

Peruvian Cuisine • Vegan Options in Moscow

VOLUME XXX, NO 2

VEGETARIAN

JOURNAL

HEALTH ECOLOGY ETHICS

Want to Start a
Salad Bar at Your
Child's School?

The Experts Tell
You How!

Ten Takes on
Tortillas

Pinwheels made with tortillas
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All About
an Emerging
Literary Form –
ECOCRITICISM

NUTRITION HOTLINE

JULIA DRIGGERS, RD



This issue's Nutrition Hotline discusses what chia seeds are and how to incorporate them into your diet, if switching from vegetarian to vegan will result in weight gain, and which traditional Indian breads may be vegan.

QUESTION: "I've heard a lot of buzz about chia seeds. What exactly is a chia seed? What are the nutritional benefits, and how can I use them in cooking?"

ANSWER: Believed to be eaten by the Aztecs, the chia seed is a 'superfood' that resembles a black sesame seed and is nutty to taste. It is an excellent source of minerals and antioxidants. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2 Tablespoons of chia seeds provide approximately 100 milligrams of calcium, 7.5 grams of dietary fiber, and 3 grams of protein. Chia seeds are also high in alpha-linolenic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid, with 3.5 grams of alpha-linolenic acid in 2 Tablespoons¹.

What's even better? Chia seeds do not need to be crushed the way flaxseeds do to release their omega-3 benefits². Whole chia seeds can be added to oatmeal and vegan yogurt, sprinkled over salads, stirred into smoothies, and tossed into stir fries—or you can get creative! Chia seeds can also be ground and added to any flour-based or grain dish.

Natural foods stores typically carry chia seeds. Call ahead to see if your favorite store stocks them or if it's possible to order them. Because chia seeds have gained popularity, they can be expensive; you may find lower prices online or by shopping around.

Here's a fun fact! The infamous 'Chia Pet' gets its name from these tiny seeds.

Now that you know a bit about chia seeds, try this warm

and yummy oatmeal recipe. It's packed with taste and nutrition, thanks to the chia seeds!

PUMPKIN OATMEAL AND CHIA SEEDS

(Serves 1)

**1/2 cup old-fashioned oats
1/3 cup non-dairy milk
1/3 cup water
1 Tablespoon chia seeds
4 Tablespoons pumpkin purée
2 Tablespoons maple syrup
1 Tablespoon sliced almonds
Sugar and cinnamon to taste**

In microwave-safe bowl, combine the oats, milk, water, chia seeds, and pumpkin purée. Microwave on high for approximately 2 minutes. Allow to cool. Add maple syrup and stir. Top with almonds, sugar, and cinnamon.

Total calories per serving: 430 Fat: 12 grams
Carbohydrates: 71 grams Protein: 14 grams
Sodium: 56 milligrams Fiber: 13 grams

¹ Reyes-Caudillo E, Tecante A, Valdivia-López MA. 2008. Dietary fiber content and antioxidant activity of phenolic compounds in Mexican chia (*Salvia hispanica L.*) seeds. *Food Chem* 107:656-63.

² Nieman DC, Cavea EJ, Austin MD, et al. 2009. Chia seed does not promote weight loss or alter disease risk factors in overweight adults. *Nutr Res* 29:414-18.

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The *Vegetarian Journal* is one project of The Vegetarian Resource Group. We are a nonprofit organization that educates the public about vegetarianism and the interrelated issues of health, nutrition, ecology, ethics, and world hunger. To join VRG and receive *Vegetarian Journal* in the USA, send \$20 to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203.

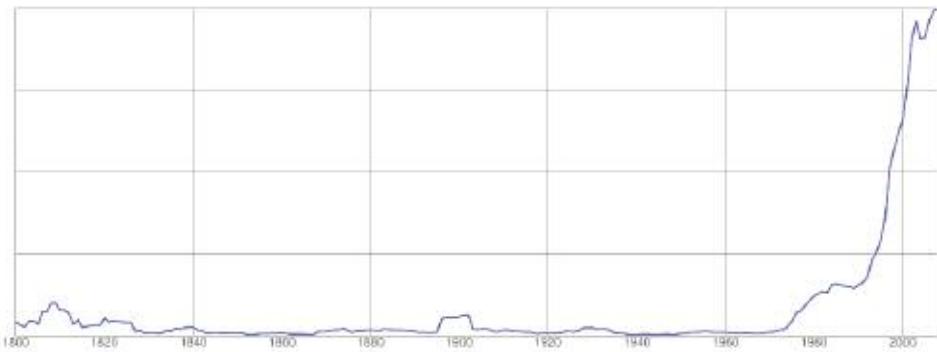
NOTE FROM THE COORDINATORS

'VEGAN' POPULARITY HEADED UP



When we searched Google Books for mentions of the word 'vegan' between 1800 and 2008, the graph below came up. The use of the word was pretty flat until The Vegetarian Resource Group started in 1982. Then, there was a tremendous spike, which accompanied the popularity of our *Simply Vegan*, *Vegan Handbook*, and other vegan publications.

With a cursory glance, the use of 'vegan' between 1800 and 1847 appears not to be a reference to diet but actually a proper name or the word 'began.' Most instances appear to be since 1990, even though *Nutrition: Concepts and Controversies* mentions 'vegan' in 1962 and the *British Journal of Nutrition* uses the term in 1959.



Mentions of 'Vegan' on Google Books NGram Viewer

Veganism in the United States has increased because of many individuals taking personal responsibility for their health, environment, and ethics, as well as activists taking on responsibility to support groups and bring about societal change. Thank you to the 100-year-old VRG member who is still passing around *Vegetarian Journal* to her family and friends. Kudos to the student who requested teen brochures to give to her classmates.

Change happens because of donors who support our scholarship programs, internships, ingredient research, outreach to dietitians, and activism. Thank you to Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, who did an interview on vegan nutrition for the AARP website. Congratulations to VRG Intern Veronica Lizaola, who became a vegetarian while growing up in a Mexican-American, meat-eating culture in Texas. (See her article on page 35.) VRG's impact can only happen with all the hard work of our staff, volunteers, donors, interns, and members. To donate, volunteer, or become involved, contact VRG's new Volunteer Coordinator Mary Herbranson at vrg@vrg.org.

Debra Wasserman & Charles Stahler

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The signature on the left is 'Debra Wasserman' and the signature on the right is '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: _____

In honor of: _____

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

My name and address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

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

Thanks to volunteer Sara Griffith for designing new fliers to promote VRG's scholarships and VRG events.

Special thanks to the following VRG volunteers for helping to respond to all the VRG scholarship applications we received last year: Ryan Andrews, Michael Billian, Ashley Boss, Ann Marie Brokmeier, Jessica Dadds, Lisaanne Davis, Julia Hart, Veronica Lizaola, Regena Lynch, Lisa Martin, Jeannie McStay, Susan Petrie, Kim Roberts, Jenny Saccenti, Patricia Shiflett, Linda Tyler, and Amy Vaughn.

VRG Information Is Popular With New Dietitian Program

In July, we ordered handouts from you for our new dietitian program at the University of Chicago. These handouts were well-received by the students; therefore, I would like to order more:

- 50 *Vegetarianism in a Nutshell*
- 50 *Vegan Diets in a Nutshell*
- 50 *Heart-Healthy Eating Tips*

Also, the cookbooks have been checked out from my office on a regular basis. Thanks again for offering such wonderful materials and resources.

Marla C. Solomon, RD, LD/N, CDE
University of Chicago Student Care Center

VJ Adds to Successful Texas Meatout Dinner

Thank you so much for your donation of *Journal* issues to our Meatout event! We had over 175 participants, all of whom learned a bit more about the benefits of a plant-based lifestyle. Your publication should help in making that learning permanent!

I hope that we can work together again in the future.
Barbara B., President
Black Vegetarian Society of Texas

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

Coming in the Next Issue:

CHILEAN CUISINE

Plus: Fantastic Fava Bean Recipes, Preparing Polenta, Analyzing the Market for Vegetarian Foods, and more!

Longtime Member Praises VRG-News

I just want to say I have been a supporter since I first learned about VRG many years ago.

Also, I just finished reading the latest e-mail newsletter, top to bottom as always. Thank you for all the good things you do, for all the information, and for sharing it. Holly H., via e-mail

Note: The VRG-News e-mail newsletter includes upcoming events, recipes, ingredient information, and more! Sign up to receive this publication at <www.vrg.org/vrgnews/>.

VRG Recipes Inspire Vegan Café Founder

Following up on her letter in Issue 1, 2011, of VJ:

I wanted to send a big THANK YOU to all of you for your support and helping me come up with recipes for Life Savers Café. We are the first in the state of West Virginia to open a totally vegan eatery. We have been open since December 1. Thanks again for the amazing support and help! Rebecca G., via e-mail

Note: See more about veg-friendly restaurants at <www.vrg.org/restaurant/index.php>.

PERUVIAN VEGAN CUISINE

By CHEF NANCY BERKOFF

PERUVIAN CUISINE HAS GOT TO BE ONE OF THE most diverse cuisines in the world. Combine pre-Incan and Incan influences with Spanish, African, French, Chinese (especially from the Canton region), Japanese, and Italian ingredients and cooking techniques, and you can see what we mean! A Peruvian food expert once said that, before you try to understand Peruvian cuisine, you should note that there are more than 2,000 different types of soups in coastal Peru alone and at least 250 traditional desserts!

Of course, cuisine varies depending where you are in Peru. Coastal cuisine is traditionally based on fish from the Pacific Ocean, while the dishes in the Andes are based on corn, hundreds of varieties of potatoes, grains, and root vegetables. Jungle cuisine is based on fruits and plants readily available in the Peruvian rainforest. Lima, the country's capital, has access to ingredients from all over the world and offers traditional dishes combined with many other cuisines.

POPULAR PERUVIAN INGREDIENTS

Let's take a quick tour of some of the ingredients you can find in Peruvian cuisine:

- **Aguaje** is the fruit of a tall tropical palm found in the Amazon jungle. *Aguaje* grows as small clusters of red fruit, and it can be served at meals or mashed to use as an ingredient. It can be the base for purées, locally made fruit ice cream (instead of dairy ice cream), and beverages.
- **Lucuma** looks like a round avocado. This tropical fruit is pale green on the outside and yellow-orange on the inside. Lucuma can be dried and ground

into flour that can be used for breads and pastries or to thicken drinks and beverages. We have even seen a type of ice cream based on lucuma flour.

