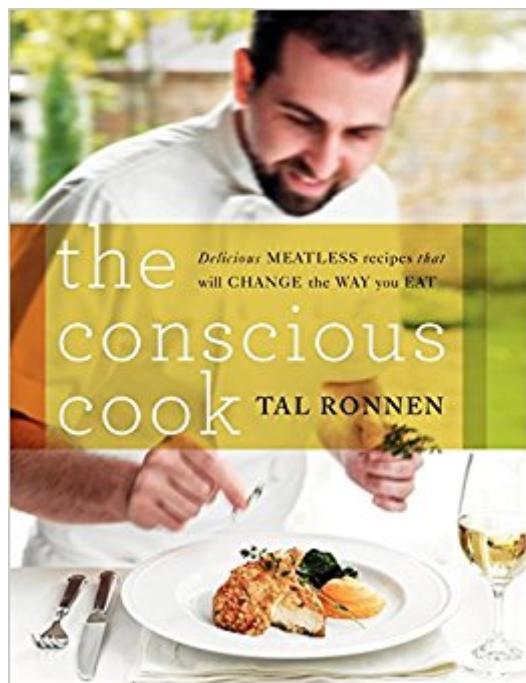


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# The Conscious Cook: Delicious Meatless Recipes That Will Change The Way You Eat



## Synopsis

A former steak-lover himself, Chef Tal struggled for years on a vegan diet that left him filled with cravings for meat and dairy. Frustrated by the limited options available and unwilling to sacrifice the delicious flavors he associated with eating meat, he decided to create vegan meals that could hold their own at the center of the plate. Chef Tal found that by applying traditional French culinary techniques to meatless cuisine, he was able to create delicious meals full of rich flavor and healthy fat. meals that any food-lover, even devoted meat-eaters, would find completely satisfying. Seventy groundbreaking recipes later, Chef Tal is ready to share his magic. The Conscious Cook features vegan versions of tried-and-true dishes such as Oysters Rockefeller, Caesar Salad, Corn Chowder, and Paella, as well as adventurous new cuisine like Lemongrass Consommé with Pea Shoot and Mushroom Dumplings and Peppercorn-Encrusted Portobello Fillets. A full-color photo accompanies each of the recipes. Also included are engaging stories from influential people in the vegan world; a peek into Chef Tal's pantry and kitchen; a guide to eating seasonally; and a selection of dinner party menus. Above all, The Conscious Cook shows readers that avoiding the health risks and ethical dilemmas of eating meat and dairy does not mean sacrificing taste or satisfaction. The starters, soups, sandwiches, entrées, and desserts here offer culinary adventure that will truly revolutionize the way the world experiences meatless food.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Named one of the top ten cookbooks of the year. (Epicurious) #3 New York Times bestselling book (New York Times) #14 Wall Street Journal Bestseller (The Wall Street Journal) "Wow, wow, wow! I never imagined meatless meals could be so satisfying." (Oprah Winfrey, on

Oprah.com) "Meeting Tal has changed our lives for the better. We wish everyone could experience his cooking. It's delicious and healthy at the same time" sometimes that's a hard balance, but not with Tal. (Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi) "You name it, he's fed it. Tal Ronnen is no up-and-comer he has long since arrived and taken over the culinary world of veganism." (Rory Freedman, author of Skinny Bitch) "What's great about this cookbook is its range and its approach to meatless cooking. No main dish ever feels like a side dish . . . Instead, each meal is made to be complete and satisfying."

(fitsugar.com) "Tal Ronnen's assertion is that [The Conscious Cook] will change the way you eat. It will, for the better." (Basil & Spice) "What you'll probably be most conscious of as you prepare the 75 vegan recipes from "The Conscious Cook" is how delicious the food is. (Lisa Messinger, creators.com) "Tal's recipes are simply fantastic . . . Whether you are a vegan, vegetarian, or committed meat eater, this is a book that can help you down the path of higher-quality, good tasting, humane eating."

(Wayne Pacelle, President and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States)

Chef Tal Ronnen is one of the most celebrated vegan chefs working today. In 2008, he became known nationwide as the chef who prepared vegan meals for Oprah Winfrey's 21-day vegan cleanse. He consults with restaurants, universities, and corporations around the country on vegan menu additions and conducts master vegetarian workshops at Le Cordon Bleu's affiliated culinary schools nationwide. In addition, he has worked at the top vegan restaurants in the United States, including Sublime in Fort Lauderdale and Candle 79 in New York City. Chef Tal lives in Los Angeles and Vancouver.

First, I admit that I had this book for a few weeks before trying any of the recipes, I felt a little intimidated. There was no need for that, I found the directions were clear, easy to follow, and if there were a lot of ingredients, well the finished product justified all of it. I have only been a Vegan for 6 months, but a self-taught home cook for 30 years. I have had to learn to "cook" all over again. It has gotten easier and easier, so books like this one that raise the bar to restaurant quality meals are a welcome challenge. In one week I made the CALIFORNIA GARDEIN "CHICKEN" SALAD with great success, then the CASHEW CREAM in both regular and thick versions to have on hand. (I have a VitaMix blender, I am not sure a food processor would make this as well.) We needed a dessert and since I had everything on hand I made the CHOCOLATE CHIP PEANUT BUTTER CAKE. I

