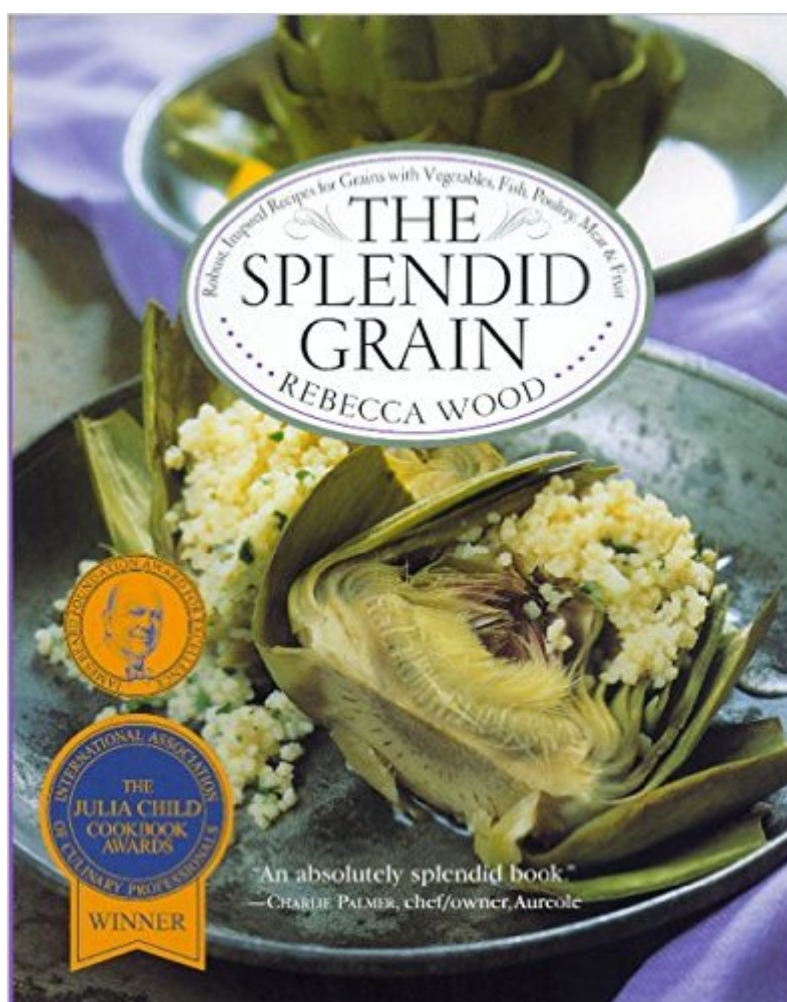


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The Splendid Grain



Synopsis

With 250 luscious recipes, along with eight pages of color photographs, *The Splendid Grain* dramatizes how you can incorporate extraordinarily healthful grains into your life without changing your lifestyle. Grains can transform taste and texture in unsurpassed ways like these: Nutty, sweet oats form the delicious crust of fried chicken. Piquant quinoa heightens and absorbs the savory juices of gingered lamb. Hearty buckwheat becomes a sweet, delicate, Parisian-inspired crepe. Thai black sticky rice flavored with coconut makes unforgettable exotic banana dumplings. The natural and native history of each grain is also explored along with its health benefits.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I knew nothing about this book when I checked it out of the library, except that it had recipes for some of the more unusual grains. It is only now that I looked it up on that I discovered that it won the James Beard award. I am not the least bit surprised, however, because all the recipes I have tried have been consistently delicious, wholesome, and creative. You will find very few run-of-the-mill recipes in this cookbook. I check many cookbooks out of the library, but for many I can't find any recipes that I want to make, or if I do find recipes to try, once I make them I am generally not impressed. So I was amazed when I opened this cookbook to find so many intriguing recipes, each of which turned out better than the last. Some highlights: The grilled millet and butternut squash cakes had so few spices I was sure they would be bland, but they weren't. They were subtle but sweet and crunchy and addictive. The millet, quinoa, and burdock pilaf again looked underseasoned, but the burdock adds a great earthy depth to the pilaf, and again, I could not stop

eating this dish. Wood's recipe for Locro, a South American soup, has a large number of ingredients, but it is well worth the effort. The barley and beans that make up the bulk of this soup make it substantial and extremely filling. The celeriac is sweet and delicious, the anise seeds add a subtle mysterious note, and the roasted New Mexican chili and the kombu create a great tasty broth with more depth than a typical vegetarian soup. The only recipe that I was disappointed in was her basic recipe for "steamed" amaranth. Wood swears it's the best way to cook amaranth, but I thought it turned out exactly the same as it always does when I cook it--gooey, but tasty.

Who says whole grains have to taste like health food? Rebecca Wood lays out everything you need to know about the common grains (oat, wheat, barley, rice), the not-so-common (quinoa, millet, amaranth, buckwheat) and the downright rarely eaten in this country (tef, Job's tears). For each one she explains how/where it is grown, how to buy and store it, what it is used for, its nutritional advantages, etc. She gives basic recipes for cooking the grains plain or nearly so, as well as more complicated recipes and suggestions for what to pair with what. The chapters are divided first by the continent to which each grain is native and then by the grains themselves, and then for each grain there are recipes for plain grains, soups, main dishes, side dishes and desserts. I like this organization, although if you want to make a whole grain dessert, for instance, you'll have to look through the chapters on the various grains or in the index, as there is no organization by type of dish, e.g., soups, desserts, etc. The intros to each dish give you a good idea of what to expect, the instructions are pretty clear, and the results are spectacular. The Winter Squash and Quinoa Pottage is amazingly great (especially if you make it with homemade stock -- it is particularly awesome using the vegetable stock recipe from *The New Basics Cookbook*, but was also good with Swanson low-sodium chicken broth), is ridiculously easy, and extremely high in protein and vitamins. Just wash the quinoa really well first. Takes less than 1/2 hour plus the time to wash the quinoa and cut the onion and squash. The pinon (pine nut) crackers with amaranth are all whole grain, super easy and the only problem with it is that it's hard not to eat the entire batch myself as soon as it's done.

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