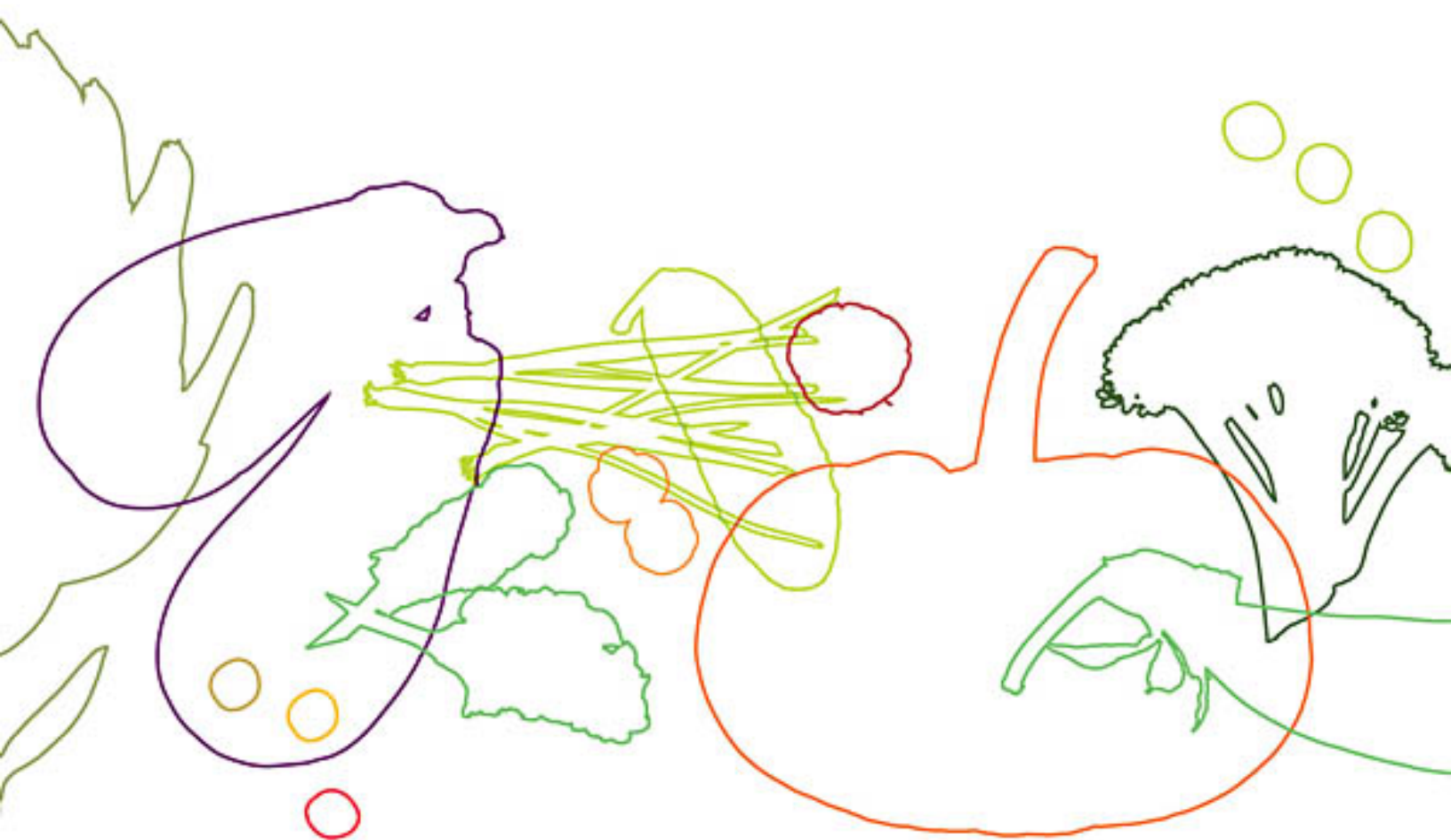


YOTAM OTTOLENGHI



PLENTY

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Introduction



I'll start with something as simple and unassuming as rice. When I try to think of all the uses for this grain I immediately go dizzy with the countless possibilities – within and between cultures, pairing with other ingredients, all the types of rice available, the methods of cooking and when you serve it, the consistency, degree of processing, home cooking, commercial uses. I think of paella, wild rice salad and ho fan noodles. I visualize arancini with their golden breadcrumb crust, Iranian saffron rice with potatoes, Chinese fried rice, rice pudding. I recall plain steamed rice my mum used to prepare for me when I had a bad tummy, with only a little bit of butter stirred in at the end.

