

clover food lab



Kiernan here. That's my bookshelf. And no, we're not talking beans again.

As you know, one of our goals for the Veggie Monster newsletter is to help you dream up new ways to incorporate vegetables into your cooking. Conveniently, this is a favorite pastime of pretty much everyone on the team—where others see a celery root and think “Ugly!”, Chef Phil thinks “Sandwich!”

So I thought it would be fun to make the rounds at Clover and ask our team about their favorite cookbooks, ones they turn to over and over, or ones that first inspired them when they were getting started cooking.

Here's what I heard. (Warning, a LOT of love for Mark Bittman and Yotam Ottolenghi ahead.)

Phil, Development Chef

“[Jaques Pepin's "Complete Techniques"](#) is a great “if you're only going to buy one cookbook” book. It's right in the title—COMPLETE! I also really love [Kansha](#) as a nice, approachable book on Japanese vegetarian/vegan cooking, which is close to my heart. [Ottolenghi Test Kitchen: Shelf Love](#) is new and fun and—full disclosure—his co-author is a classmate of mine from culinary school! But I'm unbiased in the rec, I swear.

Kevin D, Director of Production

“For those starting out, Mark Bittman's [How to Cook Everything Vegetarian](#) and Deborah Madison's [The New Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone](#). Full of great, straightforward, simple recipes. My daughter's favorite (don't hate me for the title, Clover) is The ["I hate vegetables Cookbook"](#) by Katie Moseman. It'll convert anyone to a vegetable lover. Also you can't go wrong with Cook's Illustrated's ["Vegetables Illustrated"](#) from America's Test Kitchen, our neighbors right up the street. 700 kitchen tested recipes—really great.”

Michelle, Social Media Director

“I just got a great new one for Christmas! [Salad Freak](#) by Jess Damuck, focuses on seasonality—very Clover!—and covers basic culinary skills AND puts salads at the center of a meal. Super fun and approachable.”

Lucia, Creative Director

“My relationship with cookbooks is complicated. I love to page through them to get inspired, but then my ego takes over and I rarely follow the recipes. [Saltie: A Cookbook](#) is the exception. On trips to New York from Boston, I would always stop at Saltie first. It was a tiny little shop with an equally tiny menu with dishes named after sea captains. They had this smoky Spanish tortilla sandwich that taught me how to pair smoky flavors with mild, rich flavors. Their clean slate sandwich packs so many veggies into every bite. The recipes are not entirely plant-based but they are mostly (tip: anytime you see a sardine, you can substitute it for a well-seared mushroom hit with some soy sauce). And the chocolate nudge cookies are soooooo good. Saltie is closed now but their recipes live on in my kitchen and heart.”

Jasper, Director of Teams

“Any of the [Ottolenghi books](#)—Plenty or Jerusalem especially. A fun way to explore by vegetable or by cooking technique.”

Emily, Food Planning and Supply Chain Manager

“I don't have to think twice: [How to Cook Everything Vegetarian by Mark Bittman](#). Boom.”

Kevin B, General Manager

“[On Food and Cooking](#) by (friend of Clover) Harold McGee. I always have a copy and I used it all through culinary school. It's like an encyclopedia. Very helpful and give lots of information on different produce and ways to make it beautiful and delicious!”

Chris S, Director of Ops

“[Salt to Taste](#) by Marco Conora—the book builds a solid foundation for cooking (specifically Italian cuisine), and then you can riff and get creative in your kitchen.”

Mahya, General Manager

I follow this awesome lady on Instagram ([@cleanfoodcrush](#))—she has good recipes with vegetables and she has an ebook “Clean Food Love” which I recommend highly!

Ayr, Founder and CEO

“The cookbooks I like best aren't instruction manuals. My suggestion for people just starting out is to have fun. So probably just start out with something little. If there's a dish you really like—try making it! Or if there is somebody in your family who can teach you, start there. Ask for recipes! I think getting 1 or 2 recipes under your belt that feel fun and successful can lead to more learning over time. Cooking classes can be great. But mostly it's about getting inspired enough to keep moving forward. That said, [Mark Bittman](#) is a good place to start. Well tested recipes. Good diverse set. Smart tips.”

And finally, my own rec:

Kiernan, CMO

“I'll echo that Bittman is a great resource for those starting out. I especially recommend an old video series he shot back in the early 2010s for the *New York Times* called “The Minimalist.” I love Bittman's dry humor and frank talk—and the opening credits tickle me every time.

[“The Minimalist” Season 1](#)

[“The Minimalist” Season 2](#)

[“The Minimalist” Season 3](#)

I'm also a great fan of Chris Kimball's [Milk Street magazine](#), which provides me with constant new inspiration for family dinners. The magazine is a combo of travel reporting and recipes inspired by the way real people cook delicious everyday meals in countries other than the USA. A highlight every time it comes.

And if you don't want to commit to the magazine, [here's the cookbook](#)—which (trivia alert!) quotes our very own Chef Phil talking about vegetable cleavers!”

Hope this helps you with a bit of mid-winter culinary inspiration! Let us know if you end up buying a book or two—and support local bookstores if you can!



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