increased the ingredients to 1.5X to be able to use a 9X13 baking pan. It took another 10 minutes to bake and worked very well. It was devoured, enough said. Christmas Eve dinner was a shortcut version of FREE-FORM RAVIOLI WITH TOFU RICOTTA AND ARUGULA PESTO. I make mass quantities of basil pesto puree each summer to freeze, so I subbed that for Tal Ronnen's arugula version, and there wasn't time to make homemade pasta sheets, so I bought fresh ones at a gourmet store here in NY. The tofu ricotta was easily made ahead of time and refrigerated, so the meal came together in 10 minutes. Everyone loved it, even the teens. Christmas dinner was not so successful, which was entirely my fault. I disobeyed Rule 1 of Good Cooks Everywhere: I didn't read through the recipe I'd chosen before beginning-- PEPPERCORN ENCRUSTED PORTOBELLO FILLETS WITH YELLOW TOMATO BÃfÃ ARNAISE. There was a 1 hour marinating step that would have had us eating by 10 PM! Oops. So it became the dinner for the next night and I started at 5:30pm. Another big hit, the marinating step was the key to the tenderness and fabulous taste of the portobellos. The MASHED POTATOES on the side were a revelation, we never thought they could be made properly without all the butter and sour cream we used in the past. Didn't miss any of it. No leftovers, must double next time! New Years Eve inspired my husband to try the CORN CHOWDER recipe. I reminded him that we live in NY and there was snow outside and no fresh corn for a thousand miles or more, but he soldiered on using organic frozen sweet corn. The chipotle gave it a nice flavor kick, it was another big success. Have to double THAT recipe next time, also. This cookbook has never gotten a rest on the shelf with the others. My plan is to hand it to a family member to pick out what they want for dinner and jump right in. My only issue with this and some other cookbooks by chefs are the weights and measures of ingredients. The corn chowder calls for 6 ears of fresh corn, we had to guess at the equivalent in frozen. Exactly what is a large potato? It's all relative, I'd need 3 in a row to pick the large one. I would prefer ounces or pounds as a measure for veggies. It's not a huge deal, just a pet peeve!

This cookbook doesn't meet my criteria for a must have. Some of the ingredients may be a little hard to come by if you live in the burbs or out in the country. It didn't have as many full color pictures of the dish as I would have liked. Sometimes chefs need to take it down a notch for people who don't cook for a living.

I saw this book last week as one of only 4 vegan books that a major book chain had (only 4 vegan cookbooks, and that in California?) and being very visual, I loved that it actually had pictures for every dish. I sat on the floor and looked everything and my mouth started watering. But I ordered

the book through (price was better) ;-). I'm a 2.5 months vegan and love to cook. Having ordered about a dozen vegan cookbooks in that time, I tend to be disappointed, that most don't have many pictures. maybe I'm strange (well, ok I am ;-) ), but seeing pictures makes a big difference to me. I just don't enjoy the recipes that much, if I don't see a great presentation of the finished products. Anyway, having received it yesterday I can't wait to start cooking with this. While the recipes are probably not your every day meals, they are certainly comparable to high end gourmet dishes. I love the ingredients, the presentation. I go to a lot of potlucks and really enjoy putting some effort into the preparation and have people be amazed at the kind of vegan dishes that are possible, other than salads and basic veggies. In between having seen the pictures in the book and receiving it, I had already used the little 'beggars purses' idea that is on page 46 with a garbanzo bean roast recipe that I've made before. People at the potluck loved it. While this book is probably not for the person that doesn't enjoy cooking, I think it is perfect for those, like me, that are emotional eaters and who's taste buds need to be happy, and who enjoy cooking and making unique dishes. These recipes would certainly impress meat eaters out there.-----update: In the past 3 days I cooked the tomato bisque, corn chowder and celery root soup (was that the name?). They are all awesome and I have made portions, that I put into the freezer. My favorite is the corn chowder, with the tomato bisque following. All the recipes were very easy to follow.-----update 2 - I have now made about half the recipes in this book and I can't recommend it enough. In fact, I check with every few months, hoping that Tal has brought out another book. And, please, Tal, again have pictures for all your recipes in your next book. I'm tired of vegan cookbooks that don't have photos of the finished product. While the recipes are more complex than your everyday cooking, the instructions are really easy to follow. And I have now most of his seasoning staples in my cupboard, there are usually not that many additional ingredients that I have to buy. I like that many of the dishes have various 'layers' in that there are sauces or stuffings or other things that I can mix and match with other foods.

A new neighbor's kindness introduced me to The Conscious Cook. He arrived at our door with a container of creamed asparagus soup as we were busy moving in to our new home. As he left he said, "oh, by the way... there's no cream or milk products in this soup." Later, as we sat down to eat, my husband kept remarking, "this is one of the best soups I've ever eaten." The next day he arrived with yet another container, this time, a chicken tortilla soup. Again, my husband raved, "this is one of the best soups I've ever eaten." I knew I must see if our neighbor would share his recipes. He was happy to share and showed me Tal Ronnen's book. He has taken the cashew base used for soups

in the book and had fun creating his own soups with it. He has even used almonds in place of the cashews, with excellent results. We are not vegan in our home, but the soups were so delicious that it piqued my interest. I enjoyed the cookbook so much that I've now ordered several copies for family and friends. My sister-in-law, who is lactose intolerant, was thrilled to learn of the delicious nut-based soups. Of course, the book includes much more than soups. It is beautifully presented and a pictorial treasure. I look forward to eating my way through it as soon as the boxes are all unpacked!

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