

Meals Made in a Blender . Scholarship Winners

VOLUME XXVII, NO 4

VEGETARIAN

JOURNAL

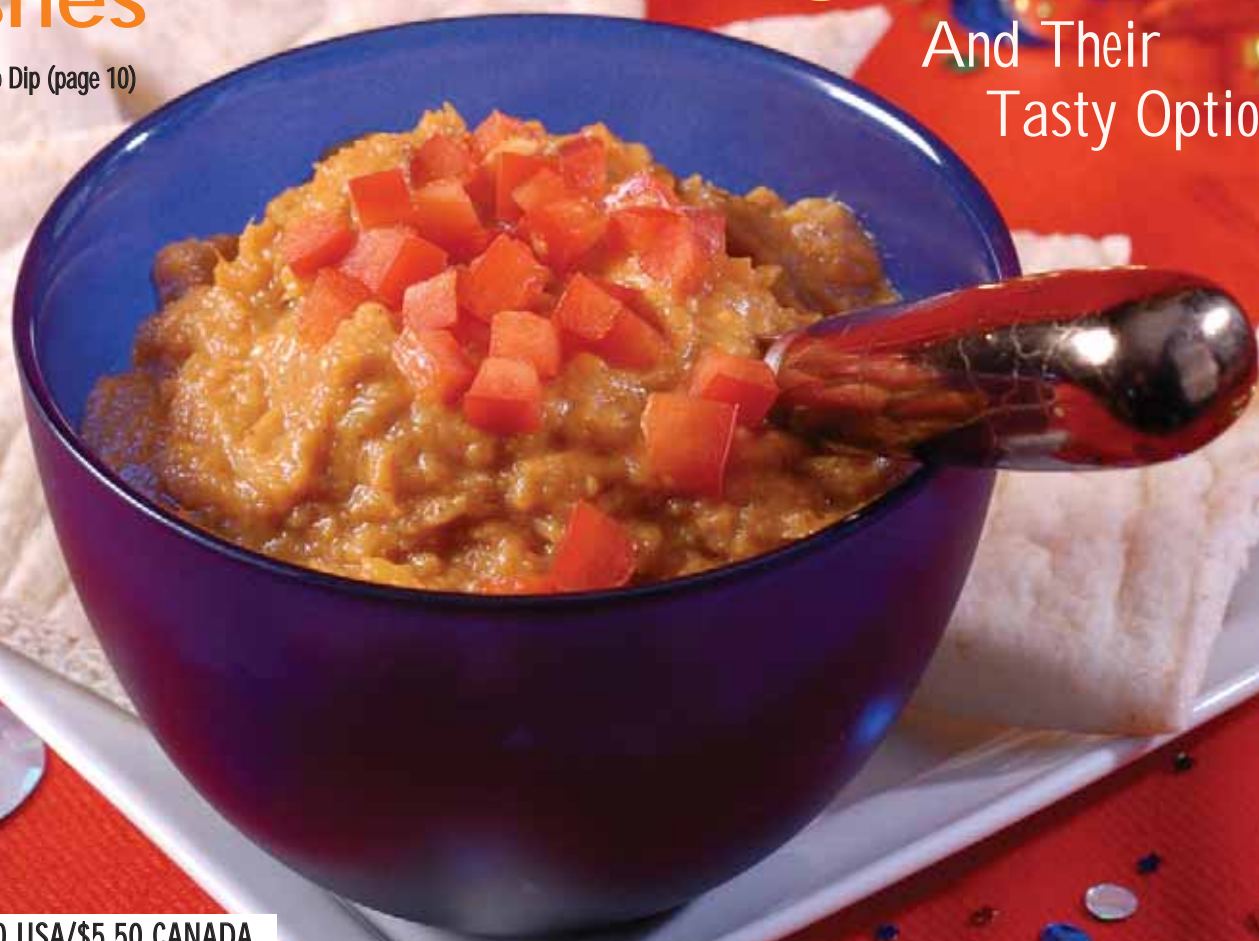
HEALTH ECOLOGY ETHICS

Hearty Root Vegetable Dishes

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Top Restaurant Chains for Vegetarians

And Their
Tasty Options!



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An Update on Gelatin

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NUTRITION HOTLINE

REED MANGELS, PhD, RD



This issue's Nutrition Hotline addresses questions surrounding soy allergies and examines whether soy consumption during adulthood is harmful to one's health.

QUESTION: *"Two of my family members developed serious allergic reactions to soy foods. Have you heard of a lot more of this sort of thing happening?"* D.B., via e-mail

ANSWER: In the United States, approximately 1 percent of people have a soy allergy. Soy is one of the eight most common foods that trigger allergic reactions. The others are cow's milk, eggs, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, fish, and shellfish.

Allergies to soy most commonly occur in children; many outgrow this allergy by age 3, although it can continue into adulthood. Soy allergies can also develop in adults for unknown reasons.

As soy products are more commonly eaten, the incidence of soy allergy may increase because more people are exposed to soy. The authors of *Food Allergy Survival Guide* (Healthy Living Publications, 2004) suggest that our hygienic lifestyle, pollution, genetic modification, exposure to pesticides, injury or infection of the intestinal tract, medication use, and stress are factors that could possibly explain the increased incidence of allergies in general. In addition, peanuts and soybeans have similar amino acid sequences, so people who are allergic to peanut protein may also react to soybean protein. As peanut allergies become increasingly common, soy allergy rates may also rise.

A food allergy is commonly defined as an abnormal immune reaction to a food, usually to a food protein. A reaction can be triggered by even the smallest amount of that food imaginable.

Symptoms can include hives; swelling of the lips, face, tongue, or throat; wheezing; difficulty breathing; dizziness; or fainting. Anaphylaxis is a very serious and potentially fatal allergic reaction that involves a sudden drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness, and body system failure.

Food allergies are relatively uncommon. In contrast, many people report reactions such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain to specific foods. The distinction between an allergy and an intolerance is an important one because many people with a food intolerance can eat small amounts of the food without having symptoms. Anaphylaxis does not occur with food intolerance.

Food scientists are working to reduce the allergenicity of soybeans. This area of research appears promising, although so far no technique has been found that completely eliminates potential allergens in soybeans.

QUESTION: *"I read an article stating that a person's age at the time of their exposure to soy could be very important with regard to their risk of developing cancer. For instance, one study has shown that eating a lot of soy in adolescence is good and may lower the risk, but when you start as an adult, it may have no impact or actually increase your risk. As a person who became a vegetarian during my early 30s, I am concerned that I am placing myself at an increased risk of developing cancer. Soy products constitute*

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NOTE FROM THE COORDINATORS

MORE SIGNS OF VEGETARIAN CHANGE



We keep seeing proof that there are great changes for vegetarians. Melanie Campbell, one of our nutrition interns, took a look at the 2008 American Dietetic Association/American Diabetes Exchange list. In the 2003 edition, the Meat and Meat Substitutes List gave one line: 1.2 cups of beans, peas, or lentils (although tofu and meatless burgers were mentioned elsewhere in the handout). In the 2008 version, there are two pages of “Plant-Based Protein,” including soy-based bacon strips, edamame, falafel, hummus, tempeh, soy-based sausage patties, lentils, soy chicken nuggets, and more!

One of our friends was reading a Chinese language newspaper (in Chinese) and happened to notice that The Vegetarian Resource Group was quoted in a positive article about vegetarianism.

To bring about change, the world needs people with courage and kindness in equal measure, and clearly our \$5,000 scholarship winners Randon and Sierra have both (pages 26-27). To be a vegetarian is to take a stand against cruelty and a stand for clean air and clean rivers. To be a vegetarian in high school is especially commendable because so many young people want to go along with the crowd. Randon and Sierra are happy to explain their choices and to practice patience as they teach others the countless good reasons they have to be different. Animals need people like Randon and Sierra to speak for them. However, choosing vegetarian food goes beyond speaking up for animals and the planet. The very act of eating a bean burrito or pouring soymilk on your cereal is worth more than all the words in the world. The health benefits have been documented, and the list of them grows longer each year. And while the cows, pigs, turkeys, chickens, lambs, and fish whose lives are spared because of Randon’s and Sierra’s choices have no way to thank them, we at The VRG admire and congratulate them!

Thank you to all the kind people who make change possible, such as:

- 1) Our nutrition intern Melanie Campbell, whose family hunted, gave up red meat at age 8 after seeing a rabbit killed with a bow and arrow.
- 2) Sponsors of the Eleanor Wolff Internship who enabled Melanie to work here.
- 3) The sponsor of our college scholarships and our scholarship entrants.
- 4) Jeannie, Sonja, and John in our office, who go out of their way for so many callers and volunteers each day.
- 5) Jane Michalek, who has done volunteer editing for *Vegetarian Journal* since 1996 and helps at outreach booths.
- 6) Jeanne Yacoubou, who has been so tenacious in researching restaurant chains and ingredients for VRG over the years (pages 14 and 28).
- 7) All our members, volunteers, and supporters in the U.S. and abroad.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season!

Debra Wasserman & Charles Stahler

Coordinators of The Vegetarian Resource Group

VRG'S MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFT PROGRAM

How often have you wanted to make a gift in honor of a loved one or friend but weren't sure which charities are vegetarian-friendly, pro-environmental, or pro-animal rights? Please remember The Vegetarian Resource Group. You can make a gift in memory of a loved one or as a living tribute to honor someone you care about on a special occasion, such as a wedding or birth. We'll send an acknowledgement to you and to the recipient(s) you choose. Your gift will support educational outreach programs and help promote vegetarianism.

Memorials & Honorary Gifts

In memory of: _____

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Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

My name and address:

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Address: _____

Make checks payable to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203.

Special thanks to Melanie Campbell, Lauri Caplan, Avi Carter, and Jenny Saccenti for sending acknowledgement letters to the students who applied to VRG's annual scholarship competition for graduating high school seniors.

Also, special thanks to Ralph Estevez for doing a vegan cooking demo at the Richmond Vegetarian Festival in Virginia earlier this year.

Veggie Burger and Dog Fans Speak Out About Recent Article

In response to the *VJ's Guide to Veggie Burgers and Dogs* in Issue 2, 2008:

Great review of vegan burgers and dogs! I've been eating the Morningstar Farms Grillers for quite a while—they're great when my husband barbecues them on the grill. (Segregated, of course, from his hamburgers!) I've only tried the Lightlife Smart Dogs and Yves Tofu Dogs, and I'm not very impressed with either, though I still eat them! I'll have to take your suggestion and try the Tofurky Chipotle Franks.

Love your magazine and love sharing it with my daughter, who is slowly adopting better habits as she is getting older!

Peggy Z., via e-mail

First, how could you have missed Morningstar's hot dog? It is available in the stores I go to, and it is my favorite hot dog. I also recommend trying Baco's sausage. It is great as an alternative to a hot dog.

Also, how could you run this article and leave out a tasting test? Yes, I want to know a ranking of sodium and fat. In fact, I want

not just those that are lowest in sodium and fat but a complete ranking since you obviously have it. Don't throw away data! And I would choose a dog and burger based on not only sodium and fat but also taste.

Finally, don't compare them to meat-based alternatives, just among each other.

Louis F., via e-mail

Editor's Note: Only vegan items were reviewed for this article. Morningstar Farms' America's Original Veggie Dog® Links, Veggie Corn Dogs, and Mini Veggie Corn Dogs contain dairy derivatives and egg whites.

A Texas-Sized Thank You for The VRG!

Thank you so much for all of the great materials that you sent to us for Earth Day, at no charge! We had a very successful day, with much interest in our organization and the literature you provided.

It's wonderful to have the support of organizations such as yours to help promote an animal- and earth-friendly lifestyle. In appreciation, we would like to make a donation to your organization. San Antonio Vegetarian Society

Letters to the Editors can be sent to: *Vegetarian Journal*, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203. You may also e-mail your letters to vrg@vrg.org.

Coming in the Next Issue:

WEEKEND BRUNCH IDEAS

Plus: *The Vegetarian Solution to Water Pollution, Cooking with Cornmeal, and more!*

Vegan Roots

By Debra Daniels-Zeller

AUTUMN WOULDN'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT root vegetables. While potatoes make most everyone's weekly shopping list, beets, carrots, celeriac, Jerusalem artichokes, parsnips, rutabagas, turnips, and sweet potatoes are roots worth adding to your seasonal line-up. Carrots and beets add sparkling color, and old-fashioned parsnips and rutabagas are well-known for their earthy sweet flavors. Jerusalem artichokes and celeriac may appear to be newcomers, but they've been around for ages. Sweet potatoes are roots of a trailing tropical vine and have a long growing season. Sweet potatoes and yams are harvested before freezes begin, just as parsnips and rutabagas are settling in, ready to turn sweeter once the frost hits.

It's easy to incorporate different roots into meal plans. Try altering familiar recipes first. Celeriac, rutabagas, or turnips make perfect additions to mashed potatoes. Jerusalem artichokes, golden beets, or parsnips can be added to a roasted vegetable medley. You can also grate parsnips or rutabagas and use them like you would carrots. Instead of a carrot-raisin salad, try carrot-parsnip-raisin salad.

Each root has its own story. Peruse the history, nutrition, and cooking summaries, and try something different this year.

BEETS

Beets have an extremely long history. In fact, the remains of charred ancient beets were discovered in Mediterranean archaeological sites from the Neolithic period. The Romans used beets as an aphrodisiac and to treat fever, headaches, and constipation. In the Middle Ages, beets were believed to build blood and soothe digestion. While the root was used medicinally, beet greens were served at seasonal feasts in Europe long before the humble beet hitched a ride to North America with the colonists. American farmers were growing beets for the greens by the 1800s, but it wasn't until later that century that the ruby roots became a dinner staple on this continent.

Beets come in four basic types—red, white, golden, and Chioggia (a striped white and magenta beet sometimes called candy-striped beets). Red is the most common variety and boasts a deep earthy flavor. White, Chioggia, and golden beets are harder to find, but their flavors are more subtle and sweeter than red beets. A bonus about white and golden beets is that they don't bleed onto other vegetables when roasted or steamed.

Nutritionally, beets provide some vitamin C and fiber. Beet season is from June through November. Healthy greens attached to the roots are a sign of freshness. The red roots of the beets should be firm and smooth with few blemishes. Once home, trim the greens from the roots and store for up to a week in a nylon or plastic produce bag in the refrigerator. Leave the roots loose in the refrigerated produce bin for up to a week.

There is no need to peel the beets because the skin is smooth and traces of minerals are just below the surface of the skin. Wash and grate raw beets into salads. Shred, slice, or dice and steam them, or cut beets into chunks and bake or roast them. Balsamic raspberry or orange vinegar enhances their flavor.

