

FIRST BITES

WHAT TO *read*

RIGHT NOW: **VEGETABLE LITERACY**

By **Deborah Madison**,
Ten Speed Press
\$40; 416 pages

I don't use the phrase "instant classic" often, but it's exactly right for Deborah Madison's superb new book, which arrives March 19. The slightly stiff name telegraphs a deep purpose: not merely to present interesting recipes, but to boost a cook's understanding of 12 families of vegetables, showing how they relate and contrast in flavor and application. She has a botanist's love of plants as plants, and a playful, bold way with ingredients.

I loved her roasted rutabaga "batons," which combined the complex heat

of smoked paprika with the pungency of caraway. I loved the surprise of onion rounds that are served with a fragrant cinnamon butter. I loved the fine thread of lemony fragrance that ran through a simple salad of roasted red

peppers and tomatoes. And I loved to just read this book: exciting recipes matched with prose that is personal, concise, useful, and inspiring. If your goal is to eat more vegetables, start here, right now.

—Scott Mowbray