- A cousin to lemon grass, *luisa grass* is found in the Andes. In addition to its use in flavoring food, *luisa* grass is brewed as a tea.
- **Maca root** is a tuber that has been a staple in Peru for thousands of years. It is said to contain essential fatty acids and minerals, including zinc and protein. It can be boiled or baked like a potato, and it can serve as the basis for a thick soup or stew.
- **Rocoto** is a Peruvian pepper that resembles a red, yellow, or green bell pepper, but it is *very* hot! If you are attempting to prepare a recipe that calls for *rocoto*, you could substitute fresh jalapeños.
- **Quabranta** are Peruvian wine grapes, a hybrid grown from European stock. They are hearty and resemble muscatel or muscat grapes. *Quabranta* can be eaten fresh, pressed for juice, or processed into wine and vinegar.
- **Quinoa** is known around the world nowadays, but it is said to have originated with the Incas. Quinoa figures large as a staple ingredient in some parts of Peru and is served at all meals. Its flour can be used to create smooth hot cereals, to thicken sauces, or to make a base for hearty hot beverages.

PERUVIAN STREET FARE

Some food people have called Peruvian street food one of the best-kept food secrets in the world. You may be able to find Peruvian street food on carts in New York,



Boston, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Portland, to name a few places. Here are some options to look for:

- **Lomo saltado** is a combination of rice, vegetables, and—yes—French fries. This dish is usually served with sautéed meat but is fine vegetarian-style.
- **A tallarin saltado** is a sautéed spaghetti and vegetable dish. Again, it is usually served with meat, but it is flavorful and filling without it.
- **Chaufa** is Peruvian fried rice, sometimes including potato as one of the ingredients.
- **Yucca fries, roasted corn kernels** (like spicy, hot corn nuts), and **purple potato salad** are other Peruvian dishes that translate well from the Andes to your table!

CUSQUEÑA DE CÉRALES (Serves 6)

This protein- and fiber-rich dish can be served at almost any meal! This ‘bouquet’ of grains and vegetables can be made ahead and refrigerated or frozen until ready to use.

- 6 cups vegetable stock or broth**
- 1/3 cup quinoa**
- 1/4 cup amaranth**
- 1 cup corn kernels, preferably freshly cut from the cob**
- 3 cups diced fresh yellow squash**
- 1/2 cup finely peeled and chopped Yukon Gold potatoes**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh mint**
- 1 Tablespoon Red Star nutritional yeast**

Bring the vegetable stock to a boil in a large pot.

While waiting for the stock to boil, rinse and drain the quinoa and amaranth. Add the quinoa and amaranth to the boiling stock

and bring to a fast second boil. Lower the heat to a simmer and add corn. Stir and allow to simmer for approximately 20 minutes or until the grains are soft.

Add remaining ingredients and allow to simmer until the squash and potatoes are soft, which may take 15-40 minutes. Serve hot.

Total calories per serving: 137 Fat: 2 grams
Carbohydrates: 25 grams Protein: 5 grams
Sodium: 150 milligrams Fiber: 4 grams

CITRUS QUINOA (Serves 4)

Serve this recipe as a hot, thick breakfast beverage, as part of a hot dessert, or over sliced fruit or sorbet.

- 3/4 cup quinoa**
- Water to cover quinoa**
- 4 cups freshly squeezed orange juice**
- 1 Tablespoon arrowroot**
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- Sugar to taste (Use your favorite vegan variety.)**

Rinse the quinoa and place it in a medium-sized pot. Cover with 2 inches of water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and add the orange juice. Stir and simmer until quinoa is soft, approximately 20-40 minutes. Slowly whisk in the arrowroot until desired thickness is reached. Stir in the vanilla and remove from heat. Taste the quinoa and stir in a small amount of sugar. Continue to taste and add sugar until the desired level of sweetness is achieved.

You can serve this dish as is, or purée it in a blender or a food processor for a smoother texture. Serve hot.

Total calories per serving: 239 Fat: 2 grams
Carbohydrates: 50 grams Protein: 6 grams
Sodium: 9 milligrams Fiber: 2 grams

LOCRO DE ZAPALLO (ACORN SQUASH STEW) (Serves 6-8)

This creamy, spicy stew makes a wonderful entrée on its own or can be served over steamed rice, quinoa, or amaranth.

- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil**
- 1 cup finely diced onions**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 teaspoons finely minced fresh chili (You choose the heat!)**
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano**
- 3 cups peeled and large-diced hard winter squash, such as acorn, butternut, or banana squash**
- 1 cup fresh or thawed frozen green peas**
- 2 cups peeled and large-diced boiling potatoes**
- 1 cup corn kernels (Fresh corn is best, but thawed frozen will work.)**
- 1/2 cup soft silken tofu**
- 1/2 cup vegan cream cheese**
- 2 teaspoons white pepper**
- 1/4 cup diced green olives**
- 5 cups hot cooked rice**

Heat a large pot and add the vegetable oil. Sauté onions until tender, approximately 4 minutes. Add garlic, chilies, and oregano, and sauté and stir for 3 minutes. Add squash, peas, potatoes, and corn. Cover pot and allow stew to simmer until squash and potatoes are soft, approximately 1 hour.

Stir in the tofu, cream cheese, and pepper and cook, stirring, until the cream cheese is melted and flavors are blended. Cover and allow to simmer for 5 minutes.

Pour stew into a large serving bowl and garnish with olives. Serve over steamed rice.

Total calories per serving: 421 Fat: 12 grams
Carbohydrates: 71 grams Protein: 10 grams
Sodium: 299 milligrams Fiber: 8 grams

YUCCA EMPANADAS

(Makes 6 empanadas)

Empanadas are filled pastries that are usually deep-fried in fat, but this recipe creates a baked version. Make a double batch, bake, cool, and freeze until needed.

1 pound fresh yucca
Water to cover yucca
1/4 cup melted nonhydrogenated vegan margarine
1/4 cup all-purpose or whole wheat flour
2 Tablespoons vegan sour cream
1 Tablespoon baking powder
1 cup grated vegan mozzarella or other melting vegan cheese
Vegetable oil spray

Peel and chop the yucca and place in a medium-sized pot. Cover with 3 inches of water, bring to a boil, and cook until yucca is tender, approximately 15 minutes.

Remove yucca from heat, reserving the cooking water. Put yucca in a bowl or a food processor and mash until smooth. Mix in the margarine, flour, sour cream, and baking powder, and combine. You want a dough that you can work with easily. If the dough is too dry and does not stick together, slowly add some of the reserved cooking water.

Divide the mixture into two balls. On a clean surface, roll out one ball to approximately a 1-inch thickness. Cut into 3-inch circles. Place a small amount of vegan cheese in the center of each circle and fold each circle in half to make a pocket. Seal by pressing the ends together with your fingers and then marking with a fork (like a pie crust). Continue with the second dough ball.

Spray a non-stick baking sheet with vegetable oil. Place the

empanadas on the baking sheet and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place baking sheet in the oven and allow to bake until the dough is golden and the filling is hot, approximately 15 minutes.

Note: If you would like to fry a batch of empanadas, heat 2 cups of vegetable oil in a large pot and fry empanadas at least 3 minutes until they are golden. Drain on a towel and serve hot. Obviously, this version will be higher in fat than the baked version.

Total calories per empanada: 275 Fat: 14 grams
Carbohydrates: 36 grams Protein: 2 grams
Sodium: 379 milligrams Fiber: 2 grams

PERUVIAN-STYLE RICE

(Serves 6-8)

This is one style of Peruvian fried rice. It works best with leftover cooked rice.

Vegetable oil spray
1/2 cup cooked and crumbled vegan bacon
1 cup finely diced red bell peppers or drained canned pimentos
1/4 cup minced fresh cilantro
1 cup fresh or thawed frozen corn kernels
1/2 cup toasted peanuts or soy nuts
2 teaspoons soy sauce or Bragg's Liquid Aminos
3 cups cooked and cooled white or brown rice

Heat a large skillet and spray with vegetable oil. Add the vegan bacon and red peppers. Cook and stir until the red peppers are soft, approximately 3 minutes. Add the cilantro, corn, nuts, and soy sauce. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Add in rice and mix well to combine. Cook for approximately 5-15 minutes until rice is heated, mixing constantly. Serve hot.

Total calories per serving: 227

Carbohydrates: 31 grams

Sodium: 233 milligrams

Fat: 8 grams

Protein: 9 grams

Fiber: 3 grams

CAMOTILLO (SWEET POTATO DESSERT)

(Serves 6-8)

Serve this dish as a dessert on its own, or use it to fill empanadas for breakfast or a sweet snack. Also, it can be used to fill pie shells and baked as a pie.

2 pounds sweet potatoes, not peeled

Water to cover sweet potatoes

1/4 cup orange juice concentrate

1/2 cup sugar (Use your favorite vegan variety.)

2 teaspoons fresh orange zest

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

Place the sweet potatoes in a large pot, cover with water, and bring to a boil. Cook for at least 15 minutes until potatoes are fork-tender. Remove the potatoes from heat, drain, and peel. Mash them or use a food processor until you achieve a smooth purée.

Place purée in a medium pot. Add orange juice concentrate, sugar, and zest. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens. (This could take anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes.) Allow to cool for 30 minutes before serving.

Place purée in a serving bowl, garnish with cinnamon, and serve.

Total calories per serving: 214

Carbohydrates: 52 grams

Sodium: 84 milligrams

Fat: <1 gram

Protein: 3 grams

Fiber: 5 grams

SWEET YUCCA DESSERT

(Serves 6-8)

Serve this dish in a large bowl for dessert or breakfast, and watch

everyone dig in! It can be prepared the day before and reheated.

2 pounds peeled yucca

4 cups vanilla soymilk

1/2 cup maple syrup

2 cinnamon sticks

1 cup vanilla soy yogurt

**A small amount of arrowroot or cornstarch,
if needed**

1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon

Steam or boil the yucca (as you would potatoes) until they are soft and then drain.

Purée the yucca and soymilk together in a blender or a food processor. Pour mixture into a medium-sized pot, add maple syrup and cinnamon sticks, and bring to a fast boil, stirring. Lower heat to a simmer.

Continue to stir and cook for 5-15 minutes until the mixture is slightly thickened. Remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature (70 degrees).

Place mixture back on stove, bring to a simmer, and stir in soy yogurt. Cook and stir for 5-15

minutes until the mixture is thickened. If a thicker consistency is desired, add a small amount of arrowroot or cornstarch.

When thickened, place mixture into a serving bowl, garnish with ground cinnamon, and serve.

Total calories per serving: 415 Fat: 3 grams
Carbohydrates: 88 grams Protein: 7 grams
Sodium: 91 milligrams Fiber: 3 grams

Nancy Berkoff is The VRG's Food Service Advisor, as well as the author of *Vegan in Volume* and *Vegans Know How to Party*.

