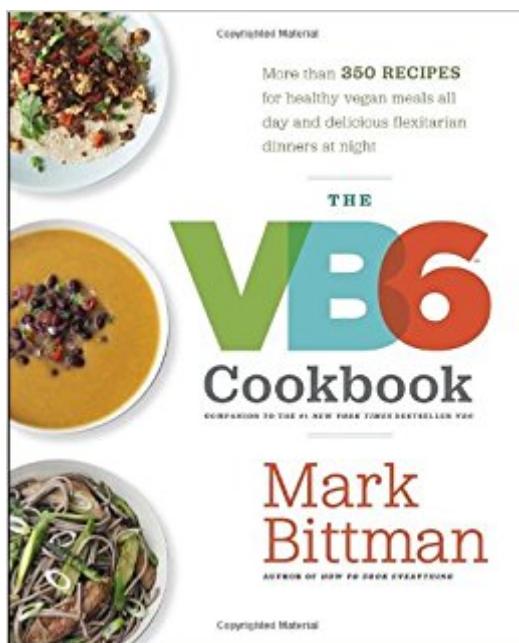


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The VB6 Cookbook: More Than 350 Recipes For Healthy Vegan Meals All Day And Delicious Flexitarian Dinners At Night



Synopsis

Following up on his bestselling diet plan, VB6, the incomparable Mark Bittman delivers a full cookbook of recipes designed to help you eat vegan every day before 6:00 p.m.--and deliciously all of the time. Whether you call it flexitarian, part-time veganism, or vegetable-centric, the plant-based, real-food approach to eating introduced in Bittman's New York Times bestselling book VB6 has helped countless people regain their good health, control their weight, and forge a smarter, more ethical relationship with food. VB6 does away with the hard and fast rules, the calorie-counting, and the portion control of conventional diets; it's a regimen that is designed to be easy to adopt and stick to for a lifetime. When Bittman committed to a vegan before 6:00 pm diet, he quickly realized that everything about it became easier if he cooked his own meals at home. In The VB6 Cookbook he makes this proposition more convenient than you could imagine. Drawing on a varied and enticing pantry of vegan staples strategically punctuated with "treat" foods (including meat and other animal products), he has created a versatile repertoire of recipes that makes following his plan simple, satisfying, and sustainable. Breakfasts, the most challenging meal of the day for some vegans, are well represented here, with a full range of hot cereals, whirl-and-go-dairy free smoothies, toast toppers, and brunch-worthy entrees. Lunches include hearty soups, sandwiches, beans, grains, and pastas to pack along wherever the day takes you, and more than a dozen snack recipes provide the perfect afternoon pick-me-up to banish the vending-machine cravings that can undo a day of eating well. Dinners are flexitarian, focusing on vegetable-forward meals that are augmented by a range of animal products for fullest flavor, satisfaction, and nutrient density. A chapter devoted entirely to "building blocks"--make-ahead components you mix and match--ensures that a flavorful and healthy meal is never more than a few minutes away. If you've thought of trying a vegan diet but worry it's too monotonous or unfamiliar, or simply don't want to give up foods you love to eat, Bittman's vegan and flexitarian recipes will help you cook your way to a new, varied and quite simply better way of eating you can really commit to...for life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

MARK BITTMAN is one of the country's best-known and most widely respected food writers. His How to Cook Everything books, with one million copies in print, are a mainstay of the modern kitchen. Bittman writes for the Opinion section of New York Times on food policy and cooking, and is a columnist for the New York Times Magazine. His "The Minimalist" cooking show, based on his popular NYT column, can be seen on the Cooking Channel. His most recent book, VB6, debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list in its first week on sale.

Mark Bittman makes eating a plant-based diet accessible and delicious. The basic structure of his recipes is elegant--not a one too many ingredient, not one less. The recipes also allow for one's own food preferences and creativity with his lists of variations on the basic recipe as a guide. For example, Green Apple Stir Fry with Cashews notes the variations: Plum Stir fry with Pecans; Apricot Stir Fry with Almonds (yum!); Cantaloupe Stir Fry with Pistachios; Grapefruit Stir Fry with Coconut; and Pineapple Stir Fry with Hazelnuts. For anyone venturing on a plant-based diet, this book is essential and provides a 4 week Vegan Before 6 eating plan. For me, who already eats vegan, this cookbook is an exciting addition to my collection--and the 4 week plan gives me an abundance of recipes, ideas and inspiration. Mark Bittman is a major player in changing the way we eat for the health of ourselves and our planet.