CARROTS

The first wild carrot was eaten in Afghanistan more than 2,000 years ago. It was purple, but decades of crossbreeding lightened carrots until they were nearly white. Eventually, the familiar orange carrot emerged, and the vibrant hue quickly won the color contest.

In ancient Greece, carrots were used as food and medicine, and they were considered an aphrodisiac. During the Middle Ages, doctors prescribed carrots for a wide spectrum of health problems. They've been used to treat indigestion, prevent constipation, and improve night vision. Carrots are rich in alpha- and beta-carotene.

When selecting carrots, look for bunches with healthy greens attached. The carrot should be firm and smooth with few blemishes. The season for carrots can be year-round, but it often tapers off in March and

resumes in the summer. The sweetest carrots are often those grown close to home, from farmers' markets or your own backyard. Remove the greens before storing. Leaving greens attached can cause the carrot to wilt and become old before its time. Store greens and loose carrots in a plastic or nylon bag in the refrigerator. Use the greens within a few days. The body of a carrot will last up to two weeks.

Carrots are portable and easy to prepare. (I always take a few when I travel.) Grate or slice carrots and serve raw, or steam, roast, braise, sauté, or stew them. They're also good pickled or steamed and served with balsamic vinegar. The greens can be chopped and used in a stir-fry or tossed into a soup stock for added nutrition and flavor.

CELERIAC

Hundreds of years ago, Mediterranean farmers grew both celery and celeriac. Celeriac was a common vegetable in this country until 1940 when it fell out of fashion and practically disappeared. Still, it remained popular in Europe, and just a few decades ago, you practically had to travel across the pond to find the savory root. Thanks to farmers' markets and a renewed interest, though, celeriac is making a comeback here.

Celeriac, a relative of celery also called turnip-rooted celery or knob celery, is cultivated for its root, not its stalks, which are thin, limp, and bitter. It is a knobby vegetable with a rough, brown, hairy texture and crevices where dirt from the farm hides. Nevertheless, when celeriac is peeled, soaked, and cut, this ugly duckling offers an amazing celery-parsley flavor with a texture of cooked potatoes.

When shopping for celeriac, look for firm roots. Store it unwashed in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Peel the outer skin and soak the flesh in water with a little lemon juice or vinegar added to preserve the white color.

Raw grated celeriac salads are traditionally laced with mayonnaise and sour cream. Vegan mayonnaise and plain soy yogurt could be used as substitutes in these kinds of traditional recipes. One of my favorite ways to serve celeriac is to mash it with potatoes and roasted garlic. (Use more potatoes than celeriac because celeriac contains more water.)

JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE

These roots are neither related to artichokes nor from Jerusalem. In fact, Native Americans cultivated Jerusalem artichokes long before Europeans arrived on the shores of the New World. Also called sunchokes,

these small, tan to brown knobby tubers look like misshapen ginger roots. They have an earthy flavor that becomes sweeter the longer they are cooked.

Jerusalem artichokes contain B vitamins, potassium, and iron. Look for firm, unblemished specimens from fall through early spring. Select dry, firm tubers, and avoid any with a greenish tinge. Wrap in paper towels, place in a plastic bag, and then store in the refrigerated vegetable crisper. They will keep for up to three weeks, but for the best flavor, eat them within a week. Jerusalem artichokes are often available at farmers' markets and natural foods stores.

To prepare Jerusalem artichokes, wash and peel with a vegetable peeler. Or leave the peel on since it also contains some vitamins and minerals. Slice or dice the tuber, then immediately immerse it in water with a little vinegar or lemon juice so these roots won't discolor. Jerusalem artichokes can be served raw, perhaps

It's easy to incorporate different roots into meal plans. Try altering familiar recipes first.

grated into salads, or they can be roasted, boiled, steamed, or fried. When cooked, their flavor is often enhanced with a little sweetener, such as agave nectar, and a squeeze of lemon juice. They can also be steamed and mashed with potatoes or stirred into soups as a thickener. Don't use a cast iron pot to cook them, or they may turn black.

PARSNIPS

Parsnips, which look like albino carrots, originated around the Mediterranean, and wild parsnips were eventually cultivated by the Romans. In the 1600s, Europeans brought carrots and parsnips to America. Unlike carrots, though, parsnips didn't catch on as a popular vegetable except in the Midwestern states.

Freezing temperatures convert the starch to sugar in parsnips. The flavor is transformed from starchy to sweet and earthy. The best parsnips are harvested after the first frost. Look for firm, unblemished roots in small to medium sizes. Large parsnips can be too fibrous. If you buy parsnips with greens attached, snip them off before storing. Parsnips retain their sweet

taste when stored in plastic bags and can be refrigerated for up to two weeks.

Parsnips offer a good amount of fiber, vitamin C, folate, manganese, and copper and small amounts of iron. They also contain thiamin, niacin, potassium, and magnesium.

You can serve parsnips raw like carrots, such as grated for salads, or they can be sautéed, roasted, or steamed. You can also mash and purée them into side dishes or creamy soups. Parsnips' dry texture can be enhanced with a little olive oil. Their flavor is best balanced with a dash of nutmeg, cardamom, or cinnamon, but they can also take more savory flavors like curry.

TURNIPS AND RUTABAGAS

Turnips and rutabagas are different, but these two root vegetables have always been linked together. Look up one, and you find the other.

Turnips lived in prehistoric times and are white in color. They appeared at the dinner table eons before rutabagas, which were first bred in the 17th century. Rutabagas are a cross between turnips and wild cabbage. They are light purple at the top of the root and yellow below. Rutabagas became known as Swedish turnips because of their popularity in that country, and they were one of the first vegetables new colonists in America grew. But like Jerusalem artichokes and celeriac, rutabagas never gained the wide following that carrots did. Rutabagas lack the pungent tones of turnips, and the taste is much sweeter. It's a puzzle why they aren't more popular.

Turnips and rutabagas are different, but these two root vegetables have always been linked together.

Both turnips and rutabagas are good sources of vitamin C. Select firm roots with few blemishes. Wash, but don't peel, these roots; then, grate them into salads or steam, boil, bake, or roast them. One of my favorite ways to enjoy rutabagas is to slice them into thick matchsticks to make baked rutabaga fries. Roast them with a little oil at 350 degrees for approximately 25 minutes. I have also successfully substituted or combined mashed rutabagas with puréed pumpkin in pumpkin bread and muffin recipes.

SWEET POTATOES (AND YAMS)

The root of a vine in the morning glory family, sweet potatoes can be traced back 10,000 years in South America. Sweet potatoes grew in ancient Peru and are one of the oldest recorded vegetables. Columbus brought them back to Europe. During the following century, Spanish and Portuguese explorers took sweet potatoes to Africa. In the mid-20th century, an orange, moist-fleshed variety was developed. We call these bright orange sweet potatoes 'yams,' though they are not true yams. Yams are actually large, white, starchy tubers from Africa.

Sweet potatoes are a good source of antioxidants, and they are high in beta-carotene. The darker the sweet potato, the higher the beta-carotene content. They also offer a good amount of vitamins C and B₆ and contain iron, manganese, copper, and fiber.

Buy firm, healthy-looking roots without blemishes. Store fresh sweet potatoes in a cool, dark, well-ventilated place but not in the refrigerator. Steam, bake, or roast until very tender. Cooked sweet potatoes keep for approximately three days in the refrigerator.

ROSEMARY ROASTED ROOTS

(Serves 4-6)

This is an easy basic roasted vegetable recipe. I sometimes toss in a head of peeled garlic cloves. (These become sweeter as they roast.) You can also add a little more oil or change your choice of herbs. Try basil or oregano, or use a pinch of spices like nutmeg or cardamom for variation.

1½ pounds golden beets, carrots, Jerusalem artichokes, parsnips, sweet potatoes, rutabagas, or turnips, cut into bite-size chunks
1 large onion or 1 cup shallots, chopped (optional)
1 or 2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 sprig fresh rosemary, leaves removed and chopped
1 Tablespoon paprika
Dash of cayenne
Salt to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Place cut vegetables in a large baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil. Add rosemary and stir vegetables until all are coated with oil. Sprinkle with paprika, cayenne, and salt. Stir again, and then bake for 1 hour or until all vegetables are very tender.

Total calories per serving: 141
Carbohydrates: 19 grams
Sodium: 68 milligrams

Fat: 4 grams
Protein: 3 grams
Fiber: 5 grams

ORANGE-MARINATED BEETS

(Serves 6)

I've found that the flavors in this recipe are best if the beets are allowed to marinate for approximately an hour or more after mixing. I often make these beets a day before I want to serve them. If you do this, refrigerate the marinated beets.

1½ pounds beets (approximately 4 cups), cut in half and sliced thinly
¼ cup white or red wine, balsamic, or rice vinegar
2-3 Tablespoons orange juice concentrate
Salt and pepper to taste

Steam beets for approximately 5 minutes or until tender. Combine vinegar and orange juice concentrate in a medium-sized glass bowl. Add warm beets and gently blend. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Total calories per serving: 60 Fat: <1 gram
Carbohydrates: 13 grams Protein: 2 grams
Sodium: 89 milligrams Fiber: 3 grams

CARROT-RUTABAGA COLESLAW

(Serves 6)

The dried fruit adds color, sweetness, and texture variety. Check for agave nectar in natural foods stores. As an alternative, substitute a vegan granulated sweetener. The toasted pecans are a nice touch if serving company, but for everyday meals, I skip them.

1 pound carrots
½ pound rutabagas
¼ cup rice or white wine vinegar
¼ cup vegan mayonnaise
2 Tablespoons soy, rice, or almond milk

½ teaspoon agave nectar (optional)
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
¼ cup raisins or dried cranberries (optional)
2 Tablespoons lightly toasted, finely chopped pecans (optional)

Wash and grate the carrots and rutabagas. This should yield approximately 5½ cups grated carrots and rutabagas.

In a separate bowl, blend vinegar, mayonnaise, soymilk, agave nectar, salt, and pepper. Pour over rutabagas and carrots and blend well. Stir in raisins and sprinkle top with pecans, if desired.

Total calories per serving: 71 Fat: 3 grams
Carbohydrates: 11 grams Protein: 1 gram
Sodium: 208 milligrams Fiber: 3 grams

TOMATOES AND LENTILS WITH CARROTS, TURNIPS, AND KALE

(Serves 4-6)

This is one of my favorite dishes to bring when gathering with friends for an autumn meal. Look for pickled peppers in the salad dressing aisle.

½ cup gray-green, brown, or French lentils, rinsed
One 28-ounce can whole tomatoes
1 or 2 pickled hot peppers, chopped
1 or 2 carrots, sliced
½ pound (approximately 2 cups) diced turnips
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
1-1½ cups finely sliced kale leaves
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine lentils, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, turnips, and garlic powder in a medium or large saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 40 minutes or until lentils are

nearly soft. Add kale and continue to simmer until kale is soft. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Total calories per serving: 153 Fat: 1 gram
Carbohydrates: 30 grams Protein: 10 grams
Sodium: 394 milligrams Fiber: 11 grams

MASHED CELERIAC-POTATOES WITH ROASTED GARLIC

(Serves 4-6)

This recipe is a great way to introduce celeriac to family and friends.

1 head garlic
1 Tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided
1 medium-sized celeriac root, peeled and cut into small chunks
¾ pound washed unpeeled potatoes, cut roughly into small chunks
¼ cup soy or rice milk
1½ teaspoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Slice off the top of the garlic head so that the top is flat and cloves are exposed. Place garlic on a piece of aluminum foil and drizzle 1 teaspoon of olive oil over the head. Wrap in foil and bake for 45 minutes or until head is very soft. Remove garlic from oven.

While garlic bakes, steam celeriac and potatoes until soft, approximately 10 minutes. Place celeriac and potatoes in a medium-sized bowl. Add 1 Tablespoon olive oil, soy or rice milk, and lemon juice, and mash to combine. Squeeze garlic into the mixture and blend with salt and pepper to taste.

Total calories per serving: 143 Fat: 5 grams
Carbohydrates: 23 grams Protein: 5 grams
Sodium: 63 milligrams Fiber: 4 grams

JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE WITH CARAMELIZED ONIONS

(Serves 4-6)

Caramelized onions lend sweet flavors to Jerusalem artichokes. You can also use rutabagas or parsnips in this recipe.

- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 Tablespoon oil
- 1 pound Jerusalem artichokes, sliced and placed in water with a little lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, pressed
- 1 Tablespoon granulated vegan sweetener, like Florida Crystals
- ¼ cup water
- 1 Tablespoon nonhydrogenated vegan margarine
- 1½ Tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- Salt and pepper to taste

Heat a heavy skillet over medium heat. When skillet is hot, add onions and drizzle oil over the top. Reduce heat to low. Cover and sweat the onions until soft and slightly golden. This may take up to 10 minutes.

Drain Jerusalem artichokes. Stir Jerusalem artichokes and garlic into onions and sprinkle with sweetener. Stir and cook for

approximately 30 seconds. Add water. Cover and cook until Jerusalem artichokes are tender, approximately 5-10 minutes. Remove cover and cook until liquid disappears.

Stir in margarine and drizzle with lemon juice. Sprinkle with lemon zest, stir, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Total calories per serving: 169 Fat: 6 grams
Carbohydrates: 27 grams Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 37 milligrams Fiber: 3 grams

CURRIED PARSNIP SOUP

(Serves 4)

Substitute turnips, carrots, or potatoes in this soup, or use a combination of root vegetables.

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 Tablespoon oil
- 1 Tablespoon curry powder
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- 5 cups vegetable stock or water
- 3 cups sliced parsnips
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar
- 1 cup soy or rice milk
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- Salt to taste

Heat a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add onions and oil. Stir and

cook until onions are transparent. Blend in curry powder and cumin and then stir in vegetable stock. Add parsnips and cook on medium heat until soft, approximately 15 minutes.

While parsnips cook, mix lemon zest, lemon juice, and agave nectar with soy or rice milk. Add to parsnips.

Remove approximately 1½ cups of parsnips-onions mixture and blend it in a blender or food processor. Return creamy mixture to soup and add cayenne and salt to taste.

Total calories per serving: 186 Fat: 6 grams
Carbohydrates: 28 grams Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 744 milligrams Fiber: 7 grams

SWEET POTATO DIP

(Serves 4)

**Pictured on the cover. This is a sweet and savory dip. I like to slice warm pita bread and then spread the dip on the pita triangles. If you don't have miso, use salt to taste.*

- 1 large baked sweet potato, peeled
- 2 Tablespoons almond butter
- 1½ Tablespoons rice syrup
- 1 Tablespoon white miso
- Handful of finely chopped red, yellow, or green peppers
- Dash of cayenne

Mash sweet potatoes and blend with almond butter, rice syrup, and miso. Stir in peppers and cayenne.

