

What has Dr. Shook Been Reading?

*Spices of Life, Simple and Delicious Recipes For Great Health*

By Nina Simonds

Knopf publishers 2005

Nina Simonds is well traveled and has studied with chefs from all over the world. In addition to authoring numerous award winning cookbooks, Ms. Simonds is an Asian correspondent for Gourmet magazine and frequently contributes to the New York Times. The recipes within *Spices of Life* call for a variety of colorful vegetables, grains, beans, lean meats, seafood, the occasional soy food and, as the title implies, a wide variety of spices.

Within each chapter is a brief and informative commentary from skilled and frequently well known health, diet, nutrition or cooking expert. Dr. Andrew Weil shares his latest advice on supplements. Walter Willett discusses the redesigning of the Food Pyramid. Dr. Jim Dukes offers anti-aging tips and presents his “Herbal Pharmacy”.

*Spices of Life* places an emphasis on the healing properties of various herbs, spices and foods. *Colorful vegetables are full of antioxidants and may prevent cancer. Tofu, mushrooms and ginger strengthen the immune system and garlic protects against bacterial infection. My favorite was Chocolate contains flavonoids which promote a healthy heart and antioxidants which strengthen the immune system.*

Without getting bogged down by pesky technicalities, the health and nutritional information is presented casually, lightly sprinkled between recipes that look yummy and photographs that made my mouth water (thank you photographer Tina Rupp).

I was terribly disappointed when I came to the chapter titled “Irresistible Vegetarian”.

Following a brief discussion of the health promoting aspects of a diet with lots of vegetables, Nina Simonds proceeded to offer recipes for dishes calling for fish and oyster sauce.

Nina, shame on you, you should know better.

For the record and for the information of anyone who is unfamiliar with what is or is not considered vegetarian food or cooking: Vegetarian food contains no ingredients made of or from animal flesh. A dish made with fish sauce, oyster sauce or chicken/beef/pork/bison broth might be considered a “vegetable dish” but it is most definitely not a “vegetarian dish”. Let us save the discussion of eggs and milk and what it means to be a “Vegan” for another time.

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