Denny's Offers Amy's Kitchen Vegan Burger on a Vegan Bun

By VRG Research Director Jeanne Yacoubou, MS

IN LATE AUGUST 2010, ALL DENNY'S RESTAURANTS in the United States added Amy's Kitchen Veggie Burgers to their menus. This vegan patty replaces the vegetarian burger that Denny's had been offering. The burger is available during any time of the day at every Denny's location in the U.S.

The listed menu item is served with pepper jack cheese, but restaurant patrons may request the veggie burger without cheese. Those with food allergies should note that the vegan patty contains textured soy protein concentrate and walnuts.

If ordered as listed, the veggie burger is served on a wheat bun that contains honey. Customers may request the white sesame seed burger bun instead; it is entirely plant-based. Neither bun contains L-cysteine, a common bakery ingredient usually derived from human or hog hair or from duck feathers.

Denny's prepares its Amy's burger in a microwave without the plastic packaging. Then, it is grilled on a surface where meat products were prepared. Denny's told The VRG that patrons may request that their patty be microwaved only and/or grilled in a sanitized pan previously used to prepare omelets. Denny's assured The VRG that employees will do everything possible to ensure that customers are happy with their order.

Visitors to Canada and Canadian vegans may be

pleased to learn that Denny's restaurants in Canada serve Yves Vegan Burgers.

For more information on ingredients, see <www.vrg.org/ingredients/index.php>.



"That's an urban myth. These things don't feel pain so I have nothing to feel bad about."

ECOCRITICISM

The Intersection of Literature and the Environment By Heather Gorn

THIS ARTICLE PROVIDES A (VERY) BRIEF OVERVIEW of a literary studies field known broadly as ‘ecocriticism.’ Other terms that tend to be fairly synonymous with ecocriticism are ‘environmental criticism’ and ‘green studies.’ Addressing this topic in a two-page article is difficult at best, and cannot avoid compromising the complexities and subtleties of the issues at hand. With that in mind, I have included a recommended list of introductory resources at the end for those who are interested in delving deeper.

Ecocriticism, defined broadly as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment,” is an emerging literary studies field that began burgeoning in earnest in the late 1980s and early ’90s. During this time, the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was founded, as was its journal, *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE)*. When *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* was published in 1996, seminal works by scholars who had been writing almost unaware of each other were brought together for the first time in one collection.

Ecocriticism is “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.”

The term ‘ecocriticism’ first appears¹ in William Rueckert’s 1978 essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism,” in which he uses ecological principles as a model for thinking about how literature functions. He looks, for example, at poems as containing renewable stored energy that is released when the poem is read, taught in a classroom, etc. This stored energy, which derives from the imagination of the poet (who serves as a sun of sorts), is not simply used once but over and over, particularly in the case of constantly read classics. He speculates that perhaps

the imagination is the energy flow upon which the human community depends.²

Rueckert’s original usage of the term ‘ecocriticism’ is narrower than what the term has come to embrace. What constitutes ecocritical work is intentionally broad and open-ended inasmuch as ecocriticism quite literally takes the entire world as its subject. An ecocritical project might examine the following:

- > The role of nature in a poem
- > The function of ‘place’ in a novel
- > Land metaphors as gendered
- > The idea of the garden
- > The rhetoric of environmental policies
- > The language of tourist materials

A SAMPLE ECOCRITICAL READING

To see ecocriticism in the practicum, let’s take a brief look at the 1914 poem “Oread” by H.D. (Hilda Doolittle):

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—

 Whirl your pointed pines,

 Splash your great pines

 On our rocks,

 Hurl your green over us,

 Cover us with your pools of fir.³

In Greek mythology, an oread is a mountain nymph, but what relationship does the oread have to the poem? Is she the narrator? The addressee? H.D. collapses traditional lyric conventions and whirls together narrator/ addressee, subject/object, nymph/nature into a tenuous interconnectedness that is at once refracted and organic. A nymph—as a spirit of nature embodied in the form of a youthful, beautiful girl—is a figure somewhere between human and nature, and the poem enhances this liminality by blurring these divisions.

This poem is most often discussed in relation to Imagism, a movement based on the poems of H.D.

and promulgated by Ezra Pound. In Pound's essay "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," he defines an 'Image' as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."⁴ This definition shifts the significance of an 'image' to the internalized response it solicits; and yet, while this poem solicits the kind of 'complex' Pound describes, there is a palpable insistence upon the primacy of the things themselves, and specifically upon the role of nature—and by extension natural imagery—to induce this 'complex.'

Whether on the part of the oread, the author, or something in between, there is a call for some type of green reclamation. Five imperatives ("whirl," "whirl," "splash," "hurl," and "cover") summon a fairly violent, erotically charged, and biblically resonant flood. In this new kind of poetry, H.D. also fashions a new classical aesthetic rooted in nature.

ECOCRITICISM AS ACTIVISM

There tends to be an activist component to ecocriticism. In her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader*, Cheryll Glotfelty says:

[...] most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the troubling awareness that we

FURTHER RESOURCES

There is an increasing number of books available on ecocriticism. Several that provide good introductions and a variety of essays include:

- > Barry, Peter. "Ecocriticism." *Beginning Theory*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009.
- > Branch, Michael P., and Scott Slovic, eds. *The ISLE Reader: Ecocriticism 1993-2003*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 2003.
- > Coupe, Laurence, ed. *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- > Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- > Glotfelty, Cheryll, and Harold Fromm, eds. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996.
- > Tallmadge, John, and Henry Harrington, eds. *Reading Under the Sign of Nature: New Essays in Ecocriticism*. Salt Lake City: U of Utah P, 2000.

have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support systems[...] Our temperaments and talents have deposited us in literature departments, but, as environmental problems compound, work as usual seems unconscionably frivolous. If we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem.⁵

Through ecocriticism, scholars are able to integrate an environmental aspect into their work, thereby cultivating an awareness of environmental issues and asserting their significance. In his book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*, Lawrence Buell included this element in his definition of ecocriticism, stating that ecocriticism is "conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis."⁶ However, requiring this as part of what defines ecocriticism has been a point of contention.

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- ¹ Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. xx.
- ² Rueckert, William. "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. 105-123.
- ³ Doolittle, Hilda. *Collected Poems, 1912-1944*. Ed. Louis L. Martz. New York: New Directions, 1983. 55.
- ⁴ Pound, Ezra. "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste." *Poetry* March 1913. Web. <www.poetryfoundation.org/journal/article.html?id=335>.
- ⁵ Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. xx-xxi.
- ⁶ Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996. 430.

VRG Volunteer Heather Gorn is studying English at Cambridge.

Ecocriticism As Vegetarian Activism

By Jeanne Yacoubou, MS

ECOCRITICISM, SOMETIMES CALLED ‘ENVIRONMENTAL criticism’ or ‘green studies,’ is a field of study that began only a few decades ago, primarily in university English departments. It focused on environmental literature (for example, the nature writing of famous vegetarian advocate Henry David Thoreau). Today, with all kinds of environmental crises all over the world, the scope of ecocriticism has broadened immensely. People from fields as seemingly diverse as art, history, politics, economics, and biology are applying it to their work. More importantly, they are drawing connections between ecocriticism and various social, economic, and political theories, including those related to animal rights, feminism, and Marxism.

Ecocriticism originally focused on environmental literature, like Thoreau.

As a new field, people are still working out its precise definition, theoretical underpinnings, subject matter, and methodologies. A common thread expressed by most writers is that ecocriticism analyzes relationships (1) between nature and culture focusing on people’s involvement in those relationships, and (2) between human and non-human entities (such as dogs, cows, elephants, rivers, mountains, Earth, etc.). The study is always done in a “spirit of environmental praxis,” according to Lawrence Buell, a Harvard literature professor regarded as one of ecocriticism’s foremost scholars.

‘Praxis’ refers to the union of theory and practice. Ecocritics, then, write to promote environmental activism. In this article, The VRG proposes some ways that vegetarians can enter the ecocritical discussion.

HOW CAN VEGETARIANS BE ECOCRITICS?

One very simple way that vegetarians may enter the ecocritical discussion is to stop using or ignoring discriminatory language that reflects similarities among

classism, racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, speciesism, homophobia, and, now, ‘ecophobia.’ Through the use or passive acceptance of certain words or phrases, people continue to ingrain these forms of domination throughout society, leading to unstated beliefs that they’re acceptable. Examples include using ‘dirt’ with its environmental connotation when referring to the urban underprivileged class of people, ‘raping the land’ or ‘virgin forests’ when talking about environmental degradation in sexual terms, ‘chick’ when referring to women, or ‘dog,’ which anti-Semites repeatedly called Shylock in Shakespeare’s play, *The Merchant of Venice*. Such usage belies the fact that—as Peter Singer argued in *Animal Liberation* in 1975—racism, sexism, and speciesism have fundamentally identical roots in one group’s domination by another. (The same could be said about the other ‘-isms’ listed above.) Ecocritics expand the moral circle even more to include the environment.

Ecocritics, like some vegetarians, counter anthropocentric notions that place humans at the center of the universe. Many environmentalists disagree with this idea as well. In fact, many vegetarians and environmentalists believe that humans should not have dominion over all other beings, yet many environmentalists (and ecocritics) continue to eat meat.

Vegetarian ecocritics may offer arguments about the extent of the environmental damage that results directly from livestock grazing and raising.

Vegetarian ecocritics, using the United Nations’ *Livestock Long Shadow* as support, may engage meat-eating environmentalists in discussions and offer arguments about the extent of the environmental damage that results directly from livestock grazing and raising.

(See Issue 2, 2010, of *Vegetarian Journal* or <www.vrg.org/journal/vj2010issue2/2010_issue2_grain_meat_ratios.php>.)

Also, in discussions and in communication with government officials, educators, and business leaders, vegetarian ecocritics may dispel pastoral myths associated with country living, often found in environmental literature, especially ones depicting farm animals grazing peacefully outside on sunny days. We know that, today, even ‘free-range’ eggs almost always come from large henhouses holding thousands of birds who never see daylight except through an opaque window and are fed human-edible grains. (See Issue 2, 2007, of *Vegetarian Journal* or <www.vrg.org/journal/vj2007issue2/vj2007issue2.pdf>.)

Apartment dwellers can install rooftop vegetable gardens, rainwater tanks, and compost tumblers.

Environmental racism—for example, when toxic dumps are located next to poor, often African-American or Hispanic communities—is another topic on the ecocritical agenda. Simon Estok of Sejong University in South Korea often writes that ecocritics should pay more attention to this form of racism. (He also advocates vegetarianism on ecocritical grounds.) Vegetarian ecocritics can join the discussion by pointing out that intensive animal agriculture businesses, when not treating wastes properly, may be considered toxic dumps that pollute the environments of nearby communities. Other concerns, such as the health and safety precautions that agribusiness takes to protect employees (often poor immigrants), should also be investigated to see if environmental racism is present and to what degree.