Total calories per serving: 118 Fat: 5 grams
Carbohydrates: 17 grams Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 175 milligrams Fiber: 2 grams

Debra Daniels-Zeller is a frequent contributor to *Vegetarian Journal*. She wrote "Dried Fruit: Treasures to Savor All Year Round" for Issue 3, 2008.





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Blender Meals

By Chef Nancy Berkoff, RD, EdD, CCE

ARE YOU EVER IN SUCH A RUSH THAT YOU DON'T have time to chew your food? Then, your blender may hold the answer to fast but tasty dining options.

BREAKFAST

Everyone should start the day off with a healthy meal, but you have better things to do than open cans, chop veggies, or measure in the midst of the morning rush! Instead, build a meal-in-a-cup the night before. Load the blender or food processor canister with fresh or frozen fruit, tofu, plain or fruit soy yogurt, applesauce, fruit juice,.... You get the picture. Combine in the blender canister, and leave it in the refrigerator overnight. Then, just blend away in the morning for a refreshing start to your day.

LUNCH OR DINNER

How about a hearty soup? Here are some ideas for mix-and-match soups made with ingredients from the pantry and/or refrigerator:

- **Split Pea and Lentil** — Add canned or leftover cooked lentils to canned vegan split pea soup and dilute according to package directions, using soft silken tofu for a really thick soup or soymilk for a slightly thinner soup. For a really creamy soup, purée all the ingredients. If you like, toss in some soy crumbles or chopped onions.
- **Fast Tomato-Potato Chowder** — Scoop leftover mashed potatoes into a blender. Add some pre-made vegan tomato soup, such as the aseptic 'boxed' vegan soups from Imagine and Pacific brands, and blend until smooth. Pour into a container or mug and add your ingredients of choice. For a spicy flavor, stir in salsa. If you like your soup chewy, add drained, canned mixed vegetables or sliced mushrooms. You can season with onion, garlic, or curry powder; white pepper; parsley flakes; or nutritional yeast.
To make a tomato-potato-corn chowder, add some canned creamed corn (which is non-dairy when it consists of smashed corn thickened with cornstarch) and some drained canned or leftover cooked corn to your tomato-potato chowder.
- **Purée Mongole** — This is a classic soup made from tomatoes and split peas. Combine canned vegan tomato soup and canned vegan split pea soup in a blender, and add soft silken tofu or soymilk for desired texture. If taking on the go, pour into a travel mug or canister. Otherwise, non-reactive serving bowls will work just fine. Then, add drained, canned diced tomatoes or some diced fresh tomatoes, and voilà!
- **Five-Bean Soup** — A great way to use up those leftover beans! Add five types of cooked beans—your choice—to canned or thawed frozen vegetables or vegan minestrone soup and blend until the mixture is still just a bit chunky. If you like, add leftover cooked pasta to the soup after puréeing. Dilute with carrot juice or tomato juice.
- **Black Bean Soup** — Combine canned black beans with canned or thawed frozen vegetable soup. Add a small amount of soft silken tofu or vegan sour cream to start. (You can always add more as you go on!) Purée some of the soup and recombine with the portion that hasn't been puréed. Or purée the entire pot to achieve a smooth texture.
- **Hot Gazpacho** — Combine canned vegan tomato soup with prepared salsa. Dilute with tomato juice or vegetable cocktail juice. For seasoning, you can add lemon or lime juice, a small amount of vinegar, and onion and garlic powder for flavor.

- **Cream of Green** — Allow a package of frozen spinach to thaw, or use leftover chopped, cooked kale or collard greens. (This recipe does not work well with fresh spinach.) Drain the greens well and add to the blender. Add soft silken tofu, mashed potatoes, or vegan sour cream and purée. Season with garlic or onion powder or nutritional yeast. If you like, you can add in some shredded vegan cheddar cheese, which will melt and add texture when heated.
- **Broccoli or Cauliflower Cheddar Soup** — Another good way to use leftovers! Place cooked broccoli or cauliflower into a blender and then add mashed potatoes, soft silken tofu, or soymilk. Blend for a short time, but leave the mixture chunky. You may want to blend in some ripe avocado as well, if you like.

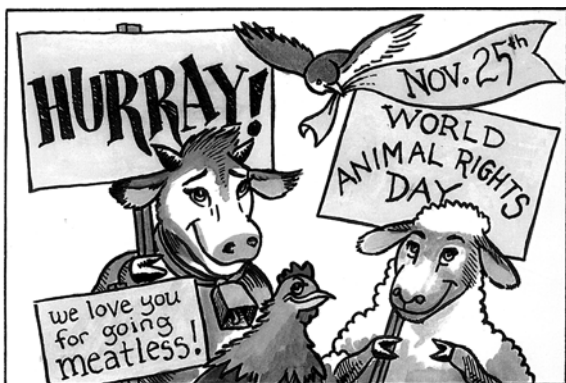
For lunch, pour one of the thicker soups above into a microwave-safe mug or canister. Then, toss an apple or orange and a bag of pretzels into your lunch box, knapsack, or briefcase, and you've got a meal ready to heat and eat. As for dinner, just blend, heat, and serve!

DESSERT

If your mood is calling for sweet rather than savory, you can make a nutritious dessert or snack from any number of sweet ingredients that you have on hand. Here are some suggestions for tasty, blender-friendly combinations:

- **Creamy Smooth** — Fruit-flavored soy yogurt, rice milk, bananas, nutritional yeast, thawed orange juice concentrate, and drained canned apricots.
- **Ginger-Peachy** — Fresh or frozen peaches, pineapple or orange juice, carrot juice, a splash of maple syrup, and a dash of ginger.
- **Harvest Apple** — Soft silken tofu or soy yogurt, unsweetened applesauce, thawed apple juice concentrate, rice milk, and a sprinkle of cinnamon.
- **Potassium Plus** — Carrot juice, orange juice, half of a banana, drained canned pineapple tidbits, and vegan sour cream.
- **Sunny** — Orange juice, pineapple juice, sliced banana, frozen strawberries, and wheat germ.

Don't Forget! November 25 is World Animal Rights Day!



Postcard image courtesy of Chandru Mahtami
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Bequests

The VRG depends on the generous contributions of our members and supporters to continue our educational projects. Though the world may not become vegetarian in our lifetimes, we realize that we are planning and working for future generations.

- ◆ Your will and life insurance policies enable you to protect your family and also to provide a way to give long-lasting support to causes in which you believe. Naming The VRG in your will or life insurance policy will enable us to increase our work for vegetarianism.
- ◆ The VRG is a tax-exempt organization. Bequests are tax-deductible for federal estate tax purposes.
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Who's the Veggie-Friendliest of Them All?

The Top Restaurant Chains for Vegetarians From The Vegetarian Resource Group

SOME VEGETARIANS—IN AN ATTEMPT TO BE '100% safe'—may make the decision to never eat out or to eat only in vegetarian restaurants. However, most vegetarians want to patronize chains that attempt to meet their needs, even though it's possible for mistakes to be made at such establishments.

Recently, The Vegetarian Resource Group looked at offerings from the 400 largest restaurant chains in the United States. The establishments in this article appeared to make the best effort (if not always perfect) at serving vegetarians of diverse needs. If you would like to vote on **your** favorite restaurant chain for vegetarians, go to <www.vrg.org>. Also, you can find more than 2,000 veggie-friendly restaurants listed at our website.

ABOUT OUR FINDINGS

When The VRG started this project, we expected to have more Italian restaurants on the list. Certainly, numerous vegetarians eat pasta and pizza, and many entrants in our college scholarship and essay contests report eating at Italian chains. However, the listings of ingredients tended to be unclear, and it appeared that cheeses sometimes contained animal rennet.

It's unfortunate to see that salad bars in fast food chains are harder to find than they used to be. On a positive note, though, Mexican restaurants, which in the past often had lard in their food, now tend to offer meatless beans. Also, we were excited to see that Pei Wei and P.F. Chang's label their items as vegetarian. This makes life easier for people who wouldn't know if Chinese restaurants included chicken broth or fish sauce in their meals.

In the future, we hope more businesses offer the number of vegetarian and vegan options that Fresh Choice and Souplantation/Sweet Tomatoes serve. With a little tweaking of their menus, several bread and bagel places could make our next top restaurant chains list. We look forward to even more options and clearer

labeling for the growing number of people interested in vegetarian food. Still, in the end, restaurants will offer what their clientele will continue to support and buy.

And now, we present (in alphabetical order) the top vegetarian-friendly restaurants in the United States selected from the 400 largest chains.

CHIPOTLE (www.chipotle.com)

Locations: Approximately 289 restaurants somewhat scattered throughout the U.S.

Vegetarian Menu Items: Black Bean Taco, Fajita Burrito, Guacamole, Salads, Salsa and Chips, Vegetarian Black Bean Burrito

More About Chipotle: Chipotle lists on their website which menu items are vegetarian. They do not use animal rennet in their cheeses. Their guacamole does not contain gelatin or dairy, and their sour cream does not contain gelatin. There is no L-cysteine in the company's bread products. The black beans are animal-free, but the pinto beans are prepared with bacon. The rice, soft flour tortilla, and corn shell are free of animal products.

FRESH CHOICE (www.freshchoice.com)

Locations: California, Texas, and Washington State

List of Menu Items That Fresh Choice Calls "Vegan Vegetarian":

- **Specialty Salads:** Cool Napa Crunch, Fuji Apple & Papaya Wasabi Toss, Spinach Dijon, Strawberry Fields Spinach, Winter Mixed Greens w/Maple Orange Vinaigrette
- **Prepared Salads:** Asian Broccoli Slaw, Asian Edamame & Pasta, Asian Slaw (Fat-Free), Black Bean Fresca, Chili-Lime Fiesta Bean (Low-Fat), Chipotle Hummus, Creamy Dijon Potato (Fat-Free), Creole Corn & Black-Eyed Pea, Crisp Apple Pineapple (Fat-Free), Crunchy Quinoa, Edamame & Black-Eyed Peas, Fresh Hot Smokey Salsa (Low-Fat), Fresh

Vegetable Medley, Ginger Soy Long Noodle, Italian Tomato & Cucumber (Fat-Free), Italian Vegetable Medley (Low-Fat), Jicama Citrus (Low-Fat), Jumpin' Beans (Low-Fat), Lemon Garlic Pasta (Low-Fat), Madras Curried Rice (Low-Fat), Marinated Cucumber (Fat-Free), Marinated Sesame Cucumber (Low-Fat), Moroccan Lentil, No Fry Stir-Fry Rice, Roasted Garlic Basil Potato, Roasted Vegetable, Salsa Fresca (Fat-Free), Summer Garden Pasta (Fat-Free), Tabbouleh, Thai Shredded Slaw (Low-Fat), Toasted Couscous w/Garden Vegetables, Wild Rice & Cranberry, Zesty Cucumber & Tomato

- **Prepared Seasonal Vegetables:** Balsamic Oven-Roasted Vegetables, Corn (Low-Fat), Fresh Summer Italian Bruschetta, Ginger Roasted Sesame Carrots, Pineapple Papaya Salsa (Fat-Free), Roasted Yukon Gold Potato, Squash Ratatouille (Fat-Free)
- **Soups:** Black Beans Sante Fe (Low-Fat), Carrot Ginger (Fat-Free), Confetti Bean Chili (Low-Fat), Garden Bean Stew (Low-Fat), Greek Artichoke & Lemon Rice (Low-Fat), Harvest Vegetable (Fat-Free), Hearty Garden Vegetable Barley (Low-Fat), Hearty Vegetable (Fat-Free), Mushroom Bean & Barley (Low-Fat), Pho Noodle Bowl (Low-Fat), Ratatouille Stew (Fat-Free), Red Bean Chili (Low-Fat), Roasted Vegetable & Butternut Squash Medley (Low-Fat), Rustic Country Vegetable (Low-Fat), Savory Bean (Low-Fat), Southern Lentil (Low-Fat), Spicy Vegetable Gumbo (Low-Fat), Summer Squash (Fat-Free), Thai Coconut Ginger, Tomato Basil Florentine (Fat-Free), Tuscan White Bean & Vegetable (Low-Fat), Vegetable Barley (Fat-Free), Vegetable Minestrone (Low-Fat), Vegetarian Vegetable (Fat-Free)
- **Pasta & Rice:** Asian Vegetable Medley (Fat-Free), Baked Potato (Fat-Free), Pomodoro Sauce (Fat-Free), Spicy Thai Noodles w/Marinated Tofu (Low-Fat), Peking Rice, Vegetarian Jambalaya (Low-Fat), White Rice (Fat-Free)

More About Fresh Choice: Fresh Choice said it doesn't claim to be a vegetarian restaurant, but its 50-foot salad bar and soup arcade is conducive to offering many vegetarian items, including tofu. They use the term 'vegetarian' since it's commonly understood by the general population. The word appears on signage above the dishes. The ingredient statements are also posted above the dishes.

There is no meat in vegetarian items, but there could be eggs and dairy. Vegan items do not contain meat, eggs, or dairy. There is animal rennet in cheeses

(especially cheddar, Jack, and mozzarella), and that's why there is no vegetarian pizza. A spokesperson for the company said, if their cheeses contain animal rennet, they will not label the item as vegetarian.

A representative said the word 'vegetarian' has been used since the company's beginning almost 20 years ago. At that time, they had tabbouleh and couscous salads, but they weren't very popular. Now, since conventional stores have made them popular and have educated the public about them, Fresh Choice is offering them more and more.

The term 'vegan' was introduced maybe 15 years ago. Fresh Choice said, "Vegans are the most vocal" to the company about what they want in a restaurant, and they have tried to meet their requests and expectations. Fresh Choice is exploring adding more vegan items. Since we started looking at their list, we noticed several "new" vegan dishes with quinoa and couscous on the menu.

The company is selling more locally grown and local organic produce as fresh and in prepared salads. However, because organic laws are so strict as to how organic foods must be displayed—especially when sold next to non-organic foods—it would be difficult to market the foods as 'organic,' and it would be cost-prohibitive to convert every offering on their entire menu to organic.

Every item won't be available at every location. All store locations have their own listing on the website, and those are the most current menus. Texas and Washington have their own menus, which differ from the menus at California locations.

There is no designated place in the kitchen just for vegetarian/vegan preparation apart from meat products, but there is proper sanitation between uses.