I can then move on to another cereal grain such as wheat and think of things we do with flour – dumplings, pastas, breads, pastries – or of less-processed examples like bulghar or whole wheat. My mind then wanders to the sphere of lentils, dried beans, green

beans, peas. There are herbs, leaves, seeds, flowers, roots, bulbs, fruit and fungi – each part of a separate little universe, with a million varieties and variations within it.

What I am getting at is how lucky we are (although unfortunately not all of us) to be living and cooking in a world that offers such a spectrum of ingredients and so many culinary heritages to draw on. And this is what gets me excited – the multitude of ingredients cooked and processed by so many people in so many ways with so many different purposes.

The New Vegetarian

Back in 2006, when I was first approached by the *Guardian* to write a vegetarian column in their *Weekend* magazine, I was slightly hesitant. After all, I wasn't a vegetarian. The issue wasn't close to my heart either and I had never given it much thought. Still, I understood the reasoning behind the *Guardian's* approach. Ottolenghi had become famous for what we did with vegetables and grains, for the freshness and originality of our salads, and it only made sense to ask me to share this with vegetarian readers.

It took me a while, though, to get to grips with my title, *The New Vegetarian*, and it made some *Guardian* readers extremely unhappy to learn that the new vegetarian wasn't a vegetarian at all. A couple of angry letters to the editor stick in my mind and an incident where I suggested serving a salad with some barbecued lamb chops. Unfortunately, my editor missed this too.

But with time the task has become more natural to me. Ottolenghi's vegetarian image was rightly based on the fact that both Sami Tamimi – the other creative force behind the company and co-author of *Ottolenghi: The Cookbook* – and I were brought up in Israel and Palestine and were exposed to the multitude of vegetables, pulses and grains that are celebrated in the region's different cuisines.

The food I had growing up was a huge mixture of diverse culinary cultures – European at home and Middle Eastern all around – with an abundance of easily sourced fresh ingredients. The greengrocer's where my mother does her shopping in the neighbouring Arab village always reminds me of this. It sells a fantastically fresh abundance of local and seasonal fruit and veg, what I call real fruit and veg because they look real, taste

real and are grown by real people – that is, Arab or Jewish farmers and not nameless farmers across the globe. It sells cucumbers, kohlrabis, figs, pomegranates, apricots, almonds and pistachios, as well as herbs from the area, local halva, olive oil and much more. Both my parents used this wealth daily to prepare real meals of real food, which is their food.

This multitude of ingredients and ways of making miracles with them have given me the perfect tools for making up dishes and turning them into recipes. This is also why vegetarian cooking didn't turn out to be a chore for me. I like meat and I like fish but I can easily cook without them. My grandmother's vinegar-marinated courgettes, or the ripe figs with ewe's cheese we used to down before dinner, are as substantial and as basic as any cut of meat I used to have.

Vegetarianism

Still, I am not a vegetarian and this is important to mention. I refer to meat and fish in the introductions to the recipes as I occasionally have them in the back of my mind. But I don't miss these two elements. In this book I offer dozens of solid dishes, all balanced and nurturing, that just happen to include neither fish nor meat.

Why vegetarianism then? What is the reason behind not having meat or fish? Why would people be interested in this vegetarian collection?

First, this is an assembly of my work in the *Guardian* over the past four years. I have often been asked by readers, who've become fed up with collecting little bits of torn paper, to assemble it all together in one volume. Most of these bits of paper are now here for them, plus plenty more new recipes I haven't published before.

But more to the point, people have very different motivations for wanting to cook vegetarian recipes. Some choose unequivocally to exclude meat from their diet. Many do this for moral or other personal reasons, which I both understand and respect. These people may find allusions to non-vegetarian ingredients disturbing. Some may not like my extensive use of eggs and dairy products. Many would probably be put off by my advocating the use of Parmesan and other continental cheeses that almost always include animal rennet in their production. My answer to all these objections is that I can only be myself and cook what I like to eat. I believe that most seasoned vegetarians

would know which elements in the book to adopt and which to disregard, which suit their type of vegetarianism and which don't.

A second group of people, which is increasingly growing in numbers, are pragmatic vegetarians, those who have excluded meat or fish from their diet to some degree, but are not completely put off by the notion. This group would include people who are concerned with the health implications of eating meat. It also consists of people who would like to eliminate or reduce their consumption of meat and fish due to the environmental implications. They are put off by what mass-scale farming does to the land and the sea, how growing numbers of cattle herds contribute to the growth in greenhouse gases and the warming up of the planet. Many long for a time when meat was precious, a reason for celebration rather than a cheap commodity, a time when farm animals were highly regarded and their slaughter more sensible.