Another result of Estok’s work in ecocriticism has been to shift focus away from wilderness to metropolitan areas (i.e., toward constructed ‘environments’ rather than just ‘natural’ environments). This makes sense given that most humans live in urban areas. Urban vegetarian apartment dwellers/ecocritics can request or install rooftop vegetable gardens, rainwater tanks, and compost tumblers, all in the name of environmentally conscious living. This has already been accomplished in several large cities. Vegetation on rooftops has other environmental benefits, too.

Raising Vegetarian Ecocritical Children

Ecofeminist Greta Gaard has outlined ecopedagogical criteria for children’s books in an article titled “Children’s Environmental Literature: From Ecocriticism to Ecopedagogy” (*Neohelicon* [2009] 36:321-34). In this article, she discusses the themes of several children’s books that raise consciousness against forms of domination, such as those against other animals and the environment. Titles include the following:

- > *Oi! Get Off Our Train!* by John Birmingham
- > *‘Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving* by Dav Pilkey
- > *Rani and Felicity: The Story of Two Chickens* by Radha and Aparna Chakrabarty
- > *Mojo’s Story of Clara the Chicken* by J. Greene
- > *Lena and the Whale* by Deirdre Kessler
- > *Buddy Unchained* by Daisy Bix and Joe Hyatt
- > *Abigale the Happy Whale* by Peter Farrelly
- > *The Harvest Birds (Los Pajaros de la Cosecha)* by Blanca López de Mariscal and Enrique Flores

Gaard’s list is unique from other ‘green’ lists of children’s books in that it is “activist in orientation, dedicated to teaching children and their adults the strategies of sustainability, connection, and democratic community-building that considers and involves all life on earth.” She states that her form of ecopedagogy “can illuminate the many anti-ecological features of economic globalization, particularly its effect on food production ... around the world, [people] are abandoning traditional diets centered around plant-based foods in favor of unhealthy Western-style fast food and a meat-centered diet.”

As *Livestock’s Long Shadow* from the United Nations pointed out, this transition often involves more intensive animal agriculture and exacerbates environmental problems.

Ecocritics explore the sense of ‘place’ (i.e., the ‘setting’ in literature) that people have/develop with their physical environment. Aldo Leopold, author of the famous “Land Ethic,” stated that weeds in a city lot can convey the same lessons as redwoods to those open to hearing them. Indeed, even cities as huge as Los Angeles or New York cannot exist separately from the ecosystems of which they are parts.

BIOREGIONALISM

Bioregionalism, focusing on the specific locale of a community and the connectedness that exists between residents and the physical region, is thought of as a complement to ecocriticism. The successful Foxfire approach to education, in which Appalachian students collected and published oral histories and folk knowledge from community members during the 1960s, is one example of bioregionalism. Vegetarian parent ecocritics can encourage this approach at their children’s schools in relation to local food production.

Erik Ryberg, a concerned citizen living in Montana with graduate-level training in English, offers another example of how bioregionalism can directly affect the environment in relation to food production in one’s local area. Ryberg successfully appealed a number of grazing allotment renewals (i.e., permits for private companies to graze their livestock on public lands).

Vegetarian ecocritics could bring another viewpoint to the decision-makers, one that differs from that of livestock owners and agribusiness seeking land permits.

He stated that such documents are understandable and can be successfully appealed. Environmental impact statements (EISs), offers of timber sales on public lands, and state water appropriations bills are other documents that are available to the public and often subject to public appeal. Vegetarian ecocritics could use evidence presented in *Livestock’s Long Shadow* and similar literature to formally appeal decisions. They could bring another viewpoint to the decision-makers, one that differs from that of livestock owners and agribusiness seeking such permits, and affect real environmental change on the local level.

Furthermore, vegetarian ecocritics can use *Livestock’s Long Shadow* and similar documents to do some work on the global level. Recall the 1987 Montreal Protocol that led to a global ban on ozone layer-destroying chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). If ecocritics’ demand leads to a similar collaboration concerning the causative role of animal agriculture in environmental problems, changes in both local and global food production could result.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOs)

Another global issue of concern to vegetarian ecocritics involves genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Some individuals, such as *Biopiracy* author Vandana Shiva, fear environmental ‘neocolonialism,’ in which

Vegetarians have much to say and much to do on practical levels to further the goals of ecocriticism.

Western scientists or governments work with biotechnology companies to ‘buy’ genetic resources in developing countries for their own profits. The genes are manipulated in labs and then inserted into other organisms to create hardier species (e.g., faster-growing or drought-resistant organisms). This occurs in the case of both plants and animals.

ECOPEDAGOGY

Ecopedagogy, or ‘green language arts,’ is another complement to ecocriticism that may be of particular interest to vegetarian parent ecocritics. Simply put, ecopedagogy brings environmental awareness and focus to reading, writing, and media studies. Interested readers may find more information at <www.greenharted.org>.

CONCLUSION

Much work in the field of ecocriticism remains to be done as environmental problems around the world continue to multiply in both scale and number. Vegetarians have much to say and much to do on practical levels to further the goals of ecocriticism as it applies to food production’s role in environmental issues.

Jeanne Yacoubou is VRG’s Research Director and writes regular updates about product ingredients and restaurants. She holds master’s degrees in philosophy, chemistry, and education.

Foodservice Update

Healthy Tips and Recipes for Institutions from The Vegetarian Resource Group

Implementing Salad Bars in Public Schools

A Survey of School Food Service, Parents, and Students By Ashley Boss

IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT CONSUMING FRUITS and vegetables is good for your health. Dr. Lorelei DiSogra, Vice President of Nutrition and Health at the United Fresh Produce Association, said, "Research has shown that children significantly increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables when given a variety of choices in a school salad bar. When offered multiple fruit and vegetable choices, children respond by trying new items, incorporating greater variety into their diets, and increasing their daily consumption of fruits and vegetables" (United Fresh Campaign, 2010). So, why is it then that many schools do not include a daily salad bar as an option for their students?

Special Thanks to These Schools and School Districts

- Cambridge Public Schools in Massachusetts
- Col. Zadok Magruder High School in Montgomery County, Maryland
- Pasco County Schools in Florida
- Seminole County Schools in Florida
- Walnut Valley Unified School District in California
- West Orange County Public Schools in New Jersey

Also, thank you to all who took the time to answer The VRG's online survey!

The Vegetarian Resource Group has spent many months interviewing school nutrition services staff, teachers, parents, and students across the nation. After speaking to several persons involved in school nutrition, VRG found that there are numerous factors that prohibit some schools from offering a salad bar. One of the major reasons is that schools have to follow strict USDA guidelines as to what they must include in their daily lunches. For example, according to Walnut Valley Unified School Nutrition Services in California, middle school students are required to have 2 ounces of protein in addition to vegetables and a milk serving. Furthermore, many of those interviewed shared common complaints about having a salad bar in schools:

- Cost
- Wastefulness
- Equipment expenses
- Limited space
- Monitoring the salad bar
- The salad bar's popularity

VRG also spoke with several people from schools that have implemented salad bars successfully, and they offered advice for addressing these complaints.

COST

For many schools, cost is a huge determinant of which foods they include in their daily menus, as are standards set by federal guidelines. Some of the school representatives with whom I spoke purchase their foods through

a bid and contract system; essentially, this means that schools let distributors know which food items they want to purchase and, in return, distributors give them their best deal. Then, the schools decide who has the best deal and from whom they would like to purchase. (This system is much like the process of finding a contractor to work on your house.) For some, this process may limit which food items they have access to, whether they are able to purchase food items locally, and how much control they have over what they can purchase. (For example, schools can only purchase what is being offered by distributors.) The schools that had successfully implemented salad bars offered some advice to make them cost-effective. (See sidebar below.)

WASTEFULNESS

A complaint related to cost was wastefulness. A few schools said that, if all of the food on the bar had not been eaten by the end of the day, they must throw it out. Again, purchasing carefully is one means of combating this particular issue.

How to Make a Salad Bar Cost-Effective

- 1) Purchase items when they are in season. For example, if tomatoes are in season, they are likely to be plentiful and, therefore, inexpensive. This is the time to include them on your salad bar.
- 2) Know your audience and purchase accordingly. For instance, if eggplants didn't sell well the last time you served them, don't buy them again.
- 3) Keep produce at the correct temperature to decrease food spoilage and waste.
- 4) For some schools, charging by the ounce was an effective way of ensuring cost effectiveness.
- 5) Start small. Offer only six or seven items until you determine the salad bar's popularity.
- 6) Look for grants that may be used to improve school nutrition, increase the number of fruits and vegetables in schools, or purchase new equipment. These are offered by individual states and sponsored by businesses such as Whole Foods. Learn more about their Great American Salad Bar Project at <www.saladbarproject.org>.

One solution to wastefulness is donating leftover food. While many homeless shelters and food banks will not accept food items that are not packaged according to set standards, many nonprofits like Food Not Bombs will gladly take these donations. According to Food Not Bombs Co-Founder Keith McHenry, the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (below) states that persons are not to be held liable when donating food items:

- (1) *Liability of person or gleaner—A person or gleaner shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or an apparently fit grocery product that the person or gleaner donates in good faith to a non-profit organization for ultimate distribution to needy individuals.*
- (2) *Liability of nonprofit organization—A non-profit organization shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or an apparently fit grocery product that the non-profit organization received as a donation in good faith from a person or gleaner for ultimate distribution to needy individuals.*

EQUIPMENT EXPENSES AND LIMITED SPACE

Two common complaints are related to one another: the need for costly equipment (for example, a cold unit) and the lack of space for the equipment. One school's solution to both was to use a BBQ set-up (that the school already had) and to load it with fresh vegetables.

Another viable option was to offer pre-made salads instead of a salad bar. Doing so may be a solution to a lack of equipment, and it may alleviate some of the issues surrounding cost effectiveness and waste. Still, many of those who answered our survey felt that, when schools offered pre-made salads, they were left with few vegetarian or vegan options and often with unfresh salads. (According to some, it seems as if the salads are made only once every few weeks.)

While it may not always be possible, making the pre-made salads fresh would increase their popularity. To maximize the number of salads purchased, serve the toppings separately. For example, offer add-ons such as tofu cubes, chickpeas, and dressings in single-serving containers. This way, vegetarians, vegans, and other students can customize their salads based on their dietary needs and personal tastes.

MONITORING THE SALAD BAR

A few of the school administrators I interviewed complained about monitoring issues, that is, having to keep a close eye on the salad bar because students were putting items in the food or playing with the food. One school's solution to monitoring problems was to make the salad an extra item to be added to the traditional lunch, instead of offering it as an entrée. This way, no personnel were needed to monitor the food.

