



Health Wise Books

By Kinneret Globerman

On some really cold days, it's fun to curl up with a good book. And why not a cookbook to motivate you to get off your backside and get active...in the kitchen. Here are two that'll tantalize those taste buds and give you a culinary workout.

She comes from a privileged background and has reinvented herself many times: as an actress, a prenatal yoga instructor, an entrepreneur. Now, Anna Getty is a champion of organic and sustainable food and, together with the Organic Center for Education (now the Organic Center) in Boulder, Colorado, has produced *anna getty's easy green organic* (Chronicle Books/Raincoast Books, ISBN-978-0-8118-6668-2) — a cookbook whose title says it all.

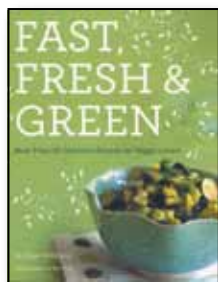


Getty delivers. The recipes really are straightforward. From starters, soups, and salads to main and side dishes, desserts and sweets, you'll find a nice variety of recipes that are colourful in both the assortment of ingredients used and in the final presentation. If you're tired of quinoa salads (although her red quinoa with toasted pine nuts, cranberries, and feta cheese might make you change your mind), try her quinoa croquettes with cilantro yogurt sauce. If you've an aversion to chicken or fish (and Getty includes recipes for both fowl and fish, even beef), why not whip up her ginger risotto or baked Portobello mushrooms with avocado and pesto? Want a lighter meal? Try one of the soups (creamy butternut squash and macadamia nut soup with roasted poblano

chile cream made from poblano chile and silken tofu) and pair it with a salad (warm potato salad with lentils and capers). And if you've got any room left, try the caramelized banana cream or the mango bread pudding — all great recipes for a frigid, cold winter's day.

If you don't feel like cooking, read her book for the beauty of it. You'll also find information on organic farming, which produce has the highest residues of pesticides, decoding labels, transitioning to an organic pantry, money-saving tips, greening your kitchen, and more.

Veggie-lovers can pick up *Fast, Fresh & Green* by the former editor of *Fine Cooking* magazine, Susie Middleton (Chronicle Books/Raincoast Books, ISBN 978-0-8118- 6566-1). Middleton's vegetables are sautéed, braised, roasted, stir-fried, grilled, and baked. And while some of the recipes are a little more labour-intensive than she claims, they're worth the extra time. How can you resist Gingery Sweet Potatoes and Apple Sauté with Toasted Almonds; or Roasted Beet, Orange, and Provençal Kale with Chorizo, Pimentón, and Honey?



Like Getty's book, the recipes aren't all vegetarian; but the exceptions are few. Unlike Getty's book, Middleton's is a mini course in the different techniques you can use to transform vegetables into a celebration of tastes and textures that'll make even the pickiest veggie eater clamour for more. **HWO**

GUATEMALA STOVE PROJECT — FANNING THE FLAME OF PHILANTHROPY

By Lynda Hall

Cooking on open fires may seem romantic — and if it's done occasionally outdoors, it can be a pleasant, entertaining, and harmless activity. But if you take it indoors, and it represents the only method you have for preparing meals, it can be deadly.

This is the situation for the majority of indigenous people living in the highlands of Guatemala, a Central American country bordering on Mexico. Rural villages in the area have few resources and very little infrastructure. Running water, sewage systems, electricity, and a reliable supply of fuel for heating and cooking are rare. Meals are prepared over traditional three-stone fires built on the dirt floor of household kitchens. There are no chimneys to vent smoke outdoors.

