

Foreword to *The Herbal Kitchen*

By Rosemary Gladstar

Author

Herbalism and herb books have become quite the hot topic these past few years, and there are herb books on any subject one could imagine exploring the broad territory that herbalism embraces. Quite the change from only a few years back, when one was wont to find any information about herbs and herbal healing. Good herb books were far and few between. Today, quite thankfully, my library shelves are heavily stacked with books on plant spirit medicine, wild crafting and identification, books on herbal healing and herb lore, books on the latest most popular herbs, using herbs with drugs and medication and counter indications, safety issues and a few covering herbal medicine as a clinical practice. You name it, big book or small, colorfully laid out or

plainly printed, each herb book holds at least a few gems and often many about this intriguing field of study that I have been impassioned with for most of my life. But few touch my heart the way Kami McBride's *The Herbal Kitchen* does. It embraces all that I love most about this ancient healing tradition and reminds me of how necessary our relationship to plants is in our world today.

*"Herbs and spices are a gift from nature. We are nature and the plants have an affinity with our bodies...they are our allies"* (from the Herbal Kitchen)

In the *The Herbal Kitchen* sits the rich green heart of herbalism in all its abundance, simplicity and practicality. Medicines are made, recipes exchanged, and wise adages passed along to the reader. One can almost smell the flowers, taste the cup of tea in hand, so homespun and real are the teachings that Kami shares. She artfully guides us through garden and field, baskets overflowing with earth's abundance, then leads us back into the heart of the household, the earthy

abode of the kitchen. There amidst pots and pans, herb jars and baskets overflowing with the lush harvest of fragrant plants, all that is best about the tradition of herbal healing comes forth, as Kami generously shares not only recipe and remedy, but wisdom passed down through time.

*“The culture of our kitchen environment is the space we create to nurture and care for ourselves and our families”....* With the simplest of ingredients and always an eye for what is practical and doable, Kami guides us to create recipes for health and healing and weaves the magic and power of herbs back into our daily lives. Every recipe embraces that wise old adage, “food is our best medicine.” Within the limitless range of the kitchen lies the pathway to wellness. As Kami makes obvious, *“this is a book about reclaiming the art of using herbs in our daily food routines and developing a deeper understanding of our relationship between food and wellness.”*

But it's far more than just a book of recipes and remedies. Kami embraces all that's real and honest, traditional and practical, about the green world and generously, with spice and vigor, offers her warm insights for all of us to savor. It's sweetly delicious, like the elder berry syrup, Rose Delight Honey, and Benedictine liqueur, (recipes she shares along with the stories that accompany them). One can feel the grandmothers with her, guiding her, whispering their ancient wisdom and infusing it into the very teachings that Kami shares so warmly with us. Perhaps that is one of the reasons I love this book so much; it offers a sweet antidote to the sometimes stale modernism of so many herb books written today. In Kami's *The Herbal Kitchen* I am reminded of all that I love most about this ancient tradition of healing, how it's been passed down through the ages, from grandmother to granddaughter, grandfather to grandson; how it embraces simplicity and humbleness, while being grand and noble at the same time. And how it offers us the best kind of medicine, that feeds the heart as well as the body, which heals us from inside out, and reaches deeply into the sacred places of

our souls. *"I keep a watchful eye for what the earth has to offer, paying my respects by nourishing my body and soul with the harvest"* (from *The Herbal Kitchen*). Read deeply; this is a book that will nourish heart and soul, body and spirit with the rich harvest of the green world. And yes, another book to add to my shelves of green literature; this one, however, goes on the top shelf where I house most of my favorite tomes and the ones I use most often.

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From her Mountain home in Vermont