Also, some complained that they didn't know if students had clean hands when they went to the salad bar. Hand sanitizer dispensers could be stationed at the entrance to the cafeteria or the food line, and students can be encouraged to use them through announcements.

THE SALAD BAR'S POPULARITY

One of the biggest complaints among school nutrition services is that salad bars aren't popular enough among students to make them worth the school's efforts, especially since financial resources are already stretched. However, schools that have implemented salad bars say that this simply is not the case. VRG spoke to the food service staff person for West Orange County Public Schools in New Jersey, who said that children do like vegetables and that exposure to new veggies at a young age contributes to proper nutrition for years to come.

"One of the biggest complaints among school nutrition services is that salad bars aren't popular enough among students to make them worth the school's efforts."

Salad bars are also hugely popular with Cambridge Public Schools in Massachusetts. According to their Nutrition Services, the items that are most popular with their students include romaine lettuce and croutons.

It is important to use foods that students will like, but also pick foods that are culturally appropriate for your student population. For example, Southwestern and Mexican cuisines are popular in California.

One way to boost the salad bar's popularity is through promotion. The schools with successful salad

Food Items That Survey Respondents Would Like To See Offered on School Salad Bars

Fruits and Vegetables

- Baby Corn
- Beets
- Bell Peppers
- Cranberries
- Green Peas
- Mushrooms
- Red Cabbage
- Red Onions
- Romaine Lettuce
- Scallions
- Shredded Carrots
- Spinach
- Veggie Sticks for Dipping

Proteins

- Baked or Marinated Tofu
- Bean Salads
- Chickpeas
- Gardein Products
- Hummus
- Nuts (e.g. Almonds, Walnuts)
- Seitan

Dressings and Toppings

- Fried Onions
- Guacamole
- Olives
- Olive Oil
- Pickles
- Salsa
- Sunflower Seeds
- Vegan Dressings
- Vinegar(s)

Other Lunch Items To Be Served

- Almond Milk
- Brown Rice
- Bruschetta
- Grain- and Legume-Based Salads (Quinoa, Lentils, etc.)
- Vegan Nachos
- Veggie Burgers

* For more information on serving vegetarian meals in school, check out VRG's article in Issue 3, 2005, of *Vegetarian Journal*.

bars felt that simply offering the salad bar was enough to ensure that students would eat from it. However, faculty members, parents, and students interviewed through VRG's online survey had some useful tips that they felt would aid promotion:

- Serving free samples/free taste tests
- Having students create posters to hang throughout the school
- Conducting student surveys
- Sending parents info, such as menus, photos, etc.
- Exhibiting the salad bar options at parents' night
- Providing nutrition classes that promote the benefits of including fruits and vegetables in one's diet
- Offering cooking and gardening classes

"Treat the salad bar like you would a business, including marketing and budgeting. Re-examine product costs regularly."

Popular food service distributors used by those surveyed:

- Lancaster Produce (Maryland)
- Performance Food Group AFI (New Jersey)
- Swiss Produce, Buena Park (California)
- Todd Tomatoes (Florida)

Other distributors with vegetarian and vegan options:

- Chartwells
- Sysco
- Sodexo

Gardein garden protein is offered by numerous food distributors. See <www.gardein.com> for a complete list of food distributors.

NOTE: Many food distributors offer pre-planned meal plans. However, those researched did not offer a salad bar option.

Brenna Sirois, a high school student from Salado, Texas, made a suggestion that will appeal to technologically savvy students. Her school has a 'my favorite salad bar combo' blog on its website. Students submit pictures of their favorite salad combos—the stranger and more colorful, the better! You can let students vote on their favorites and award a silly prize each month. For example, recognize 'the salado combo of the month.'

A FEW MORE TIPS ABOUT SALAD BARS...

- Prepare foods ahead of time.
- Using a self-serve approach makes it easier.
- Solicit advice from school districts that have found a way to make salad bars work.
- Treat the salad bar like you would a business, including marketing and budgeting. Re-examine product costs regularly.
- Search for possible government grants, such as funding to increase education about proper nutrition.

CONCLUSION

Though it may seem that there are many roadblocks to implementing a successful salad bar in your school, there are several approaches that have been proven to be successful for other schools that you should try. There are also additional resources featured at the end of this article to assist you in implementing a salad bar in your school.

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- "United Fresh Launches 'Salad Bar in Every School' Campaign." United Fresh Produce Association. February 11, 2010. Web. Accessed July 2010. <www.unitedfresh.org>.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Slusser, Wendy, et al. 2007. "A school salad bar increases frequency of fruit and vegetable consumption among children living in low-income households." *Public Health Nutr* 10:1490-96.

United Fresh "Salad Bar in Every School" Campaign. <www.unitedfresh.org>.

Ashley Boss wrote this article during a VRG internship. She is a graduate student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Food Service Produce Providers for Salad Bars

- Earthbound Farm
1721 San Juan Hwy.
San Juan Bautista, CA 95045
(800) 690-3200
www.ebfarm.com
Products: Bulk organic baby greens and salad mixes as well as other organic vegetables
- Foxy Organics
The Nunes Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 673
Salinas, CA 93902
(831) 751-7500
www.foxy.com
Products: Wide range of produce
- Frieda's, Inc.
P.O. Box 58488
Los Angeles, CA 90058
(800) 241-1771
www.friedas.com
Products: Wide variety of produce, including Asian and Latin items, chiles, tropical fruits, and much more
- Giorgio Foods, Inc.
P.O. Box 96
Temple, PA 19560
(610) 939-9400
www.giorgiofoods.com
Products: Mushrooms
- Grimmway Farms
P.O. Box 81498
Bakersfield, CA 93380
(661) 845-5200
www.grimwway.com
Products: Fresh and frozen produce
- Mann Packing Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 690
Salinas, CA 93902
(800) 285-1002
www.mannpacking.com
Products: Ready-to-use produce mixtures, including broccoli with baby carrots, cauliflower, and other veggies; broccoli coleslaw; stringless sugar snaps; and more
- Melissa's/World Variety Produce, Inc.
P.O. Box 21127
Los Angeles, CA 90021
(800) 588-0151
www.melissas.com
Products: Wide variety of produce, including organics, tropical, exotic, Asian, Latin, and more
- Phillips Mushroom Farms
1011 Kaolin Rd.
Kennett Square, PA 19348
(610) 925-0520
www.phillipsmushroomfarms.com
Products: Mushrooms
- Tanimura & Antle, Inc.
P.O. Box 4070
Salinas, CA 93912
(800) 772-4542
www.taproduce.com
Products: Pre-chopped salad mixes and vegetables

Taken from <www.vrg.org/fsupdate/FSUProducts2010.php>

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 Vegetarian Resource Group in your will or life insurance policy will enable us to increase our work for vegetarianism.
- One suggested form of bequest is: *I give and bequeath to The Vegetarian Resource Group, Baltimore, Maryland, the sum of _____ dollars (or if stock, property, or insurance policy, please describe).*
- To be sure your wishes are carried out, please speak with your attorney specifically about writing the correct information in your will.

HOW TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE SALAD BARS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

BY JULIA DRIGGERS, RD

AS CHILDHOOD NUTRITION TAKES CENTER STAGE in our nation's capital, primary schools around the country have been focusing on improving the quality of food in their cafeterias. A number of schools in the U.S. are at the forefront of this movement, incorporating fresh salad bars into their menus every day. The salad bars not only provide guidance for healthy eating habits, but they can also help increase the students' fruit and vegetable consumption. Salad bars in primary schools are an excellent way to help young America get healthy and fit; however, establishing and maintaining a salad bar requires both key planning and execution.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

When first planning to start a salad bar, there are a few major issues to consider.

1. Where will we get the resources to start up and maintain the salad bar? Where will our produce come from? What will be offered?

Getting started can be a financial challenge.

Experts suggest contracting with a local farm and using seasonal produce, which is the most cost-effective approach. You could also think about establishing a school garden to cultivate produce right there on campus. In addition, it is important to track your National School Lunch Program participation to make sure you are using your government commodities wisely.

In terms of set-up, using self-serve salad bars is most economical. Offer foods that you know the students will like! A combination of four or five vegetable options, two or three fruit options, two or three protein options, and four or five different dressings works well. Make sure to keep good records about how much food is purchased and how much is wasted so you do not overorder!

2. Do we need any special prep equipment for cutting, larger refrigerators, or the physical salad bar itself? Will we have a centralized kitchen, or will each school staff prepare its own produce?

Your school district may have a food service contractor who will have information about purchasing new equipment. Commercial-grade equipment can be very expensive. Schools may have to cover their bottom line by charging higher rates for goods in the beginning to pay for equipment. If your district has a flexible contract, you may also be able to contact outside vendors.

Having a centralized kitchen is best if you're having trouble covering equipment cost. Just be mindful of added delivery costs.

3. How will we price the salad bar? Will it be priced per pound? Should it be included on all lunches as a side item? Can it be offered to those on reduced and free lunches?

Most schools choose to offer the salad bar as a side item included with all regular, reduced, and free lunches. Students are also able to purchase the salad bar meal only at a set price. Prices vary depending on grade level, with elementary school having the lowest cost and high school having the highest cost.

4. How will we educate the staff about this change, as well as new sanitation standards for the salad bar?

It is important to have employee in-service meetings outlining proper produce handling and salad



bar upkeep. Make sure that school janitors and maintenance employees are involved in these talks since they are the ones who will be cleaning the areas and repairing the equipment.

Prepackaged and ready-to-use produce is more sanitary, so using this option can cut down on labor and human exposure.

5. What educational approaches will we use to promote the salad bar?

If you want your salad bar to be successful, you must educate your students about healthful eating. If possible, have nutrition teachers who can provide age-appropriate, hands-on nutrition education. Frequent taste testings, in which students try new foods and decide what the school should offer, are popular. Also, colorful fruit and vegetable posters, literature, and special theme-meal days can help keep interest.

Laina Fullum, Nutrition Department Superior of Columbia Public Schools in Missouri, has had a salad bar in her school district for many years now and helped with the suggestions above. When starting, she advises a slow integration process. Pilot a salad bar in one or two schools to note challenges and develop corrective action plans that can be carried over to future cafeterias.

PROMOTE YOUR PROGRAM

It is essential that both the cafeteria personnel and the school faculty support the program's goals and expectations. Ann Cooper, Director of Nutrition Services at Boulder Public Schools, recommends educating your staff on the importance of fruit and vegetable consumption and outlining how it can help improve the students' well-being. Your cafeteria workers will be the on-site promoters of the salad bars.