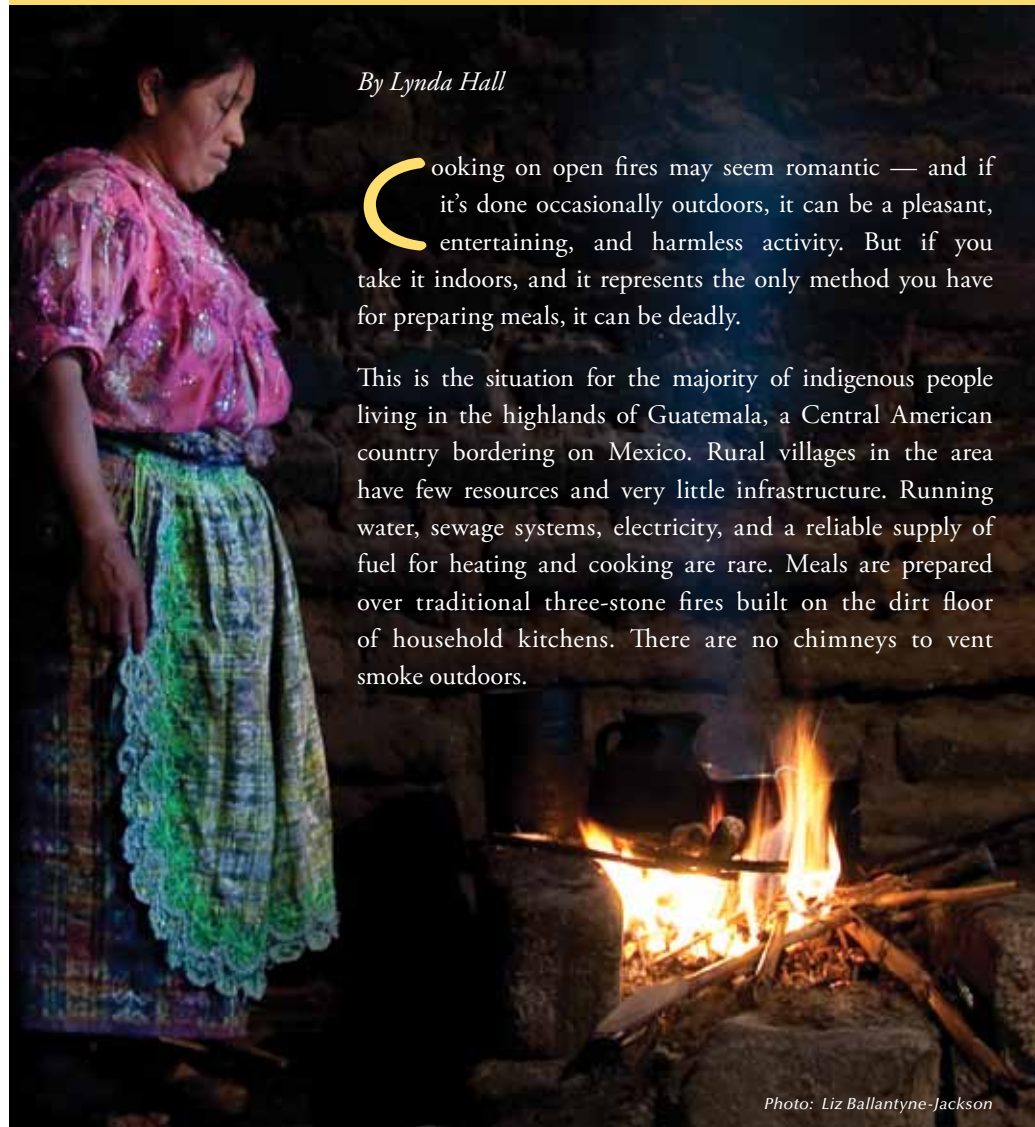


Photo: Liz Ballantyne-Jackson



Photos: Pierre Fortier

Serious health problems are caused by toxic wood smoke, especially for women who do all the cooking for the family and therefore have a higher exposure to the tar and other particles in the smoke. Chronic respiratory illnesses, including tuberculosis and pneumonia, are common, and eye infections often lead to blindness for women, who spend the most time over the fires.

Over a decade ago, the indigenous non-profit group Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación, or CEDEC, recognized and identified the need for cleaner and more efficient cooking systems as a priority. They also recognized that to make a substantial change, they would need resources from outside of the communities themselves. This appeal for help was answered in 1999, when Perth, Ontario resident and international volunteer Tom Clarke spent two weeks building six masonry stoves under the guidance of master Mayan mason Don Juan Puac in the remote village of San Jose de Mas Alla. Out of that experience, Clarke created a volunteer-driven organization aptly called the Guatemala Stove Project, through which nearly 4,000 stoves have been constructed in Guatemala in the past 11 years.



Traditional cooking in a Mayan home

What began as a passionate response to a need by an individual has become an international network of collaborators. In the United States, Masons on a Mission was founded as an American cousin to the Canadian project after Pat Manley, former President of the

Masonry Heater Association, was invited to Guatemala along with Clarke. In Guatemala, CEDEC continues to be an active partner, but other non-governmental organizations or NGOs have also become key contributors. These NGOs connect with village leaders to make decisions on which village will receive stoves next, and how funds will be dispersed.

