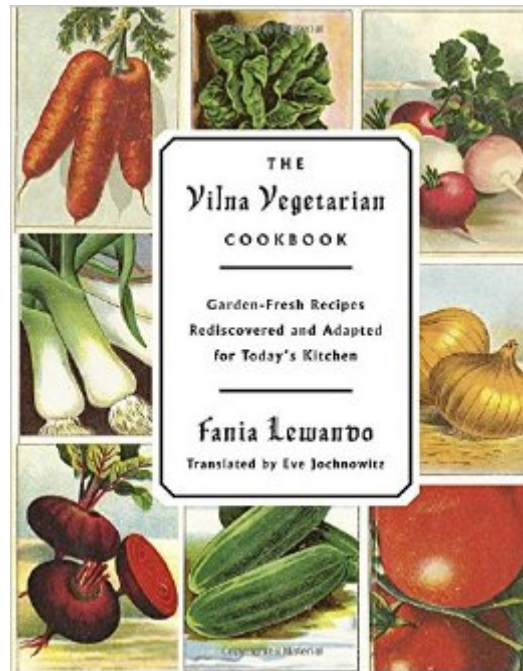


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# The Vilna Vegetarian Cookbook: Garden-Fresh Recipes Rediscovered And Adapted For Today's Kitchen



## Synopsis

Beautifully translated for a new generation of devotees of delicious and healthy eating: A groundbreaking, mouthwatering vegetarian cookbook originally published in Yiddish in pre-World War II Vilna and miraculously rediscovered more than half a century later. In 1938, Fania Lewando, the proprietor of a popular vegetarian restaurant in Vilna, Lithuania, published a Yiddish vegetarian cookbook unlike any that had come before. Its 400 recipes ranged from traditional Jewish dishes (kugel, blintzes, fruit compote, borscht) to vegetarian versions of Jewish holiday staples (cholent, kishke, schnitzel) to appetizers, soups, main courses, and desserts that introduced vegetables and fruits that had not traditionally been part of the repertoire of the Jewish homemaker (Chickpea Cutlets, Jerusalem Artichoke Soup; Leek Frittata; Apple Charlotte with Whole Wheat Breadcrumbs). Also included were impassioned essays by Lewando and by a physician about the benefits of vegetarianism. Accompanying the recipes were lush full-color drawings of vegetables and fruit that had originally appeared on bilingual (Yiddish and English) seed packets. Lewando's cookbook was sold throughout Europe. Lewando and her husband died during World War II, and it was assumed that all but a few family-owned and archival copies of her cookbook vanished along with most of European Jewry. But in 1995 a couple attending an antiquarian book fair in England came upon a copy of Lewando's cookbook. Recognizing its historical value, they purchased it and donated it to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City, the premier repository for books and artifacts relating to prewar European Jewry. Enchanted by the book's contents and by its backstory, YIVO commissioned a translation of the book that will make Lewando's charming, delicious, and practical recipes available to an audience beyond the wildest dreams of the visionary woman who created them. With a foreword by Joan Nathan. Full-color illustrations throughout. Translated from the Yiddish by Eve Jochnowitz.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 1938, Fania Lewando, the proprietor of a popular vegetarian restaurant in Vilna, Lithuania, where all the hip Yiddish speaking intellectuals ate and conversed, published a Yiddish vegetarian cookbook unlike any that had come before. Her establishment was the Elaine's of Vilnius, and not for those without some coins. Marc Chagall dined there (although he was not feeling well the night he signed the guest book), as did Itzik Manger (he said it was "heavenly"), Dr. Halevi, Zalmen Maynzer, Yudi Mark, Lazar Kahan, and other (male) luminaries. In 2011, The Forward referred to the pre-War, revolutionary cookbook as Vilna's Moosewood cookbook. And yes, it was revolutionary, since meat was the aspirational food of the Jewish community and vegetarianism and vegetables were not popular. Reading the book reminded me of how much I enjoyed the closed dairy restaurants of the Garden Cafeteria, Ratner's and that swank dairy place on HaYarkon in Tel Aviv. Sadly, and tragically, Fania, her husband, and so many of her friends, customers, and readers did not survive WWII and Nazi and Soviet occupations. It was assumed that all but a few copies of the cookbook survived. In 1995, a couple attending an antiquarian book fair in England came upon a copy of the cookbook, bought it, and donated it to YIVO, the premier repository for books and artifacts relating to prewar European Jewry. Barbara Mazur and Wendy K. Waxman were participating in a YIVO book group when they saw the 1938 book. Mazur and Waxman wanted to publish a reprint of it. They spied famed cookbook author and food journalist, Joan Nathan, at Stone Barn in New York State and showed her their manuscript, which they just happened to have on them. She set them up with a publisher and agreed to write the Foreword.

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