Once your school is on board, it's time to present your idea to the community. Most parents welcome the idea of a salad bar. The possibility that their children will be offered more produce at lunch time is appealing. However, most parents have concerns about the sanitation of the produce and the salad bar area. It is imperative that you outline the sanitation standards you have in place for your salad bar and explain how your staff has been trained in these procedures.

After the school and parents back your program, the next step is the most fun! Now, you get to promote the salad bar to your students. Be as creative as possible! Educate, engage, and have students participate in some

activities related to fruit and vegetable consumption. Then, watch the kids gobble down their greens!

ADVOCATE FOR SALAD BARS IN YOUR SCHOOL!

Parents are key players in establishing school salad bars. Below are a few tips on how to help get the word out.

1. Talk to other parents about the importance of providing healthful foods in schools. By gaining others' support, you can become more effective.
2. Draft a petition outlining the need for more healthful options in the cafeteria and have every interested parent, grandparent, caregiver, etc., sign it. Present this to your child's school board, PTA, and nutrition services personnel.

IDEAS FOR STOCKING YOUR SALAD BAR

	BEST SELLING SALAD BAR ITEMS	LEAST SELLING SALAD BAR ITEMS
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Apples● Bananas● Oranges● Sliced Pears● Strawberries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Canned Items● Purées
Veggies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Baby Carrots● Broccoli● Cherry Tomatoes● Cucumber Slices● Onions● Romaine/Spinach Mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Baby Corn● Beets● Celery Sticks● Radishes
Proteins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Chickpeas● Hummus● Kidney Beans● Peanut Butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Cottage Cheese

- 3.** Contact local farms, grocers, or businesses that may be interested in supporting salad bars in your school area. Have them promote your idea in their stores, news circulars, and flyers. Ask them to host taste-testing events where they promote healthful foods, and have children in your area participate.
- 4.** Talk directly to the school district's superintendent. Outline the need for more healthful options in cafeterias, and show the support of others in your community.
- 5.** Remember that change can be hard, but with perseverance and a can-do attitude, you can make a difference in the health of your children—and their friends, too!

TASTY VEGAN DRESSINGS	
BRANDS	VARIETIES
Annie's Naturals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Roasted Garlic Vinaigrette (Organic) ● Tuscany Italian
Newman's Own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balsamic Vinaigrette ● Lighten Up Italian ● Lighten Up Raspberry & Walnut ● Lighten Up Low-Fat Sesame Ginger
Organicville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● French ● Herbs De Provence Vinaigrette ● Miso Ginger Vinaigrette ● Tarragon Dijon Vinaigrette

CONCLUSION

Salad bars in schools help promote good eating habits that stay with students long after the school day ends. Schools that already have salad bars agree that offering fresh produce in their cafeterias is one of the best changes they ever made for their students. As Laina Fullum states, "The salad bars offer an indirect bargain for our students. We pay more now to get better results later."

If you're thinking about getting a salad bar in your school, make sure to consider all aspects of planning and promoting. Then, JUST DO IT!

Julia Driggers was a dietetics intern with The VRG and is now a registered dietitian. She wrote this issue's "Nutrition Hotline," which begins on page 2 and continues on the opposite page. She also contributes to The VRG Blog at <www.vrg.org/blog>.

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NUTRITION HOTLINE

(Continued from page 2)

QUESTION: "I've recently switched from a vegetarian to vegan diet and have gained weight! Is this common?"

ANSWER: When making the switch from a vegetarian diet to a vegan one, there are several points that you should keep in mind:

- Don't replace your lowfat yogurt with potato chips on a daily basis! Be careful about which foods you choose to substitute into your diet. Remember that not all vegan foods are low in calories. Some choices, especially convenience items, can be loaded with sugars, fats, and excess calories. Check the label to identify what is in the product and how much.
- Just because foods do not contain animal products does not necessarily mean they are healthful. As with any diet, it's important to choose nutritionally dense foods such as fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, and whole grains most often and to limit empty calorie foods that mainly contain sugar and fat. Candy, soda, coffee drinks, vegan mayonnaise and margarine, and salad dressings are all examples of foods that are high in calories and should be limited.
- Watch out for healthful vegan foods that are still high in calories. Nuts, nut butters, hummus, and falafel are mainstays of many vegan diets but should be eaten in moderation. In other words, consuming half a jar of peanut butter each day isn't a good idea! Even small portions of such foods are high in calories, and a little bite here and there can really add up.

If you find yourself needing to eat more food to be full, try incorporating more fiber into your diet. Ways to add fiber include eating raw fruits and vegetables; using whole grains like bread, brown rice, or quinoa; and incorporating high-fiber breakfast cereals or cereal bars into your new vegan diet. Flaxseeds and chia seeds can also be added to meals to increase fiber content.

● Sometimes, our bodies trick us into feeling hungry when all we need is fluid! The best thing to drink is water. However, if you are in the mood for something sweeter, consider lowfat, low-sugar milk alternatives or 100 percent fruit juice mixed with water. If you're watching your weight, try to limit caloric beverages to no more than 4-6 ounces a day.

● A final thing to remember is that 'energy in' should equal 'energy out.' In more loose terms, don't eat more calories than your body needs.

The best way to increase your 'energy out' is to exercise! By exercising 30 or more minutes most days of the week, you can increase your body's metabolism. By increasing your metabolism, you can burn more calories when your body is at rest. This can help promote weight loss and sustain weight maintenance. Just remember not to gorge on vegan cupcakes to reward yourself after a hard workout!

QUESTION: "I recently went to an Indian restaurant and discovered that some traditional breads are made with milk and butter. Which Indian breads contain dairy products, and which ones don't?"

ANSWER: Indian breads are often made from *maida*, a finely ground wheat flour very similar to cake flour, as well as water and salt. Depending on the type of bread, it may also include oil, yeast, yogurt, milk, or ghee. (Ghee is a type of clarified Indian butter. It can be mixed into the dough or brushed on top of the bread before baking.)

Breads that typically contain milk, ghee, or yogurt include *roti*, *paratha*, *kulcha*, and *bhatoora*. Indian breads that are usually vegan are *naan*, which is a leavened, oven-baked flatbread, and *poori* (or *puri*), which is a deep-fried flatbread.

Still, it is a good idea to ask your server how the restaurant prepares each bread! Some that are typically vegan may be prepared with yogurt or ghee, while some typically non-vegan breads may be made without dairy.

Also, you could ask your server if it's possible to replace ghee in your bread of choice with oil. Remember that it never hurts to ask!

MEATLESS IN MOSCOW

BY KERYL CRYER

WHEN MY FRIEND TERESA FOUND A GREAT TRAVEL package to Moscow, Russia, I immediately accepted her invitation to go along. Taking in the Kremlin, Red Square, and St. Basil's Cathedral over six days certainly sounded exciting to me!

We expected to have trouble mastering Russian basics like 'hello' (*zdra-stvooy-tyeh*) and 'thank you' (*spa-si-ba*), and we knew it would be difficult to interpret the Cyrillic lettering on maps and signs. However, we were correct in thinking that our greatest challenge would be navigating Moscow's culinary scene. Teresa has been vegan since 1995, and I have been vegetarian for a decade. What were we going to do in a country where much of the populace doesn't consider ham or salami to be 'real meat?'

Luckily, a couple of guidebooks and some Internet research led us to a few Moscow restaurants with vegetarian options and even two that are completely meatless! All were inside of the brown metro line (#5) that indicates the city's center and within a few metro stations of many major attractions.

Our first stop was our 1980 Olympics-era hotel, the **Izmaylovo Vega** (71 Izmaylovskoye, 495/956-0506, www.hotel-vega.ru). Our stay included a daily breakfast buffet, which featured many items available on a typical brunch menu ... and then some. (I don't think even the most adventurous carnivores went for what the catering staff referred to as 'hedgehog meat.') There was a large table with an impressive assortment of breads, such as ryes and Russia's famous black bread, and a variety of jams to complement those. Produce included fresh bananas, apples, pears, and watermelon, as well as a small salad bar with lettuce, beets, carrots, and similar veggies. There was also a delicious oat porridge that we concluded must be vegan since it was the only offering of its kind that didn't have 'dairy' on the sign, and there were dried apricots, raisins, prunes, and nuts to top that.

Before our trip, I had checked five guidebooks out from the library and taken copious notes about any restaurant that had phrases like 'a good choice for vegetarians' in the description. Of course, guidebooks, and even the Internet, aren't always the most current

sources of information. One volume that I found listed a vegetarian Asian restaurant called Tofu, said to be popular with international travelers and young Russians alike. Teresa and I wandered around the neighborhood for about half an hour before a very patient teenaged girl (whose English skills were as limited as our Russian ones) personally walked us to the address. What may have been Tofu at one point was now the *back* of a large house. Similarly, both Teresa and I had found information about a vegetarian café with Indian food called Dzhagannat Express. It is now an antiques store.

Luckily, only a few doors down from where Dzhagannat Express once stood is **Jagannath** (11 Ulitsa Kuznetsky Most, 495/628-3580, www.jagannath.ru). Located only blocks from the Kuznetsky Most metro stop, it is a stereotypically new-age vegetarian establishment, complete with sari-clad staff,



Choosing from Jagannath's offerings, which are served cafeteria-style works by local artists adorning multi-colored walls, and a community bulletin board covered in yoga studio and palm reading fliers. Offerings are sold cafeteria-style, with diners requesting servings of sneeze guard-covered food and adding them to their trays as they move down the line.

All of the signs were in Cyrillic, so much of the ordering process was a guessing game for us. In spite of this fact, our party ended up with a nice variety of cuisine—subtly-flavored cold borscht, samosas, yellow curry with tofu and vegetables over white rice, and tasty



Dining on the covered patio in front of Avocado

fried shish kabobs that turned out to have tomatoes, tofu, and seitan inside once I got past the batter. In addition, Jagannath is connected to a small natural foods store that sells canned beans and chickpeas, boxes of couscous, and other vegetarian staples. It was the only place in Moscow where we saw peanut butter, rice milk, oat milk, or a choice of soymilks. Make sure to stop in on your way out of the restaurant.

Our most pleasant dining experiences in Moscow had to be at **Avocado Vegetarian Café** (12 Chistoprudny Bulvar, 495/988-2656). It's well worth what seems like the 10-block trek from the Chistye Prudy metro stop to this bright, simply decorated eatery with a covered patio out front. The menu is in English and indicates with a star which items are 'strict vegetarian.' (Note that honey is an ingredient in some of their 'strict vegetarian' dishes.) Vegan options that are available year-round include a hot spinach salad (with sun-dried tomatoes, red onions, walnuts, and basil), carrot schnitzel, buckwheat noodles with vegetables and sesame sauce, farfelle with sun-dried tomatoes and lots of garlic, and a veggie burger made from soy meat and lentils and served with French fries. Also, the seasonal menu allowed us to indulge in a delightfully autumnal pumpkin soup topped with pistachios.

