



[Sweet Laurel: Recipes for Whole Food, Grain-Free Desserts.](#)

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Our Summary:

It's hard to believe that with five pantry staples – located in just about any grocery store – you can easily find a dessert recipes in [Sweet Laurel](#) to satisfy just about anyone. Ingredients like almond flour, coconut oil, maple syrup, honey and Himalayan pink salt. Add other common ingredients like cacao (cocoa), apple cider vinegar, and lemon juice, and these basics are combined time and

again to create batters and doughs that become the basis for breakfasts, cookies and bars, pies, and layer cakes. Mix in spices, nuts and nut butters, fruit and powdered green tea, and though expensive, you've just given yourself over 100 recipe options that support any dietary platform, and satisfies every sweet-tooth craving.

What you need to know:

Get it: [Sweet Laurel: Recipes for Whole Food, Grain-Free Desserts.](#) Copyright © 2018 by Laurel Gallucci and Claire Thomas. Photography by Claire Thomas. Published by Clarkson Potter/Publishers, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, April 3, 2018 Hardcover \$28.00 ([Amazon \\$16.74](#); [Kindle \\$14.99](#))

See it: 256 pages with full page color photos of each finished recipe. A Table of Contents leads, but not comprehensive recipes list is presented. A resources page, and standard index are included.

Make it: Over 100 dairy free, grain free, gluten free, filler free desserts. Some recipes are also paleo, vegan, raw, or nut free. Recipes are built upon whole foods and natural ingredients, which *does* translate into a higher grocer's bill.

Chef Donna's Review:

Dairy free. Grain free. Gluten free. Filler free. Did I mention we're talking about desserts? Desserts made from ingredients that benefit your body. Need I say anything more? If I must, let me add paleo, vegan, raw, or nut free. Welcome to the wonderful world of [Sweet Laurel](#). Authors Laurel Gallucci and Claire Thomas of LA's trendy bakery *Sweet Laurel* put two and two together: whole foods benefit your body; they also make baked goods moist, light and perfectly delicious.

[Sweet Laurel](#) is a cookbook that checks your judgments before opening the book. These recipes are made with nutrient-dense, organic ingredients and no shortcuts. The recipes are simple, but do require somewhat of an understanding of how baking with whole natural ingredients works. If you typically do not bake from these dietary platform, you do need to pay a bit of



attention because the baking rules are slightly different. That, and because the recipes are intentionally simple. Of course you'll still be successful, but it will require a wee-bit more effort on your part.

I have to be honest. I was hesitant when I first opened – and then baked from – [Sweet Laurel](#). I've baked and eaten gluten-free desserts before. I've baked and eaten vegan desserts before, and done the same with dairy free and grain free quick breads. While satisfying to those who were on a strict avoidance diet, to me they all tasted like they were trying to be something they were not. Texture – yuck; flavor – off.

Understanding the principles behind [Sweet Laurel's](#) approach to baking, happily, has absolutely changed my mind. With luscious layered cakes, quick breads, pastries, cookies, and all of the frostings, fillings, and glazes in between, regardless of how you eat or what you eat, this book is a kitchen staple. [Sweet Laurel](#) emphasizes the basic elements of every recipe are grain free, dairy free, and refined sugar free. But that makes all of the recipes gluten free! Most are paleo, and most are vegan. But truly, at the end of the day none of that matters. You are literally holding the key to luscious moist cakes and pastries in your hands with [Sweet Laurel](#).

Everything from the *Essential Recipes* chapter, that includes things like *Marshmallow Coconut Whipped Cream* with variations, an additive free baking powder, and a *how-to veganize eggs* recipe, almost justify your purchase of [Sweet Laurel](#). But then add *Coconut Yogurt* (not flavored, but yogurt made from coconut cream) and a *Vegan Caramel* recipe, along with *Vegan Chocolate Chips* recipe, and you'll wonder why you're hesitating.

There's a breakfast chapter in [Sweet Laurel](#) called *With Tea or Coffee* that includes what you want for breakfast, including *Cinnamon Rolls*, *Glazed Donuts* and an *Everything Bagel Bread*. My favorite though, and I have to say I've made this without hesitation, reservation and to great accolades, is the *Honey Walnut Coffee Cake*. It was better my second go-round; no one but me was unhappy with the first effort, though.

Breakfast is followed by *Chewy*, *Crunchy*, *Sweet*, which includes cookies and bars and, of course, a chapter on pies for any occasion. But these aren't just regular pies. [Sweet Laurel](#) offers *Caramel Chocolate Banana Cream Pie* and *Salted Lemon Meringue Pie*. There's *Creamy Dairy-free Cheesecake* and *Classic Pumpkin Pie*. You'll find cobblers to satisfy a fruit lover, and chocolate pies in the form of *Chiffon* or *S'mores* for your chocolate lover.

The hallmark of [Sweet Laurel](#) – the bakery, and the book, are its layered cakes. And when you can make a cake for any season, in any flavor, with a handful of ingredients that doesn't require you to make special trips to specialty stores, or order expensive ingredients online, why would you look anywhere else?



That all said, my favorite chapter in [Sweet Laurel](#) is the last. *The Grand Finale. How to create and decorate show-stopping layer cakes.* Using fresh botanicals, and short but easy to follow how-to's (with pictures), [Sweet Laurel](#) makes decorating layered cakes easy. You'll produce elegant and jaw dropping-ly gorgeous cakes like a pro.

Hands down, I've never been more engaged or excited about a baking book. When you consider that I have no dietary platform to abide by, to throw my hat into the ring on this one makes me happy. The truth is, I have plenty of friends, family members, and clients that *have* to eat this way. To be able to accommodate them, and have them ask me whether they'll be paying the price with their health for indulging (the answer is "no," is the highest compliment I could receive.

Recipes to cook from [Sweet Laurel: Recipes for Whole Food, Grain-Free Desserts](#). Copyright © 2018 by Laurel Gallucci and Claire Thomas. Published by Clarkson Potter/Publishers, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.

[Honey Walnut Coffee Cake](#)*

[Apple Pie Bars \(with Vegan Caramel\)](#)*

[Fluffy Lemon Coconut Cake \(with Coconut Whipped Cream and Lemon Spread\)](#)*

*[Now That's A Mouthful](#) uses and recommends [The Spice and Tea Exchange](#)® spices and seasonings in all of its recipes.