Support and collaboration has not been limited to organizations. Hundreds of individual volunteers have given their time, learning how to build stoves, organizing fundraising events, contributing to the Guatemala Stove Project website, and serving on the volunteer board of directors. Each year a new team of about twenty-four

volunteers travels to Guatemala for a month to build alongside their Mayan counterparts. While there, they document their experiences and return home, sharing their stories and spreading the word.



A Mayan family beams over their newly built stove

There are immediate and long-term impacts on the health and economic stability of a family when their open fire is replaced by a masonry stove. Eyes no longer sting, and breathing is easier. Chronic diseases are less likely to develop. An improvement in health means fewer days of school and work are missed, and fewer medical interventions are required. Healthier, longer lives — there are estimates of up to an additional 15 years of life for women cooking over masonry stoves — lead to greater family stability, and greater time to accumulate resources for the next generation.

There is also a positive impact on the community as a whole. The masonry stoves

burn more efficiently, using about 50 per cent less wood. Cutting down on fuel consumption means a decrease in the rate of deforestation. It means less money and time is spent purchasing and hauling wood. Fewer

emissions from each stove ultimately improves outdoor air quality for everyone. And about 90 per cent of the stoves are built by Mayan masons, who are paid for their labour through the project. In short, every masonry stove that is constructed adds to the sustainability of the community.

Seeing the conditions in Guatemala and observing first-hand the value of their work often inspires volunteers to continue supporting the project after they return home, through fundraising and presentations. Their engagement and commitment

is born out of a sense of empowerment: They know that what they are doing is making a difference, because their contribution is tangible.

This sense of empowerment has sustained the project and allowed it to occasionally expand into complementary efforts — such as the conversion of a school bus into a mobile medical clinic for CEDEC and the construction of a school. Whatever work is undertaken by the project, there is a collective sense of ownership for its outcome.

Currently, the Guatemala Stove Project is managed by a core group of about 12 volunteers. Tom Clarke sees himself as just part of that group. After 11 years, he

continues to be inspired and passionate about the work he has taken on. “It’s the Mayan people — they are so vital and full of joy. They have a strong sense of community and spirit, and, although they have huge challenges, they have such a great attitude.”

Clarke feels exceptionally lucky because he has taken on the task of photographing every completed stove. “I get to meet all of the families. The women are so appreciative of what we do. It is incredibly gratifying.” These photographs are part of a certificate given to donors to thank them for their contribution, and to prove that the money was spent as intended.

When asked how many stoves he estimates are still needed, Clarke patiently explains that over half the world’s population currently cooks over open fires. “So basically, we’re looking at needing stoves for half the world’s population — about three billion.” In Guatemala alone, he calculates that another one million are needed. “It would never be possible for our small group alone to fulfill Guatemala’s needs. It’s much bigger than we are.”

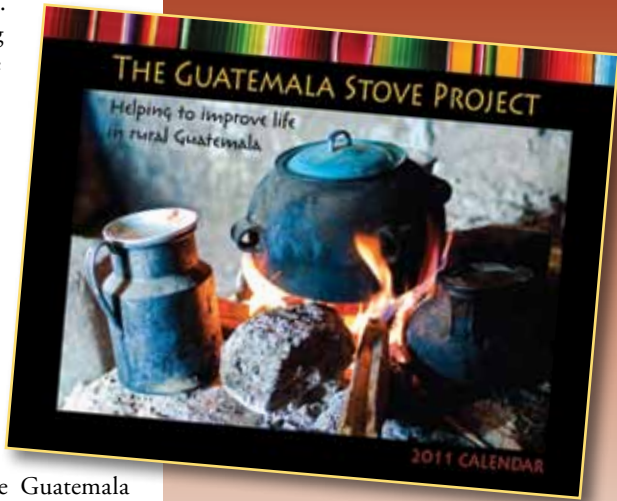
It costs about \$225 to build a stove. Each one will last about 20 years. To donate or volunteer for the Guatemala Stove Project, visit the website at www.guatemalastoveproject.org, or call project coordinator Tom Clarke at 613-267-5202.

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Stove Project News

The Guatemala Stove Project Ottawa chapter meets every six weeks or so for lunch on a Saturday at La Cabana Restaurant, 848 Merivale Road. Currently, there are about 25 active members working on fundraising, public outreach, and grant proposals.

The Guatemala Stove Project 2011 calendars, a fundraiser for the organization, are now on sale for \$20. Contact Liz Ballantyne-Jackson for information on volunteering or for purchasing calendars at 613-723-5107, or GSPOttawaLiz@gmail.com.



Guatemala Stove Project volunteers: building a better way of cooking



Photos: Courtesy of the Guatemala Stove Project