MOE'S SOUTHWEST GRILL

(www.moes.com)

Locations: Scattered through approximately 34 states but not in California or the Northwest

Menu Items at Moe's That the Chain Notes as Vegetarian: Art Vandalay Burrito, Instant Friend Quesadilla, Personal Trainer Salad, Ruprict Nachos, Super Kingpin Quesadilla, Unanimous Decision Taco

More About Moe's Southwest Grill: This report is based on information from the Research & Development Department at Moe's. All foods at Moe's that are labeled vegetarian are customizable. This means that the menu items can be ordered without one or more

components. Tofu is not listed in the items specifically labeled as 'vegetarian.' It can be included in any menu item upon request and substituted for any meat product.

Moe's stated that the beans and rice contain no animal products, and they are prepared separately from meat products. All burritos, tacos, and quesadillas come with the patron's choice of black or pinto beans. The rice at Moe's is made with vegetable stock. The sautéed vegetables are prepared on a grill separate from meat products. The tofu is prepared on the same grill where the vegetables are prepared. The tofu does not contain any animal products, but it is marinated in the "steak marinade" that does not contain any meat products.

Animal rennet is not used in any of the cheeses at Moe's, and neither the guacamole nor the sour cream contains gelatin. None of the salsas or sauces at Moe's contains animal ingredients. Moe's R&D said that none of the bread products, including the chips, contains animal-derived ingredients. However, since their pans are on a 'line,' the chain can't control cross-contamination by patrons (i.e., drippings of ingredients into other pans as people are serving themselves).

NOODLES & COMPANY

(www.noodles.com)

Locations: Scattered through approximately 17 states

Menu Items That Noodles & Company Called

Vegetarian When Asked: Bangkok Curry, Buttered Noodles (cheese omitted), Chinese Chop Salad, House Marinara (cheese omitted), Indonesian Peanut Sauté, Japanese Pan Noodles (with vegetables), Penne Rosa, Thai Curry Soup, Whole Grain Tuscan Linguine (cheese omitted)

More About Noodles & Company: At Noodles & Company, vegetable broth is used to sauté vegetables and tofu, and organic tofu may be added to any dish. Each dish is custom made to order, when ordered. This "means that each dish is prepared specifically for each guest in its respective bowl or sauté pan. The tofu is tossed into a sauté pan when added to a noodle dish, soup, or salad."

However, Noodles & Company does not label specific dishes as 'vegetarian.' Also, they said they do not make any claims about being vegan or having vegan dishes "because of the controversy amongst the vegan community around the use of certain ingredients like sugar."

The company's Mushroom Stroganoff and its The Med Salad both contain sour cream with gelatin in it.

They are actually making adjustments to their recipes now to include vegetarian sour cream. All of their restaurants should be providing the vegetarian version in the future. Their Pad Thai contains fish sauce and oyster sauce. Cheese may or may not contain animal rennet; not enough customers have voiced a preference. Cheese can be omitted from most dishes, though not from the pesto. The Asparagus Linguine is a seasonal offering that can be ordered without the cheese. The sauce contains dairy and wine.

Noodles & Company's executive chef identified himself as a vegetarian and said he wanted to start a restaurant where his family could eat vegetarian meals.

PEI WEI ASIAN DINER (www.peiwei.com)

Locations: Approximately 77 restaurants

Menu Items That Pei Wei Noted as Vegetarian on Its Menu: Blazing Noodles, Edamame, Honey Seared Signature Dish, Pei Wei Spring Rolls, Soba Miso Rice Bowl, Spicy Korean Signature Dish, Sweet & Sour Signature Dish, Thai Dynamite Signature Dish, Teriyaki Bowl

More About Pei Wei: Pei Wei's menu states which dishes are vegetarian when ordered with the tofu and vegetables option. **Note:** Pei Wei's vegetarian items have a vegetarian icon next to the dish. If an option doesn't have an icon, the dish may contain an animal-derived ingredient, such as shrimp paste.

Pei Wei's rice is prepared separately from all other foods and is free of animal ingredients. The Pad Thai is not listed as 'vegetarian.' This dish does not contain meat, fish, or fowl when purchased as is, but it is not listed as vegetarian because it contains egg.

Even though Pei Wei's cookware is washed and sanitized, the company does not use the word 'vegan' on its menu since cookware may be used for meat one day and then for tofu the next day.

P.F. CHANG'S CHINA BISTRO

(www.pfchangs.com)

Locations: Approximately 131 locations

Menu Items Labeled as Vegetarian by the Chain:

- **Appetizers:** Chang's Vegetarian Lettuce Wraps, Harvest Spring Rolls
- **Entrées:** Buddha's Feast (steamed), Buddha's Feast (stir-fried), Coconut Curry Vegetables, Stir-Fried Eggplant, Vegetarian Ma Po Tofu, Vegetable Chow Fun

- **Sides:** Garlic Snap Peas, Shanghai Cucumber, Sichuan-Style Asparagus, Spicy Green Beans, Spinach Stir-Fried with Garlic

More About P.F. Chang's: P.F. Chang's defines 'vegetarian' as containing no animal products, including no eggs or dairy. P.F. Chang's offers vegetable dumplings (steamed and pan-fried) that contain eggs, and they are not listed as 'vegetarian' for this reason. The company said they are stricter than most others in their definitions. Since there are "shades of gray" in the definitions of 'vegetarian' and 'vegan,' they wanted to keep it simple for everyone and choose to just use the word 'vegetarian.' The company uses white sugar and doesn't claim to be vegan.

Tofu is prepared as a vegetable in either vegetable stock or vegetable oil with nothing added that is non-vegetable. P.F. Chang's said its five-spice bean curd is firmer and has more flavor than its silken tofu. When requested, the chain can substitute crispy silken tofu for five-spice bean curd (and vice versa) in any dish. Also, patrons can request tofu as a substitute for meat in the meat dishes listed on the menu.

P.F. Chang's uses mushroom oyster sauces in some dishes, but these are vegetarian. Forty percent of their non-vegetarian entrées have a chicken base. Their Lo Mein contains animal products, but they are working on a vegetarian sauce for lo mein, chow mein, and pan-fried noodle dishes to add to the menu in the future.

All entrées at P.F. Chang's are served with a choice of steamed brown or white rice. The rice is prepared separately from all meat products with nothing non-vegetable added.

The company's woks are cleaned between uses. There are color-coded cutting boards and separate cleavers to keep meat apart from vegetables. Also, there are separate areas in the kitchen for each food. The food is served "in a line" in the stores. There are four to five woks in a line. The line now contains all vegetable broth.

P.F. Chang's states they are flexible and strive to accommodate everyone and customize dishes made to order.

QDOBA MEXICAN GRILL

(www.qdoba.com)

Locations: Approximately 250 restaurants throughout the United States

List of Menu Items That Qdoba Labels as Vegetarian:

Grilled Vegetable Burrito (under Signature Burritos), Tortilla Soup, Vegetarian Burrito, Vegetarian Taco Salad, Vegetarian Taco

More About Qdoba: Qdoba said that their protocol is to have designated dishes for all food preparation (cutting boards, utensils, pans, pots, etc.) that are thoroughly cleaned every day and used for the same

NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

VRG IN THE NEWS

VRG Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, was interviewed for an article about school lunches for *Vegetarian Voice* magazine and about raw foods diets for the University of Massachusetts' *Daily Collegian* student newspaper. She also spoke about the blood type diet and about the Vegetarian Nutrition Congress during a 20-minute slot on the *For the Love of Produce* radio show. In addition, Reed recently authored a chapter on pediatric vegetarianism for a textbook titled *Life Cycle Nutrition: An Evidence-Based Approach*, which will be published by Jones and Bartlett in 2009.

VRG OUTREACH

The 34th Vegetarian Summerfest, hosted by the North American Vegetarian Society, was held in Johnstown, PA, June 18-22. VRG sponsored an information table at the event. VRG Nutrition Advisor Suzanne Havala Hobbs, DrPH, RD, led sessions on raw foods diets, careers in nutrition, and understanding the role of interest groups in food and nutrition advocacy. VRG Co-Coordinator Charles Stahler and Debra Wasserman presented sessions called "Media Outreach for Quiet People" and "Raising Vegetarian Kids in a Non-Vegetarian World." The conference was attended by 600 people from across the U.S. and Canada.

purpose the following day. The only pans that do rotate (cleaned thoroughly between uses) are the serving pans (used to bring food out to the serving area from the kitchen).

The company said, “The grilled vegetables are prepared on the same grill that is used for meat products; however, they are never prepared at the same time.” Fajita veggies are cooked on the stovetop. The beans and the rice are prepared separately from meat products. Qdoba said that there are no animal-derived ingredients in either the beans or the rice. The company indicated that their tortillas are free of animal ingredients and that none of their bread products, including chips, contains animal ingredients. (We did not ask specifically about L-cysteine.) The fryer oil is used only for frying chips or salad bowls. No meat/egg products are cooked in the same oil.

Qdoba uses a pan release spray that contains artificial butter flavor, but it does not contain animal or dairy components. The company said, “The likelihood that our cheese contains animal-sourced rennet is highly unlikely. However, a few of our suppliers cannot guarantee that our product does not come in contact with trace amounts of animal-based rennet.” There is no gelatin in either the sour cream or the guacamole.

Recipe formulations are considered standard at all Qdoba restaurants. The company noted, “There can be variations in some items, but this would not interfere with the items considered vegetarian.... There may be differences in suppliers; however, all suppliers must meet a standard specification.”

Qdoba restaurants are set up so that patrons build their meals as they go along a serving area, so it is easy to leave certain components off their menu items.

SOUPLANTATION and SWEET TOMATOES (www.souplantation.com)

Locations: Approximately 15 states but concentrated in Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, and Texas

Menu Items That Souplantation and Sweet Tomatoes Call Vegan:

- **Tossed Salads:** Fields of Green w/Citrus Vinaigrette, Mandarin Spinach w/Caramelized Walnuts, Strawberry Fields w/Caramelized Walnuts, Thai Peanut & Red Pepper, Thai Udon & Peanut
- **Prepared Salads:** Aunt Doris’ Red Pepper Slaw (Fat-Free), Baja Bean and Cilantro (Low-Fat), Dijon Potato w/Garlic Dill Vinaigrette, Italian White Bean, Lemon Rice w/Cashews, Mandarin Noodles

w/Broccoli (Low-Fat), Mandarin Shells with Almonds (Low-Fat), Roasted Potato w/Chipotle Chile, Spicy Southwestern Pasta (Low-Fat), Summer Barley w/Black Beans (Low-Fat), Sweet and Sour Broccoli Slaw (Low-Fat), Sweet Marinated Vegetables (Fat-Free), Tabouli, Thai Citrus & Brown Rice, Three Bean Marinade, Tomato Cucumber Marinade

- **Soups:** Classical Minestrone (Low-Fat), India Lentil (Low-Fat), Ratatouille (Fat-Free), Santa Fe Black Bean (Low-Fat), Sweet Tomato Onion (Low-Fat), Vegetarian Harvest
- **Hot Pastas & Kitchen Favorites:** Salsa de Lupe (Fat-Free), Sautéed Balsamic Vegetables

In addition, Souplantation/Sweet Tomatoes lists 83 vegetarian items on their website.

More About Souplantation and Sweet Tomatoes: Souplantation has “signs stating ‘vegetarian,’ ‘vegan,’ or ‘non-vegetarian’” posted above each menu item in the locations. The company also has a brochure available in its restaurants that lists the most commonly served menu items and provides nutritional information. The brochure contains vegetarian, vegan, and non-vegetarian labels for many items and defines the terms in the following ways:

“Vegetarian: Vegetarian items may contain dairy or eggs, but no meat or meat products.”

“Vegan: Vegan items are made up of all plant-based foods and excludes any animal products.”

On the brochure’s last page, it states, “Complete ingredient listings are available for viewing upon request.” However, Souplantation said that the product information pages do not contain complete microingredient information.

“In general,” the rennet used in cheeses is “synthetic,” but Souplantation can’t guarantee this in all cases.

Honey is not used in the company’s vegan offerings. Vegan foods are prepared separately from other foods. Dishes used for replenishing food at the buffet are cleaned between uses but could be used for meat one day and then for vegetables the next.

In general, most Souplantation and Sweet Tomatoes locations are uniform in their standards, but there could be a minimal amount of variation. In emergency situations, the chain would prefer individual restaurants use supplies on hand rather than going to a local supplier.

Souplantation is in its 30th year. There are 107 stores. They do not define themselves as vegetarian or healthy, but they state that they cater to many types of customers.

TACO DEL MAR (www.tacodelmar.com)

Locations: 270 stores throughout the United States

Menu Items That Taco Del Mar Labels as Vegan:

Mondo Vegan (tortilla, guacamole, rice, beans, lettuce, and salsa), Mondito Vegan (tortilla, guacamole, rice, beans, lettuce, and salsa)

Menu Items That Taco Del Mar Labels as Vegetarian:

Cheese Quesadilla, Kid's Burrito, Kid's Quesadilla, Mondo Veggie, Mondito Veggie, Mondo Veggie Burrito, Mondito Veggie Burrito, Super Nacho

More About Taco Del Mar: Taco Del Mar steams their long-grain rice apart from meat products, and their rice does not contain animal ingredients. This chain offers black, pinto, and refried beans, none of which contains lard. Their guacamole and sour cream do not contain gelatin, and there is no animal rennet in their Jack cheese. Their tortillas do not contain whey.

Taco Del Mar's enchilada sauce used to contain fish extract, but it no longer does. This may not be noted in all of their literature.

The company usually has one prep table in the back kitchen and trains its team members and franchisees to "prep 'like' items at one time/sanitize the work surface/prepare next item."

There are differences in both ingredients and suppliers between the United States and Canada. Also, there will be regional menu variations.

OTHER NOTABLE CHAINS

With some clarifications/modifications, these restaurants are future contenders for this list.

Bakers Drive Thru (www.bakersdrivethru.com), which serves Mexican and American cuisine at 36 locations in California, features a separate vegetarian section on their website and even offers TVP in some of their dishes. However, as of this writing, we were unable to receive specific answers to some questions that vegetarians may have.

Taco Bell (www.tacobell.com) is a convenient restaurant that can be found almost anywhere in the United States and has been

a lifesaver for many traveling vegetarians. They will easily serve bean burritos and tacos without the cheese (Fresco Menu). Also, the company has stated and has clearly indicated on its website that there is no lard in the beans. However, there is some concern and/or confusion because, periodically, local employees have told their patrons that the beans are not vegetarian.

Uno Chicago Grill (www.unos.com) has a separate vegetarian section on their website and an array of options, such as a veggie burger (not vegan), roasted vegetables, pizza with spinach, and soups.