Avocado was our top pick for vegan desserts in Moscow, with choices like non-dairy mousses and black currant, pear, pineapple, and strawberry-raspberry sorbets. They also have an impressive drink menu with juices, soft drinks, coffees, teas, hot and cold cocktails, and wines. The restaurant does have a breakfast menu, but don't expect to find scrambled tofu on it. Nearly every item involves or includes eggs.

The Old Arbat is one of Moscow's main tourist-oriented shopping districts, as well as the home of **Shashlyk-Mashlyk** (38/1 Ulitsa Arbat, Building 1, 495/241-2107, <www.arbat38.ru/shashlik>). One

of my guidebooks indicated that this non-vegetarian Caucasus restaurant has an English-language menu with a sizable vegetarian section. The book was right about the translations on the bill of fare, but the vegetarian selection was smaller than we had hoped for. There were typical green salads, a variety of fresh or pickled vegetable sides, white and dark breads, and many boiled items, including potatoes, buckwheat, and rice. Fortunately, there was also a variety of vegan eggplant dishes, including aubergines with vegetables and Oriental-style aubergines that were stuffed with fried vegetables and spices. I ordered the aubergines with nuts appetizer—boiled eggplant slices surrounding generous servings of a delectable walnut-and-spices spread. Then, Teresa and I both feasted on hearty vegetarian vegetable soup, laden with broccoli, cauliflower, potatoes, string beans, carrots, and peas.



Shashlyk-Mashlyk, located in the Old Arbat shopping district

By the end of our trip, Teresa concluded that she had an easier time finding vegan food when she went to Swaziland than she did in Moscow. Don't let that scare you away from visiting Russia, though! Moscow is very cosmopolitan. In addition to the places where we dined, you can find Asian, Indian, and Ethiopian restaurants if you get off the beaten path. We also ran across a surprising number of American chains, including Sbarro, Starbucks, Subway, and TGI Friday's, that surely have heard their shares of Westerners request vegetable sandwiches and cheeseless pizzas.

Vegetarians and vegans who visit Moscow may not have as many options as they are used to, but they certainly won't starve. Worst case scenario, they will develop a new appreciation for paprika-flavored Pringles!

Keryl Cryer is the Senior Editor of VJ. She travels extensively and has visited 26 states, eight countries, and four continents (so far).

SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

By Reed Mangels,
PhD, RD, FADA

A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

British Study Examines Omega-3 Fatty Acids in Vegetarians and Vegans

Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) are omega-3 fatty acids that come primarily from fish. Non-fish-eaters get small amounts from eggs, but until the advent of fortified foods and supplements, vegans had to rely on their own production of EPA and DHA. Our bodies can make these from another omega-3 fatty acid, alpha-linolenic acid, that is found in flaxseeds, canola oil, walnuts, and other foods. EPA and DHA production is believed to be limited, however.

A recent study from the UK examined dietary intake and blood levels of EPA and DHA in people who eat fish and people who don't eat fish. The latter category was subdivided into meat-eaters, vegetarians, and vegans. Not surprisingly, fish-eaters had the highest intakes of DHA and EPA; the other groups had very low or no dietary DHA or EPA. Vegans, for example, had intakes of EPA that were 18 percent (women) and 8 percent (men) of the fish-eaters' intakes. Somewhat surprisingly, blood levels of EPA and DHA in non-fish-eaters, including vegetarians and vegans, were higher than would be expected based on dietary intake. This suggests that conversion rates of alpha-linolenic acid to DHA and EPA may be higher than would be predicted from earlier studies.

The results of this study must be tempered by its limitations. First, the number of subjects who ate vegan diets—only five men and five women—was quite low. Secondly, a vegan was defined as someone who did not eat meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, or eggs for the 7-day period during which food records were kept. If the subjects ate fish before that, this could have a marked effect on the study results. In addition, blood levels of EPA and DHA were quite variable, so we can't say with any confidence that vegans can effectively convert alpha-linolenic acid to EPA and DHA.

These fatty acids appear to play a role in reducing heart disease risk and possibly dementia, diabetes, and asthma. Additional study is needed to determine whether fish avoiders are more efficient at making their own EPA and DHA.

For more information about omega-3 fatty acids, see pages 22-26 of *Vegetarian Journal*, Volume XXVI, Issue 1, 2007 (<www.vrg.org/journal/vj2007issue1/vj2007issue1.pdf>).

Welch AA, Shakya-Shrestha S, Lentjes MAH, et al. 2010. Dietary intake and status of n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids in a population of fish-eating and non-fish-eating meat-eaters, vegetarians, and vegans and the precursor-product ratio of alpha-linolenic acid to long-chain n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids: results from the EPIC-Norfolk cohort. *Am J Clin Nutr* 92:1040-51.

Calcium Supplements May Be Associated with Increased Risk of Heart Attack

Many people, especially those over age 50, take calcium supplements to prevent or treat osteoporosis. Recently, a large study raised concerns that healthy older women who take calcium supplements might be at increased risk for heart attacks. Investigators used a technique called meta-analysis, in which the results of a number of studies are combined, to examine the possible relation between calcium supplements and heart attacks.

The researchers used data from 15 studies in which one group received calcium supplements and one group did not. Use of calcium supplements was associated with a 30 percent increased risk of heart attack, regardless of gender or the amount of the calcium supplement. In people with dietary calcium intakes of less than 800 milligrams per day, calcium supplements were not associated with an increased risk of heart attack. In contrast, those with dietary calcium intakes above 800 milligrams were at a higher risk of heart attack.

Studies where participants took both calcium and vitamin D and were compared to participants not receiving calcium or vitamin D were not included in this analysis. Supplements that combine calcium and vitamin D may not have the same effect as supplements that only contain calcium since vitamin D supplementation has been associated with a reduced mortality.

The researchers conclude, "Given the modest benefits of calcium supplements on bone density and fracture prevention, a reassessment of the role of calcium supplements in the management of osteoporosis is warranted."

For those vegans and vegetarians with low dietary calcium intakes, calcium supplements appear to reduce the risk of fracture (www.vrg.org/journal/vj2007issue4/vj2007issue4.pdf) and should probably be used if dietary calcium is not adequate. For those whose diets are adequate in calcium, additional supplemental calcium may not be advantageous.

Bolland MJ, Avenell A, Baron JA, et al. 2010. Effect of calcium supplements on risk of myocardial infarction and cardiovascular events: meta-analysis. *BMJ* [Epub ahead of print].

Low-Carbohydrate Diets

High-protein, low-carbohydrate diets have been promoted as weight loss diets. Typically, these diets feature high amounts of animal protein, saturated fat, and total fat; limited carbohydrate; and little fiber. Researchers wondered what effect long-term use of these diets would have on mortality. Two large studies examined the effects of animal-based and plant-based low-carbohydrate diets on mortality in men and women. Study participants were identified as following a low-carbohydrate diet based on records of their eating habits. Dietary records were also used to classify them as using animal-based or more plant-based low-carbohydrate diets.

- Those who followed an animal-based, low-carbohydrate diet that emphasized animal sources of fat and protein had lower intakes of fruits and vegetables; those eating a plant-based, low-carbohydrate diet had higher intakes of whole grains.
- Those who ate a low-carbohydrate diet containing the most animal products had approximately a 20 percent higher mortality than those eating a low-carbohydrate diet containing fewer animal products. This group also had a higher mortality from cancer and heart disease.
- Those who ate a plant-based, low-carbohydrate diet had a 20 percent lower overall mortality and a lower heart disease-related mortality.
- While amounts of protein, fat, and carbohydrate appeared similar in both low-carbohydrate groups, there were probably large differences in fiber, protein source, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that could have affected results.

The researchers determined, "The health effects of a low-carbohydrate diet may depend on the type of protein and fat, and a diet that includes mostly vegetable sources of protein and fat is preferable to a diet with mostly animal sources of protein and fat."

Fung TT, van Dam RM, Hankinson SE, et al. 2010.

Low-carbohydrate diets and all-cause and cause-specific mortality. *Ann Intern Med* 153:289-98.

Vitamin D in Vegetarians and Vegans

Vitamin D appears to play an important role in bone health and may also be protective against several chronic diseases. Vegetarians do not eat some foods that contain vitamin D, such as oily fish and meat. In addition, vegans may avoid fortified foods such as cereals and vegan margarine that are fortified with a form of vitamin D that is derived from lanolin from sheep's wool.

Researchers in the UK wondered whether vegetarians and vegans would have lower dietary and blood vitamin D levels. They examined 1,388 meat-eaters, 210 fish-eaters, 420 vegetarians, and 89 vegans. On average, meat-eaters had the highest dietary intake of vitamin D, followed by fish-eaters, vegetarians, and vegans. Blood levels of vitamin D followed the same pattern—highest in meat-eaters, lowest in vegans. Although the vegans' average vitamin D intake was less than a quarter of the meat-eaters' intake, only 8 percent of vegans had blood vitamin D levels that were considered low enough to increase the risk for bone loss. These results were based on blood drawn in the winter. Because our skin produces vitamin D following sun exposure, blood levels of vitamin D are expected to be lower in the winter when less sun exposure occurs. When blood drawn during the summer and fall was examined, only 5 percent of vegans had low vitamin D levels.

There was a relation between dietary vitamin D levels and blood vitamin D levels in all groups, suggesting that it is important for everyone, including vegetarians and vegans, to have reliable dietary and/or supplement sources of vitamin D. Vitamin D sources for vegans include plant milks fortified with vitamin D and vitamin D supplements.

Crowe FL, Steur M, Allen NE, et al. 2010. Plasma concentrations of 25-hydroxyvitamin D in meat-eaters, fish-eaters, vegetarians, and vegans: results from the EPIC-Oxford study. *Public Health Nutr* [Epub ahead of print].

Tortilla Dishes

By Chef Nancy Berkoff, RD, EdD, CCE

CORN, FLOUR, WHOLE WHEAT, SPINACH, SUN-dried tomato, hard, soft, chips—so many tortillas to choose from!

You have many options for heating up **soft tortillas**. You can steam them in the microwave or in the oven, or if you have nimble fingers, you can quickly heat them over the stove's burner. If soft tortillas hold a regular place on your table, you may want to invest in a tortilla holder or warmer to keep them toasty throughout the meal. Of course, aluminum foil, a preheated ceramic or glass casserole with a cover, or a warm, clean towel can help to hold in the heat as well.

