

## VEGETABLES AREN'T ACCESSORIES

Even while we were writing *Cooking on Fire*, our first book, we knew that our next book had to be vegetarian. It isn't that we've become vegetarians, but because we appreciate good food, we're open to trying anything offered to us. We don't eat much meat at home and not every day, out of ethical, economic, and health concerns. But first and foremost, we cook with vegetables because they are just more interesting than meat in so many ways. There's more to choose from, more colors, more diversity, subtle flavors, and so many layers of deliciousness.

We both started working professionally with food in the early 2000s. Back then, the way ingredients were arranged in our mental pantry were foie gras, caviar, and beef on the top shelves, and onions, cabbages, and carrots on the bottom shelves. Fortunately, time has helped to deflate this hierarchy, and we demand equality when it comes to the produce we use. However, when it comes to open-fire cooking, the status of vegetables is still somewhat that of a garnish to accompany meat, fish, and seafood. But there's absolutely no reason not to let vegetables take center stage, even when it comes to hot flames and smoldering embers. Fire does wonders for vegetables, which easily absorb its aromas and caramelize wonderfully at high temperatures. That's why we hope this book will inspire more people to use more vegetables in their meals, even when the kitchen is outdoors.

## FIRE TAKES US OUTDOORS

The fact that open-fire cooking is an outdoor activity is a good thing. It lets us experience nature together while we cook. One of the best things about spending time outdoors is nature's ability to remind us of the truly important things in life: how small we are in the grand scheme of things; how easy life can be when we look up from our smartphones and admire nature in all its perfect imperfection. When the birds sing carefree and the water in the brook is gently rippling, it's as if the world will endure, despite what the media screams at us. We are also reminded of how lucky we are to have each other.

Even when you live in the middle of nature like we do, sometimes you still need an "excuse" to go out and enjoy it together. Cooking over an open fire is the best excuse. That's why—along with hundreds of other reasons, many of which we will share with you in this book—we love to gather around a roaring fire. We hope you will get as much enjoyment out of our book as we have in writing it.

—Eva H. Tram & Nicolai Tram