It should be noted that those who care about cheese containing animal rennet should make sure to order pizza crusts that have not been sprinkled with cheese.

NOTE: This article is based on company statements. It is impossible to be 100 percent sure about a statement, information and suppliers can change, and mistakes can be made. Please be practical, employ common sense, remember that being vegetarian is to make a kinder world, and use your own best judgment about what is suitable for you.

Special thanks to VRG Restaurant Guide and Membership Manager Sonja Helman, VRG Dietetic Intern Melanie Campbell, VRG Co-Coordinator Charles Stahler, and VRG Research Director Jeanne Yacoubou for their contributions to this article.



SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

By Reed Mangels,
PhD, RD, FADA

A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

Vegan Diet Offers Health Benefits

Dean Ornish, MD, is known for his research using a very lowfat, near-vegan diet and other lifestyle modifications to reverse heart disease. He is currently investigating whether similar dietary and lifestyle changes can also be used by men with early-stage prostate cancer. In 2006, VRG reported about his research (available online at <www.vrg.org/journal/vj2006issue2/vj2006issue2sciupdate.htm>), which found his study diet to be nutritionally adequate.

Ornish and co-investigators have recently taken this research a step farther. They have examined whether a very lowfat, near-vegan diet offers health advantages. They studied 85 men around age 65 with early-stage prostate cancer. Study participants were divided into two groups. One group, called the Intervention Group, was asked to eat a very lowfat (10 percent of calories from fat) vegan diet supplemented with soy protein, to get moderate exercise, and to participate in a stress management program. The other group, the Control Group, received their usual level of care from their physicians. The groups' dietary intakes were compared. Although the Intervention Group was told to eat a vegan diet, study records show that they had some minor infractions and that they received supplementary fish oil; therefore, their diet can most accurately be described as a near-vegan diet. Over the year of the study, the Intervention Group nearly doubled their fiber intake and reduced their fat intake by 60 percent and their saturated fat intake by 75 percent. They also markedly increased their intake of most vitamins and minerals, including several like folate and calcium that play a role in reduced risk of heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, and other chronic diseases. Similar changes were not seen in the Control Group, who continued eating their usual diet. These results suggest that a very lowfat vegan (or near-vegan) diet can be useful in reducing intake of unhealthy dietary components like saturated fat and cholesterol and in increasing intake of components that can reduce the risk of a number of chronic diseases, including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

Dewell A, Weidner G, Sumner MD, et al. 2008.

A very-low-fat vegan diet increases intake of protective dietary factors and decreases intake of pathogenic dietary factors. *J Am Diet Assoc* 108:347-56.

More Evidence That Protein From Dairy Products May Increase the Risk of Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is a common cancer. Approximately one man out of six will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in his lifetime. While most men don't die from prostate cancer, it is the third most common cause of cancer deaths in men. Active research is focusing on ways to reduce the incidence of prostate cancer. One key question is whether diet plays a role in the development of prostate cancer. A recent study adds to the accumulated evidence that it does. This study involved more than 142,000 men from 19 European countries. The men were asked about their diets and their health histories and were studied for a number of years. No association was found between meat, fish, or egg consumption or between total protein intake and prostate cancer in this large study. However, protein from dairy foods was significantly associated with an increased risk of prostate cancer. Total dietary calcium intake and calcium intake from dairy products were also associated with an increased risk, although there was no association between non-dairy sources of calcium and risk of prostate cancer. These results suggest that it is not calcium per se that is increasing the risk of prostate cancer but some other component of dairy foods. These results add to the evidence from other studies suggesting that dairy products are associated with increased risk of prostate cancer.

Allen NE, Key TJ, Appleby PN, et al. 2008. Animal foods, protein, calcium and prostate cancer risk: the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition. *Br J Cancer* 90:1574-81.

Avoiding Gout

Have you ever seen a painting of a nobleman with his bandaged foot propped up on a footstool? Chances are that he was suffering from gout, a common, painful form of arthritis. Gout is still a problem today and most commonly occurs among men over age 40. Close to 3 million American men have gout. Where genetics can certainly play a role in determining one's risk for gout, other more controllable factors are also important.

A recent study examined close to 29,000 healthy, physically active male runners to see which factors affected their risk of having gout. One factor that was identified was meat consumption; even among this relatively healthy group, men eating the most meat had the highest risk of developing gout. Other factors that increased risk of gout included higher alcohol intake, lower fruit intake, being overweight or obese, and being less physically active. It looks like reducing risk of gout is another reason for becoming vegetarian.

Williams PT. 2008. Effects of diet, physical activity and performance, and body weight on incident gout in ostensibly healthy, vigorously active men. *Am J Clin Nutr* 87:1480-87.

Association Found Between Cured Meat and Increased Risk of COPD

COPD is the abbreviation for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a condition that makes it hard to breathe. Both chronic bronchitis and emphysema are types of COPD, the fourth-leading cause of death in the United States. Smokers are especially likely to develop COPD. A recent study looked at whether dietary factors also play a role.

Cured meats like bacon, hot dogs, and deli meats contain nitrites, which are added as preservatives. Nitrites, which are also present in tobacco smoke, can damage lung tissue. Frequent consumption of cured meats containing nitrites could potentially cause damage to the lungs. (Of course, if you're choosing vegetarian products such as veggie bacon, dogs, and deli slices, you don't have to worry about nitrites since these foods don't contain them.)

Epidemiologists looked at more than 71,000 registered nurses and found that those who consumed cured meats most frequently were most likely to have COPD. Those at lowest risk for COPD were women who

never smoked and who rarely or never ate cured meat; those at highest risk were current smokers who ate four or more servings of cured meat a week. You might guess that smokers were more likely to eat cured meats. They were, but the increased risk of COPD in women who ate cured meat was seen even when adjustments were made for smoking. Similar results were seen in an earlier study of male health professionals done by the same researchers. This study provides one more reason to choose a vegetarian diet (and to stop or never start smoking).

Jiang R, Camargo Jr CA, Varraso R, et al. 2008. Consumption of cured meats and prospective risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in women. *Am J Clin Nutr* 87:1002-1008.

Is There a Connection Between Poor Diet and Higher Stress Levels?

Stress and anxiety are often seen as a part of today's rapid pace. In some cases, mild stress can lead to improved performance. However, enduring constant stress and anxiety can be debilitating and increase risk for chronic diseases like heart disease.

Do dietary factors play a role in stress? That's the question researchers from Greece asked when they studied close to 1,000 men and women. Subjects of this small study were asked questions about their diet and their current level of anxiety; nervousness and worry was assessed. Among women, those who described themselves as less anxious ate less red meat and fewer sweets than women who described themselves as more anxious. The less anxious women were more likely to eat a vegetarian or near-vegetarian diet. Less anxious men also tended to eat a healthier diet. The researchers speculate that during times of stress, people are more likely to choose convenient and familiar foods like meat, potatoes, and soft drinks. One question that is raised by this study is whether a more vegetarian-like diet contributed to reduced feelings of anxiety and stress rather than simply being the result of less anxiety and stress.

Yannakoulia M, Panagiotakos DB, Pitsavos C, et al. Eating habits in relations to anxiety symptoms among apparently healthy adults: A pattern analysis from the ATTICA Study. *Appetite* 2008 Apr 8. [Epub ahead of print].

Patra

Spicy Green and Gold

By Chef Nancy Berkoff, RD, EdD, CCE

GUJARATI CUISINE IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER INDIAN cuisine. It has an amazing number of sweet and salty dishes and garnishes that are chosen to offer culinary harmony during mealtimes. Almost strictly vegetarian, this cuisine is traditionally served to guests on ornate platters, accompanied with sumptuous rice dishes and a variety of wheat breads.

Even though the Western Indian state of Gujarat has had many foreign influences over the years, the basic tastes have remained the same. The famous Gujarati *thali* (a selection of dishes, chosen to create balance in taste and color) is always served with sweet and sour chutneys and pickles.

Here is a partial list of some of the more popular Gujarati dishes. You may have sampled some of them in vegetarian Indian restaurants:

- ☞ *Bhel Puri* — Crisp puffed rice with cilantro, onions, and potatoes seasoned with tamarind, and mint and garlic chutneys
- ☞ *Bhatura Cholle* — Huge puffed *puri* (potato puffs)
- ☞ *Masala Dosa* — Spiced potato in crisp, savory crêpe
- ☞ *Uttappam* — A thick rice pancake served with *sambar* (a minty, spicy condiment)
- ☞ *Gobhi Paratha* — Shredded cauliflower in a flaky, flat bread
- ☞ *Pav Bhaji* — Spicy mixed vegetable purée served with bread
- ☞ *Dhokla* — Steamed chickpea cake with mint chutney

PATRA

Patra is a popular Gujarati vegetarian snack or ingredient used in main or side dishes. It is a rolled, filled menu item that resembles a green and gold pinwheel when sliced. *Patra* is also known as “pathrode,” and the leaves are sometimes called “aloo” or even “elephant ears.” The taro leaf is the traditional wrapper;

however, spinach or collard leaves can be substituted when making your own *patra*.

There are many different ways to prepare *patra*, just like any beloved traditional dish. *Patra* is rolled up with tamarind paste and a variety of spices, steamed to solidify the filling, and then sliced and fried.

Besan is usually the main ingredient in the filling or paste for *patra*. *Besan* is garbanzo bean flour, also called gram flour. It is not a finely ground flour, and the ‘grittiness’ actually adds texture to recipes in which it is used. *Besan* can be found in Indian markets and online, but it is easy to make your own. Simply lightly toast cooked garbanzo beans in a hot oven until they are crispy. Grind the crispy garbanzos in a food processor or by hand with a mortar and pestle.

Nowadays, many households cut to the chase and purchase canned or frozen *patra*, which can be microwaved or quickly fried. If you are looking for canned or frozen *patra*, you might also search for *alu wadi*, which is “*patra*” in the Marathi dialect. Canned or frozen *patra* are usually sliced before packaging. When you open the package, you will see swirls of dark green and gold. You can microwave, steam, or fast-fry canned

Sources for Canned *Patra*

- ☞ Indo Shop sells 14-ounce canned *patra*.
☞ <http://shop.indolink.com/>
- ☞ Indian-Haweli online sells dry and canned products, including *patra*.
☞ www.indianhaweli.net/groceries.php
- ☞ Deep Foods, Inc., sells many canned Indian products, including *patra*.
☞ www.deepfoods.com/deep-details.asp?iprodid=123

or frozen *patra*, depending on your time and your needs. *Patra* have a wonderful fragrance of spices, including ginger, chili, and garlic. In addition, if rolled correctly, the leaves and filling form a delightfully chewy, almost meat-like texture.

MAKE YOUR OWN PATRA

Making *patra*, rather than purchasing it canned or frozen, takes some dedication, as it does require some ingredients not usually found outside an Indian kitchen. *Patra* may sound intricate to make, but it is basically a roll—a leaf is spread with a paste-like filling, rolled, and then steamed, baked, or, most traditionally, fried. We have found it is well worth the effort to make your own.

Here are some recipes that allow you to prepare your own *patra*. The recipes freeze well, so make a double batch and freeze the extra for later. Steam, microwave, or fry frozen *patra* right from the freezer. (Do not thaw.)

TRADITIONAL PATRA

(Makes 15 pieces)

There are many 'traditional' ways to prepare patra. This is a favorite one. Canned tamarind paste and other ingredients for this recipe are available in Central American, Middle Eastern, and Indian markets or from online retailers.

15 *patra* leaves (If *patra* is not available, use large fresh spinach leaves or collard greens, with the center spines removed.)

PASTE

¼ cup tamarind paste, rolled into a ball
¼ cup *jaggery* (dark brown sugar) or slightly moistened organic brown sugar, rolled into a ball

¼ cup chopped, deseeded fresh green chilies of choice
1 Tablespoon minced fresh ginger
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 Tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon *garam masala* (a spice mix available in Indian markets, from gourmet grocers, and online)
1 cup *besan* (gram or garbanzo bean) flour
1 cup rice flour

COOKING OIL

2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon *rai* (whole black mustard seeds)
1 teaspoon *til* (untoasted sesame seeds)

Clean and set aside the leaves you have selected. If you located fresh *patra* leaves, cut out the stems and stalks.

In a medium-sized bowl, combine the paste ingredients until well-mixed. This will form a paste that is spreadable.

Place the leaves, single file, on a clean surface. Place a small amount of the paste on one edge of a leaf and roll tightly. Repeat until all the leaves are used. This is the *patra*!

Steam the *patra* in a stovetop steamer* for approximately 10–15 minutes. To test if the *patra* is done, insert a knife into the center of a *patra*. If the knife comes out clean, it's done.

Heat oil in a wok or a deep pot. Add *rai* and *til* to season the oil. With a very sharp knife, cut *patra* lengthwise into thin strips. Drop the sliced *patra* into the hot oil and fry only until the slices become crisp.

Carefully remove *patra* from oil and pat dry with paper towels. Serve hot or cold, with fruit chutney, shredded coconut, or diced fresh fruit. The fried *patra* can be frozen.

Note: If you don't have a stovetop steamer, create one by pouring 2–3 inches of water into a deep pot. Then, place a small colander on top of the pot, making certain that the water does not touch the *patra*.

Total calories per <i>patra</i> : 96	Fat: 3 grams
Carbohydrates: 15 grams	Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 7 milligrams	Fiber: 2 grams

PATRANA SAMOSA

(Makes 10 appetizer-sized servings)

This recipe is a combination of patra and samosa—a crispy, filled-pocket appetizer.

10 *patra* or spinach leaves
1 cup peeled, boiled, and medium chopped potatoes
½ cup steamed green peas
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
3 Tablespoons chopped, deseeded green chilies
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
1 Tablespoon chopped sweet onions
2 teaspoons softened nonhydrogenated vegan margarine
1 Tablespoon plus ½ cup *besan* (gram or garbanzo bean) flour, divided
1 Tablespoon plus ½ cup water, divided
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil

Wash leaves and lay flat. Set aside.

In a medium-sized bowl, mash potatoes and peas. Mix in cumin, chilies, cilantro, onions, margarine, 1 Tablespoon *besan* flour, and 1 Tablespoon water. Smear each leaf with a ½-inch of paste and roll up.

When ready to serve, combine ½ cup flour and ½ cup water to form a batter. Heat oil. Dip each *patra* into the batter and then quickly fry in oil. Flip to fry other side. Serve hot with sweet chutney.

Total calories per serving: 89	Fat: 5 grams
Carbohydrates: 8 grams	Protein: 2 grams
Sodium: 14 milligrams	Fiber: 2 grams

PALAK PATRA

(Makes approximately 17 *patra*)

This version of patra is meant to be prepared with palak (spinach) as the 'leaf' and has a delightful, spicy ginger-chili flavoring.

