

WHEN MIRIAM KASIN Hospodar's first book, *The Age of Enlightenment Cookbook*, went out of print, it left a good many people who love her recipes in desperate straits. Those who had copies lent their cookbooks to those who didn't, and people poked around yard sales and used bookstores hoping to find one. We have even known incidents where the whole book was Xeroxed and sent to an area of the country where no copies were available to borrow.



Finally, after a long wait, Miriam's second book, *Heaven's Banquet* (Dutton, \$39.95), has come out. With an amazing range of over 700 international recipes, *Heaven's Banquet* presents its recipes according to the principles of Ayurvedic cooking, whose idea is to create a balanced and healthy physiology.

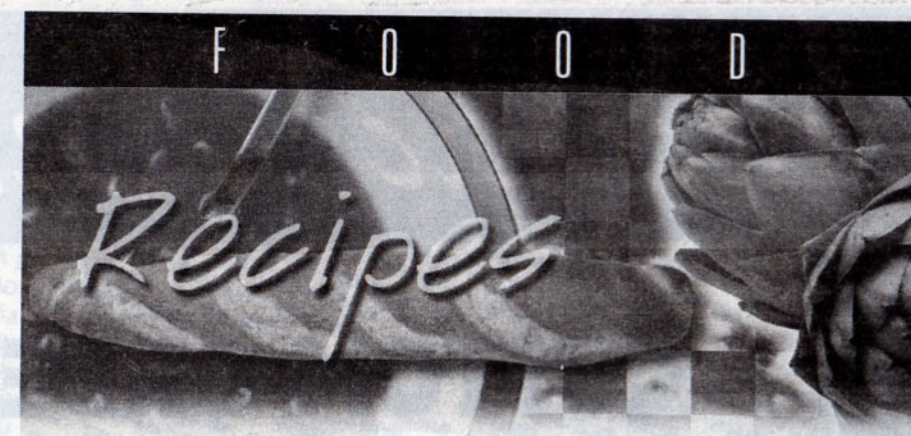
One of the greatest joys of this versatile cookbook is that the recipes come from many cultures and diverse styles of cooking, with something here for everyone. If a recipe doesn't appeal to you, turn the page, and there will be something completely different that does.

The recipes are laid out in an easy step-by-step format and prove to be not only a guide for Ayurvedic cooking but also a good everyday cookbook for vegetarians.

This time, we hope everyone has the good sense to buy his or her own copy of Miriam's cookbook and hang onto it.

Cucumber Beet Soup (makes a little over 1 quart)

- 1 cup grated, peeled beets
- 2 cups grated, peeled cucumbers
- 3 cups buttermilk
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 tsp. sugar
- ½ Tbsp. minced fresh ginger



Finally, Heaven's Banquet

BY SAM & MEREDITH HODGES

- 1 Tbsp. minced fresh or ½ tsp. dried dill
- 1 Tbsp. minced fresh or ½ tsp. finely crumbled dried mint
- Salt & White pepper

Steam the beets until tender. Drain well, pressing out the excess water. While the beets are cooking, toss the cucumbers with a sprinkling of salt and set in a colander to drain for 10 minutes. Squeeze out the juice. Beat the buttermilk and sour cream until smooth. Add the beets, cucumbers, sugar, ginger, dill, and mint. Season to taste with salt and white pepper. Purée half of the soup in a blender. Mix with the unblended soup.

Tofu and Vegetables in Coconut Milk (4-6 servings)

- 1 lb. drained tofu
- 2 Tbsp. mild-flavored oil
- Liquid seasoning (optional)
- Pinch of hing (optional)
- 3 Tbsp. mild-flavored oil
- Pinch of hing (optional)
- 2 Tbsp. minced fresh ginger
- 1 cup cauliflower, cut into small pieces
- 1 cup green beans, cut into 1½" pieces
- ½ bell pepper, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup cabbage, coarsely chopped
- 1½ cups coconut milk
- Liquid seasoning or salt
- White pepper

Slice the tofu into ¾" cubes. Wipe dry with paper towels. Heat the oil in a non-stick skillet or wok. Add the hing and tofu and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned and crusted. If desired, sprinkle with liquid seasoning during cooking to brown the tofu. Set aside. Heat the second amount of oil in a wok or large skillet. Add the hing and gin-

ger and sauté over medium heat for 1 minute. Add the vegetables, sauté, stirring constantly for 5 minutes. Add the coconut milk and a sprinkling of liquid seasoning. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer until the vegetables are tender. Gently stir in tofu. Add liquid seasoning or salt and white pepper to taste.

Apricot Couscous (4-6 servings)

- 3 Tbsp. ghee or olive oil
- Pinch of hing (optional)
- ½ cup chopped fennel or celery
- 1 cup couscous
- 2 cups stock or water
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ cup thinly sliced dried apricots
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. crushed cardamom seeds
- ½ cup blanched almonds, toasted

Heat the ghee or oil in a saucepan. Add the hing and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the fennel or celery and sauté over low heat for 5 minutes. Add the couscous. Sauté, stirring for 2 minutes. Add the stock or water, salt, dried apricots, cinnamon, and cardamom. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat, and simmer until all the water is absorbed and the couscous is tender. Stir in the almonds and fluff up the couscous with a fork.

Pineapple Chutney (makes 1½ cups)

- ½ cup ghee or oil
- 1 Tbsp. fresh ginger, minced
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- 3 cups chopped pineapple, with juice
- 1 cup raw or packed brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ tsp. ground cardamom

- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt

Heat the ghee or oil in a large saucepan. Add the ginger and cumin and sauté for 1 minute over low heat, stirring frequently. Add the remaining ingredients. Cover and simmer until the mixture has a jamlike consistency, ½ to 2 hours. The pineapple never breaks down entirely, but the sugar should bind the mixture together. Let cool to room temperature.

Spice Nectar (makes 1 quart)

- 5 cups water
- 6 whole cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 Tbsp. fresh ginger, minced
- ½ cup fresh mint, chopped, or 1 mint tea bag
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 lemon

Combine the water, cloves, cinnamon stick, ginger, and mint in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Continue to boil until the water is reduced to 4 cups. Add the sugar and stir until blended. Remove from the heat. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze the juice of one half into the drink. Strain. Save the cinnamon stick and return to the drink for decoration. Thinly slice the other lemon half and add.

Cardamom Tea Cake (One 13 x 9" cake)

- CAKE:**
- ½ cup unsalted butter
 - 1¼ cups sugar
 - 2½ cups unbleached white flour
 - 2 tsp. baking powder
 - ½ tsp. baking soda
 - 1½ tsp. ground cardamom
 - ½ tsp. salt
 - ½ cup buttermilk
 - ½ cup water
- TOPPING:**
- 1 cup sugar
 - ½ cup flour
 - ½ cup butter

CAKE: Preheat oven to 350°. Butter and lightly flour a 13 x 9" pan. Cream butter and sugar. Mix the dry ingredients and sift over the butter-sugar mixture. Mix the buttermilk with the water. Pour over the dry ingredients and mix just until blended. Spoon into the pan.

STREUSEL TOPPING: Mix the sugar and flour together. Cut the butter into small pieces and work in the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Sprinkle evenly over the cake batter. Bake 30-40 minutes. □