixth book, *Dreena's Kind Kitchen: 100+ Whole-Foods Vegan Recipes to Enjoy Every Day*, is hitting the shelves on August 24, 2021, and features a wide variety of delicious meals that could convince even the most staunch omnivore to go vegan. In addition to detailed instructions and beautiful recipe photography, Burton's book offers several sections focused on kitchen tips, ingredient hacks, and commonly asked questions about plant-based eating. Forks Over Knives chatted with Burton about her kitchen philosophy, when to use secret ingredients, and how plant-based eating has changed her life.

What does it mean to have a “kind kitchen,” and how can readers make their kitchens a little kinder?

Dreena Burton: A lot of people are on a journey with their diet, and it can be challenging to stay motivated if they're always worried about “falling off the wagon.” I encourage people to approach plant-based eating from the mindset that it's all practice. It takes time to untrain ourselves from the habits we've learned most of our lives, and changing your diet is a learned habit as much as any other skill. Just stick with what you're loving and build off of that from week to week as you try new foods and create meals that you enjoy. So it's really about kindness to yourself, which then extends out to other people, animals, and the environment.

Dreena's Kind Kitchen offers many pages of plant-based cooking tips and tricks for readers to use. Tell us more about what you hope people will gain from those sections.

DB: I hadn't initially planned to include those sections, but a lot of the same questions kept coming up as I communicated with readers online. I hope all the technical tips help people think differently about what they have on hand so that meals don't have to take the same form every time. The “Recipe Renewal” sections show readers how to take a recipe they know and love and then turn it into something brand new. A soup can become a pasta sauce if you do it right! Not only does it make your meals more interesting, but it also helps bring more variety into your diet. Thinking outside of the box is so important when it comes to plant-based eating, and I hope these sections will give people more confidence with experimenting in the kitchen. I love when people can open their fridge, see what's there, and then pull something together with whatever's on hand.

What has your journey with plant-based eating been like, and how has it evolved over time?

DB: I started eating plant-based more than 25 years ago when I first came across a study about how red meat doesn't digest well. I remember it really lit something up inside of me. Over time my curiosity grew, and I learned more about how we've really been led into eating a diet of animal products by the meat and dairy industries, and how that leads to all kinds of health and environmental issues. I was in my early 20s and had a lot of problems with my health, and even though I moved into plant-based eating in phases, I immediately noticed that my digestion was much better, my joints felt better, and I had more energy.

In your earlier books you still cooked with oil. What was it like to start cooking oil-free?

DB: When I started cooking oil-free I questioned a lot of things, like, can I still make this taste good? Can I make a delicious cake or salad dressing? I think a lot about that one quote: “Necessity is the mother of invention.” Cooking oil-free really pushed my creative skills and enabled me to get outside of my culinary box. I was incorporating veggies and other ingredients in new ways to get the textures and flavors that I wanted. For instance, one of my favorite ingredients is sweet potatoes, and I use them a lot in recipes to make a creamy texture. It's not about hiding the ingredients; it's more about using them to provide texture and flavor and moisture in a recipe that previously used oil or animal products. Someone said there's always a surprise ingredient in my recipes that you wouldn't necessarily expect. I like to work with ingredients in ways that might be unusual to most people,

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but it's fun to see how I can transform it into something super tasty. Hearty ingredients like grains, beans, seeds, and potatoes are so versatile and offer a really satisfying texture and flavor when used in combination with each other.

Do you have any favorite recipes from the new book? Which ones do your kids love?

DB: I always think of sweets first because that's what I love most. The Crackle Blender Brownies are made in the blender and use red lentils so they're naturally gluten free. I also love the Lentil and Sweet Potato Meatloaf. The potato in the mixture provides a beautiful flavor and consistency that's just so satisfying. And the Awakened Pad Thai is another favorite because it uses pumpkin seeds instead of peanuts. I know a lot of people who aren't able to eat nuts so I wanted to really make sure that this book offered plenty of nut-free options. My daughter, Hope, is 12, and she loves blueberry muffins so much that I named my blueberry muffin recipe after her. They taste like a bakery-style muffin and have hints of lemon. My kids also can't get enough of the [Zucchini Fritters](#)! I'll make a triple batch of them every time because they get devoured so quickly.

You're also a certified yoga teacher. How do you combine yoga with plant-based eating to create a holistic approach to health and wellness?

DB: People often think yoga is just about striking a pose or performing some intricate athletic routine, when really it's so much more than that. It's about coming to a place of quiet and having some stillness in the day. I'm very high energy so I have to train myself to take time out of my day to breathe in silence. Yoga is all about practicing compassion, toward yourself and to those around you, and I think both eating plant-based and doing yoga really support an overall lifestyle of kindness.

***Dreena's Kind Kitchen* is your sixth solo cookbook. What sets this one apart from the previous five?**

DB: I think it's really accessible for everyone. This book offers daily, real-life kinds of recipes and techniques so people can see that eating plant-based is doable. I like to say that everyone eats plant-based to some degree—because most of us eat bananas, potatoes, almonds, etc. It's just about expanding those tendencies more and more until you don't need the other animal-based items in your diet. I think this book really hits that home and makes it easy for everyone to do that, no matter where you are on your journey.