Recent campaigns for the reduced consumption of meat emphasize how wasteful it is to gain our calories from meat rather than from vegetables, pulses or grains. This argument and the general sense of over-indulgence over the last few decades have convinced many to include less meat in their diet, to make it special and valuable again.

This, along with increased availability of old and new vegetables and the knowledge of how to grow them or source them ethically, is the most important force behind the heightened interest in vegetarian food.

The Book

I divided this book into chapters in quite an unsystematic way. More than anything, it reveals the way I think and work when writing a recipe. At the centre of every dish, at the beginning of the thought process, is an ingredient, one ingredient – not just any ingredient but one of my favourite ingredients. I tend to set off with this central element and then try to elaborate on it, enhance it, bring it out in a new way, while still keeping it in the centre, at the heart of the final dish.

So the chapters reflect this bias. They focus on some ingredients and neglect others, and they hold them together in clusters that make sense to me. Some components are so central to my cooking – like aubergine, of course – that I dedicate a special chapter to them alone. Then there are botanical categories, like brassicas, that although a bit

scientific actually make sense to me; they bring together vegetables that I naturally associate with each other, earthy yet fresh. Other headings stem from other private associations and the way I shape my menus.

Many of the recipes that were published before, mainly in the *Guardian*, have had some changes made to them, some more radical than others. I can't always give account as to why these changes were made. My style of cooking and writing has changed over the years and things that seemed to make sense then (potato in an artichoke gratin, for example) don't make sense now. But more generally, every time you approach a dish, at least when I do, it feels slightly different. It seems to be asking for a little alteration, for the addition of this or the removal of that. I try to stay attentive to this. I guess this is what makes real food.

Yotam Ottolenghi



Roots

Poached baby vegetables with caper mayonnaise

Spicy Moroccan carrot salad

Beetroot, orange and black olive salad

Roasted parsnips and sweet potatoes with caper vinaigrette

Two-potato vindaloo

Beetroot, yoghurt and preserved lemon relish

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Parsnip dumplings in broth

Seasonal tempura

Sweet potato cakes

Poached baby vegetables with caper mayonnaise

Poaching is popular again, and rightly so. Vegetables cooked this way don't need to be insipid or dull; if not over-cooked, they can show off their natural attributes and taste fresh and light in a way that you never get when roasting or frying.

When making this recipe, choose beautiful seasonal vegetables that are clearly fresh and flavoursome. Baby turnips or corn will work too, and you can also add fresh broad beans, peas and green beans. Just remember to give your vegetables minimum treatment – don't chop them up much and don't cook them for very long. Serve the vegetables warm or cold.

Serves 4

200g baby carrots, scraped

100g baby fennel

150g fine asparagus

100g baby courgettes

150g baby leeks

2 tbsp chopped dill to serve

Poaching liquor

600ml white wine

200ml olive oil

150ml lemon juice

2 bay leaves

½ onion

2 celery sticks, cut into batons

1 tsp salt

Mayonnaise

½ garlic clove, crushed
1 free-range egg yolk
1½ tsp white wine vinegar
½ tsp Dijon mustard
½ tsp salt
grated zest and juice of ½ lemon
75ml vegetable oil
2 tbsp capers, drained well and finely chopped

Start by making the mayonnaise. Place the garlic, egg yolk, vinegar, mustard, salt and lemon juice in the bowl of a food processor. Start blending and then very slowly dribble in the oil until you get a thick mayonnaise. Fold in the capers and lemon zest and set aside.

Wash the vegetables but don't trim them too much so you are left with some of the stalk or leaves. Cut the vegetables lengthways into halves or quarters, depending on their size, trying to get similarly sized pieces. Very thin vegetables, like asparagus, don't need to be cut.

Place the wine in a wide pan and boil for 2–3 minutes. Add all the other poaching liquor ingredients and bring to a simmer. Start the poaching by adding the carrots and fennel to the pot. After 3 minutes add the asparagus, courgettes and leeks and poach for a further 3–4 minutes. At this point the vegetables should be cooked but still crunchy.

Using tongs lift the vegetables from the poaching liquor and onto deep plates. Spoon some liquor around the vegetables if you like. Before serving, top each portion with a dollop of mayonnaise and sprinkle with dill. You can keep the remaining poaching liquor in the fridge to use again.



Poached baby vegetables with
caper mayonnaise

Spicy Moroccan carrot salad

There are countless variations on this gutsy salad, all incorporating sweet spices, fresh herbs and some sort of lemony kick. My version is intense and will go well as one component in a feast of Middle Eastern salads, or just to accompany fried fish. You can serve it warm, as well as cold, with [Freekeh pilaf](#) for instance.