Canned tamarind paste is available in Central American, Middle Eastern, and Indian markets or from online retailers.

34 big *palak* (spinach) leaves

PASTE

2 cups *besan* (gram or garbanzo bean) flour

3 Tablespoons rice flour

¼ cup tamarind paste, rolled into a ball

2 Tablespoons vegan sugar

1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger

1 teaspoon garlic paste

⅛ teaspoon turmeric powder

1 teaspoon chili powder

1 teaspoon red chili powder

1 teaspoon *garam masala* (a spice mix available in Indian markets, from gourmet grocers, and online)

COOKING OIL

2 Tablespoons vegetable oil

1 teaspoon mustard seeds

1 teaspoon sesame seeds

GARNISH (OPTIONAL)

2 Tablespoons grated coconut

1 Tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro

Wash spinach and soak in ice water for 30 minutes.

In a separate bowl, mix together the paste ingredients. Drain the spinach and pat dry. Place two spinach leaves together and lay flat on a clean surface. Smear completely with paste, approximately ½-inch thick. Roll tightly. Repeat until all the leaves are used.

Steam whole *patra* for approximately 10-15 minutes, until thoroughly steamed.

Heat oil in a wok or a deep pot. Add mustard and sesame seeds to flavor the oil. Cut the *patra* into thin strips and fry quickly in oil until crispy, approximately 20 seconds. Carefully remove from oil, drain, and serve garnished with coconut and cilantro. You

Many Uses for *Patra*

Here are some ideas for serving your made-from-scratch, frozen, or canned *patra*:

- Cut the sliced *patra* into cubes. Spray a skillet with vegetable oil and heat. Add some mustard seeds and a sprinkle of cumin. Sauté very quickly (just to heat), garnish with chopped fresh cilantro, and serve.
- Warm leftover cooked rice in a steamer or microwave. Add diced *patra* to the warm rice, mix to combine, and return to the steamer or microwave to heat the rice and *patra* thoroughly.
- Steam sliced *patra* in the microwave by placing on a microwaveable tray, covering with a lid or waxed paper, and heat on HIGH for 20 seconds per piece. Serve with plain soy yogurt or vegan sour cream and a garnish of chopped pineapple and mango or fruit chutney.
- Add *patra* into a steamed or stewed eggplant or squash dish for extra flavor.
- The first time I had *patra*, it was served as an appetizer with *dhokla*. *Dhokla* are small, airy squares of chickpea bread. *Dhokla* look like cornbread but have a completely different taste. You can find frozen *dhokla*, which simply needs to be heated in the oven or microwaved, or dry *dhokla* mix, which you will need to bake.
- *Gashi* (Coconut) *Patra* — If you have time, make a smooth paste by processing shredded coconut, tamarind, and roasted red chilies. (You can roast the chilies yourself or purchase them dried.) Boil the paste with a little water and chopped onions in a medium-sized pot. Add the *patra* slices and cook on low heat until the paste thickens. Serve hot, plain or over rice.
- Stir-Fried *Patra* — Heat approximately 1 inch of oil in a large pan and add some mustard seeds. When the seeds pop, add sesame seeds and a small amount of chopped onions. Stir well. Chop some sliced *patra* into small pieces and add them to the onions mixture. Stir well and let cook for approximately 2 minutes. Remove from heat, add a small amount of vegan brown sugar and lemon juice, and stir gently to avoid breaking up the cubes. Garnish with shredded coconut and fresh cilantro.

may also cool the *patra* and freeze for later use.

Note: To serve frozen *patra*, you will need to microwave it on HIGH for approximately 1 minute or until hot or to stir-fry it in hot oil and then serve.

Total calories per *patra*: 83
Carbohydrates: 12 grams
Sodium: 24 milligrams
Fat: 3 grams
Protein: 3 grams
Fiber: 2 grams

TURIYA PATRA

(Serves 6-8)

This is an incredibly tasty dish. The squash is cut into small pieces and then simmered with the patra.

Vegetable oil spray
2 pounds banana squash or butternut squash, peeled, deseeded, and chopped into 1-inch pieces (approximately 5 cups)
12 slices *patra*
1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
2 teaspoons minced fresh green chilies
½ teaspoon turmeric powder
1 teaspoon vegan brown sugar
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
½ teaspoon cumin
1 Tablespoon lemon juice
Water to cover squash
Shredded coconut and cilantro to garnish (optional)

Allow a deep pot to heat and spray with oil. Add squash and quickly cook, tossing constantly. Add remaining ingredients plus sufficient water to cover the

squash. Bring to a quick boil. Reduce, cover, and simmer until squash is soft, approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Serve hot, garnished with coconut and cilantro.

If desired, this dish can be served with sweet chutney and steamed green peas.

Total calories per serving: 271
Carbohydrates: 44 grams
Sodium: 21 milligrams
Fat: 9 grams
Protein: 8 grams
Fiber: 6 grams

MATAR PULAO

(SEASONED RICE)

(Serves 5)

Use this recipe as a 'bed' on which to serve patra.

2 cups uncooked basmati rice
2 Tablespoons nonhydrogenated vegan margarine
¼ cup chopped, deseeded green chilies
½ Tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 cinnamon stick
1 cup chopped onions
2 cups thawed frozen green peas
4 cups water

Rinse rice in cold water and set aside.

Melt margarine in a large pot. Add chilies, ginger, and cinnamon. Sauté and toss for 1 minute. Add onions and sauté until onions are golden brown, approximately 3 minutes. Add the rice, green peas, and water. Mix while bringing to a fast boil. Reduce heat, cover, and

cook for 10-15 minutes or until all water evaporates. Serve hot with sliced *patra*.

Total calories per serving: 372
Carbohydrates: 68 grams
Sodium: 119 milligrams
Fat: 7 grams
Protein: 9 grams
Fiber: 6 grams

APPLE BUTTER AND TAMARIND CHUTNEY

(Makes approximately 3 cups or twenty-four 2-Tablespoon servings)

Serve this condiment to balance the flavors of patra or other spicy foods.

1 Tablespoon cumin seeds
1¾ cups apple butter or sweetened apple sauce
¾ cup apple juice
1 Tablespoon tamarind paste
¼ teaspoon white pepper

Heat a skillet (no oil) and toast cumin seeds for 1 minute. Cool and grind. In a food processor, combine all ingredients until a smooth texture is attained.

This chutney can last for up to 2 months if refrigerated in an airtight container.

Total calories per serving: 45
Carbohydrates: 11 grams
Sodium: 1 milligram
Fat: <1 gram
Protein: <1 gram
Fiber: <1 gram

Nancy Berkoff is The VRG's Food Service Advisor. She is the author of *Vegan in Volume*, *Vegan Seafood*, and numerous other cookbooks.





VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP AWARDS TWO \$5,000 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

It's that time of year again, when VRG announces the winners of its annual \$5,000 college scholarships for graduating high school seniors. Thank you to Sonja, Avi, Lauri, Jenny, and Melanie for helping us respond to all of this year's entrants.

As in previous years, applicants for this year's two \$5,000 college scholarships encompassed a wide spectrum in terms of their social or economic status and their belief systems. Applicants ranged from those who grew up in conservative cattle country and had been members of 4H to those who are vegetarian for religious reasons (such as Hindu, Seventh-day Adventist, or Jain) to those who are members of punk rock bands.

Some students came from relatively privileged backgrounds, while others were forced to live with relatives because their parents couldn't care for them. Some had parents who were struggling with second jobs to bring in \$20,000 per year or parents who have passed away after painful illnesses. Much of what these kids have gone through makes you stop and think. It's amazing how resilient they are, and that they can still feel empathy for others and find time to volunteer.

One factor that most of the teens who applied for these scholarships did have in common is that, even today, their beliefs and behaviors tend to make them feel different and in the minority. Of course, they would like the scholarship award, but it does have an impact on their lives to know that others care about being vegetarian and promoting meatless diets.

THE WINNERS



Randon Martin from Clearwater, Florida, says he is a "17-year-old senior in high school, animal rights activist, and proud vegan." When he was younger and lived in upstate New York on 15 acres, Randon states,

"In those years, the chickens, turkeys, ducks, and dog were my playmates, for at that time I did not come to the realization that what I consumed for sustenance was the same as our animals. I can recall one specific

winter in which my father was going outside with an axe in hand. Upon noticing him make his way to the front door, I began to weep. Startled, he inquired as to why I was crying, to which I replied that I didn't want him to kill our animals for food... Upon informing my dad of my conscientious decision to become vegetarian eight years later, he reminded me of this story and my genuine concern of our animal friends."

Randon said that he and some close friends started and played in a predominantly vegetarian punk band. Through the local music scene, they met enough vegetarians to organize two vegetarian potlucks at which many attendees were musicians and fans.

"My thirst for justice for the voiceless cannot be satiated until the animals finally receive the liberation they deserve."

In his junior year, Randon founded his high school's first animal rights club (S.C.A.R.). They hosted an all-vegetarian picnic and a vegan Thanksgiving gathering, did a vegan fundraiser for a seabird sanctuary, gave away PETA and Vegan Outreach stickers and brochures, and set up a table on campus during lunch so they could give away brochures on meat consumption and environmental degradation. Randon said his biggest success was introducing more vegetarian options into the cafeteria.

He reported, "The vegetarian options were acquired through multiple conferences I had with the Cafeteria Manager and a few phone calls to the Head of Food Supply for Pinellas County. Now, we have vegan burgers, bean burritos, and chocolate soymilk available daily. There was little resistance for the introduction of these items. It was just a matter of choosing/ordering foods and assuring the staff that there is an active demographic who would purchase the food every day. The veggie burgers are available daily, while the bean burritos are offered a few times a week. (There are also peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, which have the most sales daily but were preexisting.) The soymilk is selling really well; I often see students

sipping on the non-dairy beverage throughout the day and during our breaks. When introduced, the soymilk was only in a few vending machines in limited supply, but now they're in every machine with equivalent (or more) availability as the other beverages, so sales must've increased recently. In our weekly S.C.A.R. meetings, I advertise and remind participants to purchase the plant-based alternatives so they're consistently offered."

For the future, "I'm also speaking with the nutrition and wellness teacher here to coordinate a presentation on vegan nutrition and cooking; here, I hope to have a vegan food pyramid presented, short lecture and Q&A on maintaining a healthy plant-based diet, prepare tasty vegan food in front of the class, and have various pro-veg literature available for students as well."

One of Randon's teachers stated, "Randon was the most instrumental individual in getting this (the cafeteria options) in place here at our school. In fact, he was solely responsible. Randon has been instrumental this year in organizing 'The Great American Meatout' at our school and at his work. He contacted Primal Strips and got them to donate a few boxes of their jerky for this event...."

Randon's anticipated majors in college will be anthropology and environmental science. In the future, he would enjoy working towards his Ph.D. to become a professor so "I may further educate students on animal rights philosophy on a university level, or maybe starting another musical group to further advocate compassion to an open-minded audience... My thirst for justice for the voiceless cannot be satiated until the animals finally receive the liberation they deserve."



Sierra Predovich from Redwood, California, became a vegetarian in eighth grade. She reported, "Gradually, my mom adopted the vegetarian way of life as I did. Now, there is no meat in our house, my

mom won't buy or cook meat for my dad, brother, or guests. It may sound surprising at first, but the boys enjoy the vegetarian meals just as much, if not more, than the meat."

During the summer of her junior year, Sierra asked a department chair to advise a club that she and her classmate wanted to start. Although school was not yet in session, they had already gathered a group of interested students and had begun to brainstorm ideas for

their "Thoughtful Fuel Club," which had as its mission to encourage the consumption of locally grown produce and a vegetarian lifestyle.

Sierra wrote, "First, the school cafeteria was a major issue of concern to the club. We conducted a survey of the student body to determine which healthy, vegetarian foods students would be happy to see on the school menu. After calculating the results from the survey, Thoughtful Fuel approached the school board to address the cafeteria food. At first, the board was not very responsive to the issue; however, our persistence paid off. The effort resulted in getting 'greener' salads without iceberg lettuce and vegetarian bean burritos on the menu."

Under Sierra's direction, members of the club volunteered regularly at a local farmers' market. Sierra said, "Some of these vendors cannot afford to hire regular assistants, and therefore our help is greatly appreciated. I also believe that supporting these vendors is very beneficial to the environment, because by purchasing locally grown, pesticide-free produce, one is reducing dependence on oil (used to transport produce long distances) as well as harmful chemicals in pesticides that can leach into and contaminate groundwater. I have personally helped to sell organic apples, dried apricots, and a unique variety of pesticide-free vegetables from arugula to zucchini."

Sierra was featured in a *USA Today* story about the three percent of Americans between the ages of 8 and 18 (Vegetarian Resource Group Harris poll) who are vegetarian. Sierra says, "It may seem odd to people, but vegetarianism is the lifestyle of the future, and in my lifetime, meat-eaters will become the minority. Some people think that it takes an army of people to save the world, but in actuality, all it takes is a little dedication, and attention to what you put on your plate."

The VRG will award two \$5,000 scholarships in 2009. Visit <www.vrg.org> to apply.

Choosing two scholarship winners was very difficult. Due to a generous donor, we are now giving a third student a needs-based internship scholarship. If you would like to fund additional scholarships or internships for these deserving students, please contact The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203; (410) 366-8343; vrg@vrg.org.

Gelatin: Sometimes Kosher But Still Not Typically Vegetarian

An Update by Jeanne Yacoubou, MS, VRG's Research Director

GELATIN IS A COMMON INGREDIENT IN MANY different food products, such as desserts, candy, and yogurt. It also has many pharmaceutical applications, including being a major component in many capsules and vitamins. To date, food technologists haven't been able to synthesize gelatin in a lab or find a vegetable equivalent that has all of gelatin's unique properties—such as its ability to make water bind to other ingredients, giving foods consistency; to stabilize foams and gels; and to impart a smooth taste to certain foods—all at the same time. For vegetarians, gelatin presents problems because it is derived from collagen, a component of the skins and bones of animals.

In 2007, the writer noticed the use of the phrase 'kosher gelatin' on some ingredient statements, including the one for McDonald's yogurt. When asked about the source of the 'kosher gelatin,' McDonald's informed the writer that it was "from an animal source." No further information was given. After further research for this report, we discovered that there is no uniform meaning to the term 'kosher gelatin.'