I really like the breakfast and lunch sections of this book. They have plenty of easy vegan recipes with all kinds of variations to keep things interesting. Almost all of these recipes are easy to make in quantity to store in the fridge and eat throughout the week, so you don't have to do quite as much cooking as you think you might-- especially if you also follow Mr. Bittman's suggestions for the VB6 "building blocks" and keep things on hand like quantities of cooked grains, beans, chopped veggies and simple oil/vinegar dressings for salads. Once you get the hang of cooking and eating in this way, it's really easy to keep up. That said, I have a couple of gripes with this book. I do think the

dinner section focuses much too heavily on meat; in fact, almost all the recipes in it are meat-based. Personally, when I started doing VB6 my desire for meat diminished to near nonexistence, and that's still how I feel several months after the fact. It would have been nice to see more veg recipes in this section, maybe just incorporating some (easily left out) cheese or eggs. He does give suggestions on how to convert meat recipes to veg, but you'd pretty much have to use tofu to make most of them work and I know I am not alone in having a rather violent hatred of the stuff. Which brings me to my other gripe, that there is an awful lot of tofu in this book. After reading up on a lot of the more modern vegan literature that's out there, I've discovered there are many more and better ways to achieve pretty much anything you'd use tofu for, like pureed soaked cashews for creaminess, chia seeds to make pudding or to replace eggs in baking, chickpeas to make an egg-like scramble, and my personal favorite, seitan as a meat substitute. (It is a delightful, high-protein, chewy substance, easily and cheaply made at home, pronounced like Satan, which is likely appropriate in some circles as it is made almost entirely of gluten.) In other words, Mr. Bittman seems surprisingly behind the times and I do hope he soon learns of these fantastic tofu alternatives so he can incorporate them into newer recipes. Overall, though, I think this is a great intro to whole foods vegan cooking. You'll just want to fill out your shelves with a few more books if you are looking for more non-meat non-tofu dinner ideas.

This book adds a number of recipes to Bittman's 2013 book that argued we should basically be vegans during the day, eating high quality (i.e., not a lot of processing) plant based food, and then consider adding moderate amounts of meat, poultry, fish and dairy to our meals at dinner (dessert included). This approach derive's from Bittman's own experience (told here and in his earlier books) of being a rather unhealthy middle age man who was given the choice of eating better or going on a lifetime drug regime. The approach of eating more of a plant-based diet makes good sense, both for health reasons and also the environmental/animal welfare issues presented well in Bittman's "Food Matters" book. This book recaps the VB6 book and then presents a good set of recipes to help implement this way of eating (I prefer not to use the word "diet," given its connotation of short-run approaches to weight loss). Like all of Bittman's cookbooks, the recipes are very clearly written, with lists of (usually not hard to find) ingredients and then necessary steps to prepare a dish, along with estimates of preparation time. There are perhaps 100 basic recipes here (organized around breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner, and dessert) with 2 or 3 variations presented for each one. Bittman is a wonderful writer, and each recipe is introduced with a short paragraph that usually makes it quite appealing. Bittman here and elsewhere (including pages of the New York Times) argues for

(mostly) plant-based eating with minimally processed food. I suppose my only issue with this book is that it puts a particular structure on when you are vegan and when you are not. Someone might, for example, like to have eggs at breakfast and not wait until 6 to have some cheese. I would think you could still eat this mix of foods throughout the day and meet the goal of less meat and better quality food if you are watchful. This is a very good cookbook for vegan dishes before 6 and good dishes for dinner that don't use too much meat. It is a great cookbook for what it is (and can be enjoyed by most people, whatever their eating) but for me is a bit narrow. I prefer the approach in Bittman's Food Matters book (and cookbook), which really is pretty much the same but without the element of being vegan and then possibly switching at dinner. Whether or not you go for this specific approach to eating or prefer something a bit more flexible, it is a great resource of good recipes that can only help improve the quality of your eating.

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