Serves 4

1kg carrots

80ml olive oil, plus extra to finish

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 tsp caster sugar

3 garlic cloves, crushed

2 medium green chillies, finely chopped

1 spring onion, finely chopped

1/8 tsp ground cloves

¼ tsp ground ginger

½ tsp ground coriander

¾ tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp sweet paprika

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tbsp white wine vinegar

1 tbsp chopped preserved lemon skin

40g chopped fresh coriander, plus extra to garnish

120ml Greek yoghurt, chilled

salt

Peel the carrots and cut them, depending on their size, into cylinders or semi-circles 1cm thick; all the pieces should end up roughly the same size. Place in a large saucepan and

cover with salted water. Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and simmer for about 10 minutes or until tender but still crunchy. Drain in a colander and leave to dry out.

Heat the oil in a large pan and sauté the onion for 12 minutes on a medium heat until soft and slightly brown. Add the cooked carrots to the onions, followed by all the remaining ingredients, apart from the fresh coriander and yoghurt. Remove from the heat. Season liberally with salt, stir well and leave to cool.

Before serving, stir in the coriander, taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. Serve in individual bowls with a dollop of yoghurt, a drizzle of oil and garnished with the extra coriander.



Beetroot, orange and black olive salad

The mild sweetness of beetroot offers an ideal background for the intensity of sharp orange and salty olive, creating an unusual yet delicious salad. Use Greek black olives of the dry, wrinkled variety. Having matured longer on the tree, they are saltier and more robust in flavour. If you wish to keep the salad more mild and fresh it also tastes great without the olives. Serve with [Steamed rice with herbs](#) to create a light and healthy meal.

Serves 2 generously

400g beetroots

2 sweet oranges

1 red endive (red chicory)

½ small red onion, thinly sliced

3 tbsp chopped parsley

40g wrinkled black olives, pitted and halved

3 tbsp rapeseed oil

1 tsp orange blossom water

1½ tbsp red wine vinegar

salt and black pepper

Place the beetroots in a pot, cover with cold water and bring to the boil. Cook for 1–2 hours, or until tender – when you stick a small knife into each beetroot it should go in smoothly. Leave the beets to cool down in the water. Once cool, take them out and peel. Cut in half, then cut each half into wedges that are 1cm thick at their base. Place the beets in a mixing bowl.

Take the oranges and use a small sharp knife to trim off their tops and bases. Now cut down the sides of the oranges, following their natural curves, to remove the skin and white pith. Over a small bowl remove the segments from the oranges by slicing between

the membranes. Transfer the segments and juice to the bowl with the beetroot; discard the membrane.

Cut the endive vertically into 2cm thick slices. Break them up into separate leaves and add to the salad.

Finally, add the remaining ingredients and toss everything together gently. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then serve.



Roasted parsnips and sweet potatoes with caper vinaigrette

Treat this recipe as a blueprint for an infinite number of roast vegetable dishes. The point here is to lighten up long-cooked veggies with something crisp and fresh. You can use any of your favourite vegetables – swede, potato, carrot, salsify, beetroot, cauliflower – and many other refreshing combinations at the end: chopped herbs such as basil or mint, grated lemon zest, harissa paste, crushed garlic or a mellow vinegar.

Serves 4

4 parsnips (700g in total)

4 medium red onions

150ml olive oil

4 thyme sprigs

2 rosemary sprigs

1 head garlic, halved horizontally

2 medium sweet potatoes (600g in total)

30 cherry tomatoes, halved

2 tbsp lemon juice

4 tbsp small capers (roughly chopped if large)

½ tbsp maple syrup

½ tsp Dijon mustard

1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds (optional)

salt and black pepper

Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Peel the parsnips and cut into two or three segments, depending on their lengths. Then cut each piece lengthways into two or four. You want pieces roughly 5cm long and 1.5cm wide. Peel the onions and cut each into six wedges.

Place the parsnips and onions in a large mixing bowl and add 120ml of the olive oil, the thyme, rosemary, garlic, 1 teaspoon of salt and some pepper. Mix well and spread out in a large roasting tin. Roast for 20 minutes.

While the parsnips are cooking, top and tail the sweet potatoes. Cut them (with their skins) widthways in half, then each half into six wedges. Add the potatoes to the tin with the parsnips and onion and stir well. Return to the oven to roast for a further 40–50 minutes.