The VRG contacted four major kosher certifying agencies that certify kosher food products in the United States today—Star-K, OK, the Orthodox Union (OU), and KOF-K—to clarify the meaning of kosher gelatin. These four agencies are considered "normative mainstream" by J.M. Regenstein, a Jewish food technologist who has published extensively on kosher food laws.

Star-K said, "Kosher gelatin is derived from kosher animal sources. Gelatin derived from pig would not be considered kosher. Kosher gelatin is derived from kosher slaughtered and processed bovine sources or from kosher species of fish. Gelatin derived from fish is permitted in yogurt or other dairy foods according to most opinions."

Star-K also told us their position on the use of gelatin (a meat product) in yogurt (a dairy product). "There is debate among authorities if bovine gelatin, which is derived from animal skins or bones, can be

eaten with dairy. Star-K would not allow for use of kosher bovine gelatin in yogurt or other dairy foods." These facts may present technical difficulties for yogurt makers who wish to attain kosher certification for their gelatin-containing yogurt. Fish gelatin does not have the gelling strength needed in yogurt.

In e-mail correspondence, Miriam Wudowsky of the OK kosher certifying agency said, "Kosher gelatin is made from kosher fish and/or agar agar. The OK never uses anything made from pig or other non-kosher animals."

"For vegetarians, gelatin presents problems because it is derived from collagen, a component of the skins and bones of animals."

The OU does certify as kosher the bovine gelatin derived from cattle slaughtered in kosher fashion. To the best of our knowledge, there are two companies that produce gelatin certifiable according to OU standards. One of them is Glatech Productions, a New Jersey-based company that produces Kolatin® brand kosher gelatin. An officer at Glatech told us that Kolatin® is derived from the hides of *glatt* (a Jewish term referring to an animal whose internal organs are adhesion-free) kosher cattle raised in the U.S. and slaughtered in kosher fashion.

There are other kosher-certifying agencies that *will* certify as kosher food products containing pig-derived gelatin. Ko Kosher of Philadelphia is one such agency. They certify products from more than 200 companies, including General Mills, Hershey Foods, Jelly Belly, and GNC. According to Rabbi Novoseller of Ko Kosher,

gelatin is not a food. At one time during its processing, when the bones and hides of animals are treated with acid during the gelatin extraction process, gelatin was not a food. In fact, it was “inedible even to a dog,” referring to a commonly known Jewish test of what is or is not a food. According to Jewish dietary laws, “If something is not a food, it cannot be non-kosher.” Therefore, according to Rabbi Novoseller, gelatin *is* kosher, regardless of animal species and slaughter method.

CONCLUSION

Vegetarians should be aware that gelatin is animal-derived, and a designation that gelatin is kosher does not mean it is vegetarian. There are hundreds of kosher symbols and certifications, so you need to know the particular kosher agency’s policies and what the particular certification actually means to determine if a product meets your needs.

Most food technologists agree that vegetable gums do not mimic all of the characteristics of gelatin well and are not often used as gelatin substitutes. Jeff Morehouse of Aqualon, a company that manufactures cellulose gums, told us that gelatin replacements are very expensive and not really being investigated by food companies. Consumer demand, awareness, and purchase of vegetarian products are needed to change that corporate attitude.

Agar agar, carrageenan, and other vegetable gums are vegetarian substitutes used in some products. For marshmallows and jels made without animal gelatin, check out online retailers, such as the Vegetarian Site.com, Pangea, the Mail Order Catalog, Vegan Essentials, and Ethical Planet, or elsewhere.

Jeanne Yacoubou is The VRG’s Research Director. She holds master’s degrees in philosophy, chemistry, and education.

NUTRITION HOTLINE

(Continued from page 2)

a sizable portion of my daily diet. Are you aware of any research regarding this effect?” C.K., via e-mail

ANSWER: The study that you read about was most likely a study of breast cancer. Several studies have reported that soy intake during adolescence is more important than soy intake later in life in terms of breast cancer risk reduction.^{1,2} What about those like you who come to soy later in life? This has not been well studied, but one study has compared breast cancer incidence in women who ate little soy as adolescents and in adulthood with women who ate little soy as adolescents but who ate high amounts as adults.³ The women who ate generous amounts of soy as adults had a slightly lower, but statistically insignificant, risk of developing breast cancer. These results certainly do not suggest that soy products increase risk of breast cancer.

Studies of Asian women find a marked reduction in breast cancer risk among the highest consumers of soy products, although these results could, at least partially, be due to soy consumption in adolescence.⁴ Soy intake appears to have little effect on breast cancer risk in Western women whose intake of soy was quite low⁴ or in British women, some of whom were vegetarians,

with higher intakes of soy isoflavones.^{4,5}

Based on what we know now, soy products do not appear to increase the risk of breast cancer and may be slightly protective. You mentioned that soy products are a sizable part of your diet. In the interest of variety, perhaps you should consider using other foods in addition to soy, including dried beans, nuts, and wheat gluten, as protein sources.

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- ² Wu AH, Wan P, Hankin J, et al. 2002. Adolescent and adult soy intake and risk of breast cancer in Asian-Americans. *Carcinogenesis* 23:1491-96.
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Essay Contest Winner

WHY I'M A VEGETARIAN

By Nimai C. Agarwal, 9 yrs
Maryland



TO SAVE ANIMALS FROM being ruthlessly killed, to make earth a more natural place, to create peace and harmony in the world, this is what vegetarianism is about to me.

Vegetarianism is good for both animals and humans alike. When we save animals from being mercilessly killed, nature flourishes, and when nature flourishes, humans live happily in peace. Here are some of the incidents that deepened my faith in vegetarianism.

I went to school when I was 5 years old. It was lunch break. We got our lunch bags, which were hanging on silver metal pegs. We knew which table was ours because our tables were assigned. I walked to my table with my lunch box. My table was dark red with brown chairs that had black spots. I sat on my chair and opened my Spiderman lunch box.

I was eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Right in front of me, there was a boy eating chicken, sitting at the same table as me. He was the tallest kid in my class. He put the piece of chicken in his mouth and then bit into it, while his mouth was open. It looked repulsive to me. "Close your mouth and eat," I said to him. This was the first time I saw someone eating meat so up close. I went home and discussed this with my parents. It really impacted me. I thought, "If animals killed humans for food, how would I feel?"

One hot afternoon, my mom, dad, and I went to Washington, DC, to see the Smithsonian Museum. I was walking around when I saw this video made by PETA at a booth they had set up. It showed how they kill animals in slaughterhouses. It caught my eye. The movie was very bloody and sad. I saw bleeding cows being tortured to death and beaks of chickens being

cut off with burning iron. Seeing the movie made me think what pain the animals must be going through. That's why I am happy that I am a vegetarian.

Another problem with meat eating is that so much grain is wasted to feed one animal that will then be slaughtered. People are burning down huge forests and a lot of land to get more space to grow grains, which will be fed to animals, and then they will kill animals in slaughterhouses. One may fatten an animal a lot, but still one won't get a lot of food. One pound of meat requires 16 pounds of grains, which could feed many hungry people.

My whole family for generations has been vegetarian, and I was also brought up on a meatless diet. We believe that eating meat gives us bad karma. So, many families in India do not eat meat. Karma is the reaction of every action that we perform in our lives. So, if we perform good acts, we get good results, and if we do harm to others, we get harmed ourselves in this life or the next.

I like the taste of vegetarian food because it tastes so pure to me. Sometimes

I help my mom make flatbreads. Some people think that if you are vegetarian then you don't have enough choices, but actually there are a lot of vegetarian preparations. One Sunday there was a festival in our temple, and there were exactly 108 preparations which were all vegetarian. So, that means that vegetarians have a lot of different preparations. I enjoyed the food that day and yet I was unable to taste everything.

My favorite foods are pizza, pasta, Indian flatbreads, Mexican cuisine, bread, and tomato juice. I also like fruits, such as apples, mangos, lychees, berries, and watermelons.

I am happy being vegetarian. I feel like I am saving so many animals, forests, and Mother Earth. I may not be able to go into the world and save animals, but this is my little contribution in trying to preserve the natural world in which I live.

"When we save animals from being mercilessly killed, nature flourishes, and when nature flourishes, humans live happily in peace."

Enter *Vegetarian Journal's* Annual Student Essay Contest!

Are you 18 or younger? If so, what are your thoughts or experiences with vegetarianism? Share them with The VRG during our annual essay contest! Just write a two- to three-page essay on any aspect of vegetarianism or veganism, based on interviews, personal experience, research, and/or personal opinion. Then, enter your submission in the appropriate category: ages 14 to 18, ages 9 to 13, or ages 8 and younger. Winners will each receive a \$50 savings bond.

Send entries to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203. Please make sure to include your name, age, address, phone number, and school. All entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2009, for next year's contest. You need not be vegetarian to enter. All essays become property of The VRG, and only winners will be notified.

Kitchens of India Products Bring Authentic Cuisine Home

Why go out for fresh, flavorful Indian food when Kitchens of India allows you to make it at home? Based in India, this company exports many of its products to the United States, Canada, and parts of Europe.

Among their many vegan options are 10.5-ounce jars of chutneys, condiment-like accompaniments for appetizers like *samosas*, in tempting Mango & Dry Fruits, Shredded Mango Chutney, and Sweet Sliced Mango varieties. Kitchens of India also offers *Biryanis* (rice pilaf dishes) with or without nuts and Curry Pastes to which you can add basmati rice, mixed vegetables, or other ingredients of your choice. In addition, the company produces several vegan Ready-to-Eat Meals, including a delicious Chick Peas Curry (*Pindi Chana*) and the hearty Red Kidney Beans Curry (*Rajma Masala*).

Liberty Richter handles the import and distribution of Kitchens of India products within the United States. Contact this company at 300 Broadacres Drive, Bloomfield, NJ 07003, or via phone at (973) 338-0300. More information about these products is available at <www.kitchensofindia.com>.



Raise Your Glasses!

Celebrate the holidays with tangy, refreshing beverages from First Blush. These juices are made from the grapes that are frequently used in wine production, which allows them to stay true to vino's taste without the alcoholic kick. Their Cabernet offers subtle touches of cherry and blackberry, while their Chardonnay has a light, slightly sweet appeal. Or try their Merlot, with its strong grape flavor and a hint of apple essence.

Contact First Blush, Inc., at P.O. Box 5490, Santa Barbara, CA 93150, or via phone at (805) 969-8700. Learn more at their website, <www.firstblushjuice.com>.



Dark, Decadent Delicacies

Christopher Norman Chocolates has combined innovative flavors with elegant artistic details to create their "Veganache" collection of non-dairy chocolate truffles. This 12-piece gift box features seven tempting varieties, including Chai Tea, Coconut, Framboise, and Mint. Of particular note are the citrus-hinted Blood Orange, richly flavored Espresso, and indulgent Manhattan Dark with hand-painted accents. This sophisticated offering would make a wonderful gift for any of the dark chocolate lovers in your life, vegan or not.

Call Christopher Norman Chocolates' Factory & Gallery Shop at (212) 402-1243 or stop by their lower Manhattan storefront at 60 New Street, New York, NY 10004. You can also visit the company online at <www.christophernormanchocolates.com>.

Become One With Nature

One With Nature offers an exotic line of fine, cruelty-free soaps made from deep-cleansing Dead Sea minerals. Their enticing varieties include Almond, Bing Cherry, Dead Sea Mud, and Vanilla Oatmeal, among many others. Plus, you'll feel as good as your skin does when you purchase these products, as the company supports Friends of the Earth Middle East, a non-profit environmental organization helping to preserve the Dead Sea.

One With Nature products are available at select natural foods and grocery stores. For more information, contact One With Nature at 770 Tilton Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472 or at (800) 600-1445. Also, visit their website at <www.onewithnature.com>.

reviews

COOL GREEN STUFF

By Dave Evans



Cool Green Stuff is a guide to finding all types of fantastic items made from recycled materials. Even if you don't purchase any of the featured goods, this book will certainly inspire you to recycle materials found around your own home and perhaps even prompt artsy types to try making some interesting pieces themselves.

The "Fashion" section includes jewelry made from materials such as rubber bands, computer keyboard keys, and candy wrappers; clothes made from recycled rubber, umbrella components, and old Tupperware; and bags made from seatbelts, vinyl advertising billboards, and retired skateboards.

The chapter titled "Stuff" includes gadgets, electronics, and stationery. Especially interesting are the wooden toy helicopters made with solar blades, the computer monitor and mouse incorporating bamboo in the casing, and a wastebasket made entirely, and appropriately, from reused paper.

In the "House" section, you'll find décor, kitchen items, lighting, sculptures, and more. The bike chain bottle opener, candy wrapper place mats, coasters made from computer motherboards, bowls born from can tabs and from vintage records, and hanging lamps made from recycled mini blinds all would make terrific gifts.

The section on "Furniture" includes chairs made from shopping carts and wooden pallets, stools fashioned out of bamboo, and tables made from a washing

machine drum or from compacted aluminum window frames.

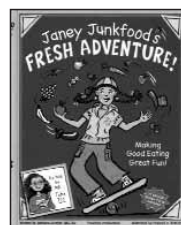
The final chapter includes items you would use outdoors, such as an all-solar electric bike.

Web addresses for the companies manufacturing the pictured items are included. Note that not all of the items are vegan, such as those made with leather or silk; however, many are.

Cool Green Stuff (ISBN 978-0-307-39557-3) is published by Clarkson Potter. This book retails for \$14.95. Order it online or purchase it in your local bookstore. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

JANEY JUNKFOOD'S FRESH ADVENTURE!

By Barbara Storper, MS, RD



Janey Junkfood's Fresh Adventure! is the story of Tobe Fit and her best friend Janey. Janey wants to be the world's greatest juggler, but she keeps dropping the balls. Tobe figures out the problem. Janey is living on junk food, and it's hurting her juggling. Can Tobe help Janey make the National Junior Juggling Team?

Janey Junkfood's Fresh Adventure! is a delightful book, written in scrapbook form with appealing illustrations. Concepts like label reading, the health effects of sugar and junk foods, the benefits of breakfast, and eating to win are cleverly presented in ways that will keep kids reading. The book includes 14 fun snack recipe cards for treats like Veggie Robots and

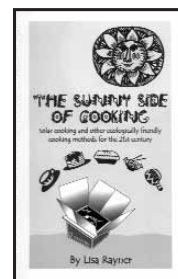
Apple Smiles. Recipes spotlight fruits and vegetables; some include cheese and yogurt but can be easily substituted with vegan products.

This book makes healthy eating fun! I highly recommend it for kids of all ages, especially for 8- to 12-year-olds.

Janey Junkfood's Fresh Adventure! (ISBN 978-0-9642858-5-9) is published by FoodPlay Productions. It has 32 pages and retails for \$15.95. Order this book online at <www.foodplay.com> or look for it in your local bookstore. Reviewed by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD.