When all the vegetables are cooked through and have taken on a golden colour, stir in the halved tomatoes. Roast for 10 more minutes. Meanwhile, whisk together the lemon juice, capers, maple syrup, mustard, remaining 2 tablespoons oil and ½ teaspoon salt.

Pour the dressing over the roasted vegetables as soon as you take them out of the oven. Stir well, then taste and adjust the seasoning. Scatter the sesame seeds over the vegetables if using and serve at the table in the roasting tin.



Roasted parsnips and sweet potatoes
with caper vinaigrette

Two-potato vindaloo

Here's a great recipe you can make heaps of and keep for a few days. It only gets better!
As always, thick cool yoghurt will make an excellent condiment.

Serves 4

8 cardamom pods

1 tbsp cumin seeds

1 tbsp coriander seeds

½ tsp cloves

¼ tsp ground turmeric

1 tsp sweet paprika

1 tsp ground cinnamon

2 tbsp vegetable oil

12 shallots (300g in total), chopped

½ tsp brown mustard seeds

½ tsp fenugreek seeds

25 curry leaves

2 tbsp chopped fresh root ginger

1 fresh red chilli, finely chopped

3 ripe tomatoes, peeled and roughly chopped

50ml cider vinegar

400ml water

1 tbsp caster sugar

400g peeled waxy potatoes, cut into 2.5cm dice

2 small red peppers, cut into 2cm dice

400g peeled sweet potatoes, cut into 2.5cm dice

salt

mint or coriander leaves to serve

Start by making a spice mix. Dry-roast the cardamom pods and cumin and coriander seeds in a small frying pan until they begin to pop. Transfer to a pestle and mortar and add the cloves. Work to a fine powder, removing and discarding the cardamom pods once the seeds are released. Add the turmeric, paprika and cinnamon and set aside.

Heat up the oil in a large heavy-based pot. Add the shallots with the mustard and fenugreek seeds, and sauté on a medium–low heat for 8 minutes, or until the shallots brown. Stir in the spice mix, curry leaves, ginger and chilli and cook for a further 3 minutes. Next, add the tomatoes, vinegar, water, sugar and some salt. Bring to the boil, then leave to simmer, covered, for 20 minutes.

Add the potatoes and red peppers and simmer for another 20 minutes. For the last stage, add the sweet potatoes. Make sure all the vegetables are just immersed in the sauce (add more water if needed) and continue cooking, covered, for about 40 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.

Remove the lid and leave to bubble away for about 10 minutes to reduce and thicken the sauce. Serve hot, with plain rice and garnished with herbs.

Beetroot, yoghurt and preserved lemon relish

Some wonderful beetroots are available in the summer months: small, firm bulbs, sold with the stalks and the leaves. Don't throw out the leaves. Use them for salads, or sauté with a little olive oil, garlic and caraway seeds and serve warm with a dollop of crème fraîche. If you manage to get young beetroots you may want to roast them in the oven, covered in foil, rather than boil them as described below. They are more flavoursome this way.

The preserved lemon relish can be used in loads of other contexts. Try mixing with cooked potato to create a salad or serving alongside oily fish.

Serves 4

900g beetroots

4 heaped tbsp chopped dill

1 small red onion, very thinly sliced

160g Greek yoghurt

Relish

2 yellow peppers

3 tbsp olive oil

1½ tsp coriander seeds

400g canned chopped plum tomatoes (with their juices)

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tsp sugar

3 tbsp chopped preserved lemon skin

2 tbsp each chopped parsley and coriander

salt and black pepper

Start by cooking the beetroots whole in plenty of boiling water for 1–2 hours, or until they are tender; check by piercing them with a little knife. Allow them to cool down completely before you peel them and cut into wedges.

While the beets are cooking make the relish. Preheat the grill to high. Use a small knife to cut around the stalks of the peppers; carefully pull out the stalks with the seeds and discard. Place the peppers on a grill pan lined with foil and grill for up to 30 minutes, or until they are cooked inside and black on the outside, turning them over once during the cooking. Fold the edges of the foil over the peppers to enclose them completely, then leave to cool down. Peel them and cut into strips.

Pour the olive oil into a medium saucepan, heat up and fry the coriander seeds for 30 seconds. Add the tomatoes, garlic, sugar and some salt and pepper and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the preserved lemon skin and continue simmering for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the herbs and yellow pepper strips. Allow to cool down completely.

When you are ready to finish the salad, transfer the cool beet wedges to a mixing bowl and add the relish, dill, red onion and some salt and pepper. Stir well, then taste for seasoning. Just before you serve, add the yoghurt and swirl it through gently. Don't stir too much, so you get a white and red marbled effect rather than uniform pink.