THE SUNNY SIDE OF COOKING

By Lisa Rayner



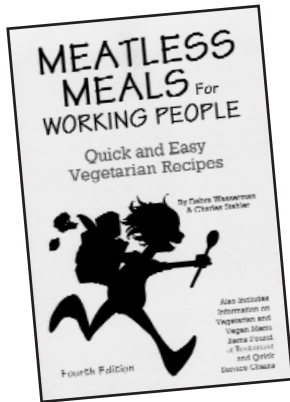
This book caught my attention for environmental reasons, and skyrocketing energy costs made it even more appealing. Solar cooking has been around for a long time; however, this book focuses on vegan recipes. (Note: A few recipes include honey but also offer vegan alternatives, such as maple syrup or agave syrup.)

After reading information on how to select a solar cooker and learning the basics, you'll find some wonderful solar-based recipes, including Quinoa Tabbouli; Scalloped Potatoes; Marinated Tofu, Tempeh, or Seitan Cutlets; and Brownies.

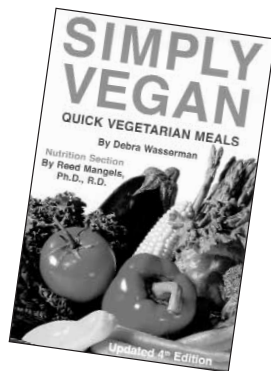
The Sunny Side of Cooking (ISBN 978-0-9800608-0-5) is a 122-page book published by Lifeweaver LLC. You can order it online at <www.LisaRayner.com> or from your local bookstore. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

VRG Catalog

Books



Meatless Meals for Working People—Quick and Easy Vegetarian Recipes (\$12) by Debra Wasserman. We recommend using whole grains and fresh vegetables. However, for the busy working person, this isn't always possible. This 192-page book contains over 100 fast and easy recipes and tells you how to be a vegetarian within your hectic schedule using common, convenient foods. Spice chart, low-cost meal plans, party ideas, information on fast food restaurants, soy dishes, and more. Over 90,000 copies in print.



Simply Vegan (\$14.95) by Debra Wasserman and Reed Mangels, PhD, RD. These 224 pages contain over 160 quick and easy vegan recipes, a complete vegan nutrition section, and a list of where to mail order vegan food, clothing, cosmetics, and household products. Vegan menus and meal plans. Over 85,000 copies sold.

Conveniently Vegan (\$15) by Debra Wasserman. Prepare meals with all the natural foods products found in stores today, including soymilk, tempeh, tofu, veggie hot dogs. . . . You'll find 150 recipes using convenience foods (including canned beans) along with grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables. Menu ideas, product sources, and food definitions included. (208 pp.)



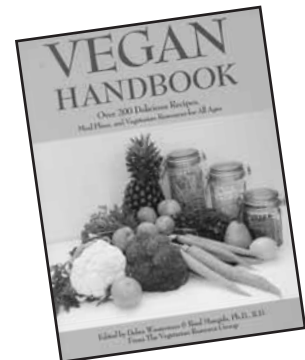
Vegan Meals for One or Two—Your Own Personal Recipes (\$15) by Nancy Berkoff, RD. Whether you live alone, are a couple, or are the only one in your household who is vegetarian, this 216-page book is for you. Each recipe is written to serve one or two people and is designed so that you can realistically use ingredients the way they come packaged from the store. Information on meal planning and shopping is included, as well as breakfast ideas, one-pot wonders, recipes that can be frozen for later use, grab-and-go suggestions, everyday and special occasion entrées, plus desserts and snacks. A glossary is also provided.

Vegan in Volume (\$20) by Nancy Berkoff, RD. This 272-page quantity cookbook is loaded with terrific recipes serving 25. Suitable for catered events, college food services, restaurants, parties in your own home, weddings, and much more.

No Cholesterol Passover Recipes (\$9) by Debra Wasserman. Includes 100 eggless and dairyless recipes. Seder plate ideas. (96 pp.)

The Lowfat Jewish Vegetarian Cookbook—Healthy Traditions from Around the World (\$15) by Debra Wasserman. Over 150 lowfat international vegan recipes with nutritional breakdowns, including Romanian Apricot Dumplings, Pumpernickel Bread, Russian Flat Bread, Potato Knishes, North African Barley Pudding, and much more. Menu suggestions and holiday recipes. (224 pp.)

Vegan Passover Recipes (\$6) by Chef Nancy Berkoff, RD. This 48-page booklet features vegan soups and salads, side dishes and sauces, entrées, desserts, and dishes you can prepare in a microwave during Passover. All the recipes follow Ashkenazi Jewish traditions and are pareve.

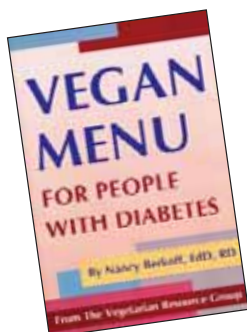


Vegan Handbook (\$20) edited by Debra Wasserman and Reed Mangels, PhD, RD. Over 200 vegan recipes and vegetarian resources. Includes sports nutrition, seniors' guide, feeding vegan children, recipes for egg-free cakes and vegan pancakes, Thanksgiving ideas, vegetarian history, menus, and more. (256 pp.)

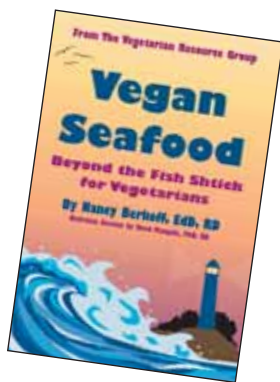
Vegan Microwave Cookbook (\$16.95) by Chef Nancy Berkoff, RD. This 288-page cookbook contains 165 recipes, some of which take less than 10 minutes to cook. It also includes information for converting traditional recipes to the microwave, microwave baking and desserts, making breakfasts in a snap, and suggestions and recipes for holidays and parties.

Vegetarian Journal's Guide to Natural Foods Restaurants in the U.S. and Canada

(\$18). Whether you're traveling on business or planning a much-needed vacation, this book is certain to make your dining experiences better. This fourth edition lists more than 2,200 restaurants, vacation spots, and local vegetarian groups to contact for more info about dining in their areas. (448 pp.)



Vegan Menu for People with Diabetes (\$10) by Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD. This 96-page book gives people with (or at risk for) diabetes a four-week meal plan, exchange listings for meat substitutes and soy products, and recipes for enjoyable dishes, such as Creamy Carrot Soup, Tangy Tofu Salad, Baked Bean Quesadillas, and French Toast.



Vegan Seafood: Beyond the Fish Shtick for Vegetarians (\$12) by Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD. Nancy Berkoff has created these unique and good-tasting vegan fish and seafood dishes. After using this book, you'll agree with millions of vegetarians who say: Sea Animals—Don't Eat Them! Inside these 96 pages you will find sections about cooking with vegan 'fish,' 'seafood' stocks and sauces, websites offering vegan 'seafood' products, and info about omega-3 fatty acids for vegans. Avoid fish but still enjoy the taste of the sea with 'Fish' Sticks, Ethiopian-Style 'Shrimp' and Sweet Potato Stew, 'Crab' Rangoon, 'Tuna' Salad, Gefilte 'Fish,' Spicy 'Fish' Cakes, and much more!

For Children and Teens

Leprechaun Cake and Other Tales (\$5) by Vonnie Crist, recipes by Debra Wasserman. Vegan story/cookbook for children ages 8-11, with glossary of cooking terms. (128 pp.) Slightly damaged cover.

The Soup to Nuts Natural Foods Coloring Book (\$3) by Ellen Sue Spivak.

The Teen's Vegetarian Cookbook (\$9.99) by Judy Krizmanic. This book is packed with health info, easy recipes, college cuisine, glossary terms, and more. (186 pp.)

Bumper Stickers

Bumper Stickers (\$1 each, 10+ \$0.50 each) "Be Kind to Animals—Don't Eat Them" "Vegetarians Are Sprouting Up All Over"

Vegetarian Journal

Vegetarian Journal subscriptions are \$20 per year in the U.S., \$32 in Canada/Mexico, and \$42 in other countries.

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Nellie McKay By Bobby Allyn

NELLIE MCKAY IS A PRECOCIOUS, SWEETLY brash, and unashamed singer-songwriter who blends jazz, cabaret, pop, and rap into scathing ballads about feminism and animal rights. Her almost indescribable genre-crossing musical infusions leave reviewers unable to fit her in any categorical boxes.

Aside from her zest-filled eclecticism, McKay has been a passionate advocate for animal rights from a young age, and she has not been afraid to express her message in her songwriting. “You can’t preach with veganism. You need to be funny and lively,” she said. “A lot of people treat veganism as a my-way-or-the-highway type thing, but it’s good to keep a sense of humor. You can do this while still moving toward a more compassionate world.”

When McKay was 2, she and her mother moved from London to Harlem, New York, where they rescued stray cats and attended PETA protests. She said her mother’s universal compassion toward all creatures shaped much of her early life and became a facet of her worldly perspective. “In Harlem, we saw so much poverty and destitution on the streets,” she said. “But even compared to the people, the animals were in so much worse shape.”

McKay’s earliest memory of animal rights activism in New York involved imagery that strongly resonated with her: “I remember going to an animal rights protest at New York University and seeing photos of a monkey all hooked up to electric wires; it gave me an instant feeling of empathy. Everyone has true empathy; it just gets beat out of them.” Today, she continues to draw on her experiences in New York for her music and her activism. Her sophomore album, *Pretty Little Head*, features the song “Columbia is Bleeding” about Columbia University’s controversial animal testing.

McKay said a lot of progress has been made but acknowledges how much more needs to be done.

“Now, there is an animal rights movement, but more animals are killed than ever,” she said. “The past couple generations have been so cynical; this has been a big impediment. There is a serious dearth of hope. We’re so aware that there are so many problems in the world, but the animal rights issue really affects so many things: factory farm workers, class, race, economics,.... It’s not just a question of the animals. But it’s also the people who work for these multi-billion dollar corporations who make the bill.”

Where would McKay like to see the future of the vegan market? In the Doritos aisle. “I think we need more vegan junk food. Who has time when you’re out in the world to get something quick? Why can’t we have a dollar menu? So many people don’t respond to animal rights as a whole because they know they will have to change their lifestyle so drastically. Why not make it easier for them?”

McKay hopes that large national corporations, despite being disapproved of in progressive communities, will begin to embrace cruelty-free and vegan products.

“I completely understand why people are leery toward corporations in any way because you can end up

compromising yourself into the ground and they win,” she said. “You can feel like you’re moving to a world where animals are not exploited at all, so you end up shaking hands with the oppressor. I do think people can be too puritan in their thinking and not realistic enough. But if the first thing is to inject humane ethics into your way of thinking, maybe it will lead to further conscious-making.”

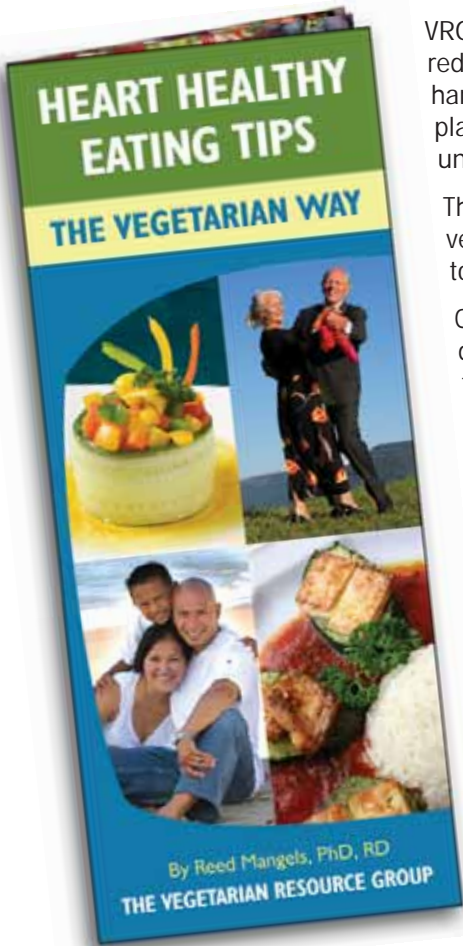


Singer-Songwriter Nellie McKay

Bobby Allyn previously interned at The VRG office and continues to volunteer at VRG booths. He is currently studying journalism and international relations at American University.

Heart Healthy Eating Tips

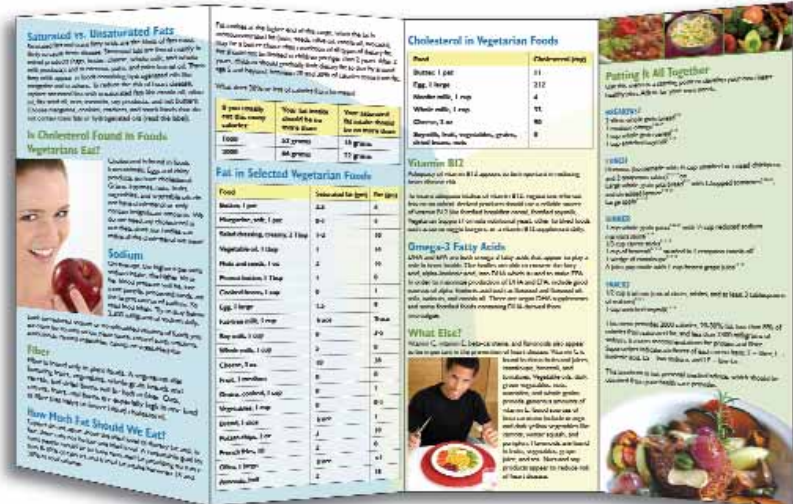
Updated and Now in Full Color!



VRG's *Heart Healthy Eating Tips: The Vegetarian Way* pamphlet has been revised and redesigned to make a full-color, eight-panel brochure. This attractive and informative handout provides advice about heart-healthy shopping, cooking, eating out, and meal planning and includes the latest nutritional information relating to saturated and unsaturated fats, sodium, fiber, cholesterol, vitamin B₁₂, and omega-3 fatty acids.

This pamphlet is great for tabling, nutrition fairs, presentations, classes, and other venues where people want to pick up information about heart health or just wish to learn a bit more about the advantages of vegetarian and vegan diets.

Quantities of these brochures are available upon request. We simply ask for a donation to help defer the costs of printing and shipping. Please send your request to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203. You may also contact The VRG at (410) 366-8343 or via e-mail at vrg@vrg.org.



Printed on recycled paper!



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