Many 'store-bought' **hard tortillas** are deep-fried. If you would like to have the hard shell without the frying, you can purchase a tortilla baker. We found one at <www.texmextogo.com/store/PPF/parameters/82_2/more_info.asp>. These are non-stick, metal forms that bake soft tortillas for approximately 10 minutes until they become harder, fluted tortilla bowls.

Or you can create your own tortilla baker by experimenting with small, ovenproof bowls, cups, or muffin tins. Use a bit of vegetable oil spray on your 'mold,' line with a tortilla, and bake until hard. You can generally bake tortilla shells several days before eating.

Making **baked tortilla chips** is easy! Just preheat the oven, spray a baking sheet, and cut soft tortillas into the desired shape, such as triangles or strips. If you like, you can sprinkle on some dried herbs, nutritional yeast, or spices. To make a small amount of chips, you can use a toaster oven.

Here are some tortilla meal ideas:

- **Tortilla Breakfast Pizza:** Bake, toast, or steam a tortilla. Top with vegan cream cheese and either preserves or chopped fresh ripe fruit.
- **Tortilla Soup:** This recipe is traditionally made with chicken stock. Use a vegetable broth instead and simmer with chopped onions, carrots, celery, and tomatoes. Just before serving, stir in some

baked tortilla chips so they can soften and soak up some of the flavor. Then, garnish with some chips as well so you get two textures.

- **Crunchy and Soft Baskets:** Bake or purchase a hard tortilla bowl. Spread a soft tortilla (that will fit inside the hard bowl) with refried or black beans. Place the soft tortilla, bean side down, into the hard bowl. You've now got a 'leakproof' bowl. Spread the soft tortilla's top side with beans, and then fill your basket with shredded romaine, spinach or mixed greens, cut corn, and other ingredients.
- **Wraps:** Rather than creating a conventional sandwich made with bread, use a soft tortilla to make a wrap. Top a large (at least 8 inches) tortilla with chopped salad, cooked beans, shredded vegan deli meat, minced smoked tofu or seitan, and a smidge of salad dressing or vegan mayonnaise. Roll tightly, and wrap in plastic wrap, aluminum foil, or parchment paper. Now, you are ready to go!
- **Pinwheels:** (*Pictured on the cover*) Use the 'wrap' technique described above, but only use 'smooth' ingredients, such as nut butters, vegan cream cheese, puréed beans or thick hummus, and minced veggies, such as olives, pimentos, and thin sprouts (such as alfalfa). Spread evenly onto the tortilla, and wrap tightly. Slice at 2-inch intervals or into bite-sized pieces to create attractive pinwheels.
- **Fast Micro-Mini Wraps:** For grab-and-go lunches, place a soft tortilla on a plate and spread a thin layer of hummus or vegan cream cheese on top. Add a slice of vegan deli meat and/or a slice of vegan cheese and a squirt of mustard. Microwave for 15 seconds to make the tortilla easier to roll. Roll tightly, slice in half, and wrap tightly in foil or parchment paper. This style works well for nut butters, vegan cream cheese and jelly, mashed beans, and even very thinly sliced vegan hot dogs, cheese, and mustard.

- **Quesadillas:** Shred vegan cheese and sprinkle evenly across a tortilla. Top the cheese with refried beans or mashed black beans. (If you like the convenience of prepared beans, there are several mainstream brands, such as Rosarita, that are vegan and nonfat.) Then, top the beans with salsa, chopped onions, chopped chilies, and/or minced olives. Cover with a second tortilla and steam in the microwave or bake in the oven until bubbly.
- **Layered Dinner:** This is a great way to use up leftovers! Spray a baking dish with vegetable oil. Put down a layer of baked tortilla chips, whole soft tortillas, or soft tortillas cut into strips. Select the ingredients for your layers, which can include mashed avocado; mashed, cooked beans or garbanzos; sliced, cooked potatoes; cooked veggies; chopped smoked

or firm tofu; leftover chili; shredded vegan cheese; vegan sour cream; leftover mashed potatoes, etc. Alternate layers of different ingredients with tortillas until the baking dish is full. Bake until hot and serve!

A great tip is to assemble your layers early in the morning and then refrigerate until ready to bake in the oven later in the day.

- **Tortilla Dessert Pizza:** Bake, toast, or steam a soft tortilla. Top with vegan cream cheese or nut butter, vegan chocolate or carob chips, and fruit preserves.
- **Sweet Tortilla Bowl:** Spread nut butter or vegan cream cheese onto a soft tortilla and place it into a bowl. Fill the tortilla with cooked and cooled grains, chopped fresh or frozen fruit, dried fruit, cold cereal or cinnamon tortilla chips, and/or vegan yogurt or frozen vegan desserts, such as Tofutti or Rice Dream.

NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

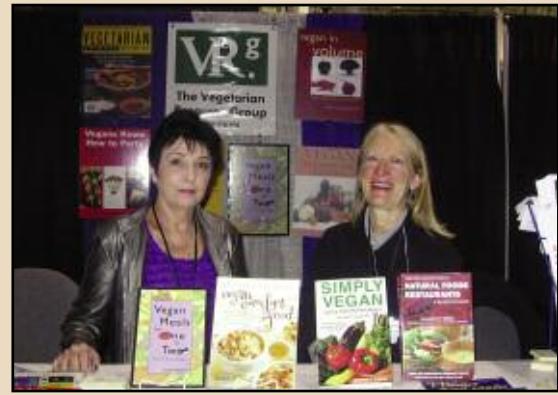
THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP IN THE NEWS

Vegetarian Resource Group Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, was interviewed about going vegetarian part-time for *Health Direct*, a health and wellness publication, and about becoming vegetarian for *The Philadelphia Daily News*. Also, the television station at Emerson College interviewed her about vegetarianism. Reed granted interviews about vegetarian children to *The Washington Post*, about tips for parents raising vegetarian children to the *NPR Science Desk* website, about high-protein vegetarian menus for children to *Every Day with Rachael Ray* magazine, and about vegetarian teenagers to *Today's Diet and Nutrition*. In addition, she spoke to CBS.com about latkes (potato pancakes), with assistance from VRG Coordinators Debra Wasserman and Charles Stahler, VRG Web Development and Consumer Research Manager John Cunningham, and VRG Food Service Advisor Nancy Berkoff, RD, EdD, CCE.

VEGAN OUTREACH

Vegetarian Resource Group Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels, PhD, RD; Virginia Messina; and Mark Messina wrote *The Dietitian's Guide to Vegetarian Diets, 3rd Edition*, which Jones and Bartlett Publishers recently released. Reed conducted a class about vegetarian pregnancy for 50 undergraduate nutrition majors at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and made a presentation about vegan diets for approximately 50 dietitians and nurses who work for the WIC program in Maryland. Furthermore, Reed helped to staff the VRG booth at the Boston Vegetarian Food Festival.

Reed presented a poster session at the American Dietetic Association's Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE). In addition, Reed (pictured, right) and longtime volunteer Cathy Conway, MS, RD, (left) worked the VRG booth during the conference. They answered questions about vegetarian and vegan nutrition, handed out VRG literature, and sold copies of VRG's books.



veggie bits

Cool Off With an Organic, Vegan Gelato or Sorbetto

Finding frozen desserts just got a bit easier! Blackwell's Organic, LLC, makes creamy soy gelati (Italy's answer to ice cream) in five irresistible flavors—Coffee, Peanut Butter, Peanut Butter & Chocolate Swirl, Vanilla, and the ever-popular Chocolate. In addition, Blackwell's has created organic sorbetti, which are water- and fruit-based confections akin to sorbet. Their sorbetti is available in refreshing Lemon, Mango, Orange, Pineapple, Raspberry, and Strawberry varieties.

You may buy Blackwell's gelati and sorbetti from select Whole Foods Markets and specialty retailers. However, you can also purchase them online at <www.blackwellsorganic.com> and get free shipping to anywhere in the continental United States. For additional information, you can write to Blackwell's Organic, LLC, at 323 Liberty Street, Long Branch, NJ 07740, or call (732) 229-8899.



Keeping It Seriously Simple

Simple Shoes is a California-based company that is committed to making footwear in ecologically sustainable ways. Many of their products are vegan and employ environmentally friendly materials such as recycled carpet padding. Anyone headed to the beach should check out the company's ultra-comfortable Flippees, made from recycled plastic soda bottles and water-based glues. Men will gravitate to an organic cotton slip-on named the GUMshoe and D-Solve athletic footwear with jute uppers. Women will go for the wide array of casual Satires with recycled-tire soles. Colors range from natural to charcoal (below) and from greystone (blue) to black, and the choices for laces include elastic, organic cotton, or recycled-plastic, grosgrain ribbons. Also, there are several durable, easy-to-clean selections for children. For example, toddler girls will be the envy of the playground when they sport aster purple Poodles with hook-and-loop closures and bright orange, non-marking soles.

Simple Shoes is a division of Deckers Outdoor Corporation. Visit <www.simpleshoes.com> for more information. You can also drop the company a line at info@simpleshoes.com or call (866) 896-3708.



Let's Fire Up the Grill!



Summer means cookouts, and cookouts mean barbecue sauce! One new option on supermarket shelves is Richard's Vegan Barbecue Sauce. Made without wheat, high-fructose corn syrup, or preservatives, this condiment will bring a Cajun kick to your favorite summer vegetables, tofu, and meat substitutes. So, the next time you pick up veggie dogs, make sure to grab a bottle of Richard's as well!

If you want to learn more, contact Vermont Made Richard's Sauces at 471 Bushy Road, St. Albans, VT 05478, or call (802) 524-3196. The company's website is <www.vtmadebbqu.com>.

Travel to Asia, And Don't Worry Once About Where You'll Eat

Green Tara Tours is a Mongolian-owned company that offers several travel options for the earth-conscious, complete with vegetarian and vegan meals. There are 12 different pre-packaged Adventure Tours, Medicine Tours for those interested in Eastern remedies such as acupuncture, and Spiritual Tours focusing on Buddhist monasteries and meditation retreats. The company can also accommodate travelers for Short Tours, which are four days or fewer, and can customize trips for groups.

For more information about traveling with Green Tara Tours, visit <www.greentaratours.com>. You can also send an e-mail to info@greentaratours.com or call (976) 9925-1131. Some staffers speak English, Russian, and Mongolian. *Written by Ashley Boss, VRG Intern.*

Bored With Apples or Oranges?

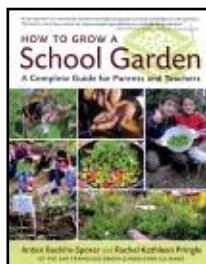


Then, Edward & Sons may have just what you're looking for! The company's Native Forest brand has canned varieties of exotic organic produce that can liven up even the most basic fruit salads. Now, you can reach for tree-ripened mangosteens, rambutans, and sliced Asian pears without ever setting foot in an orchard. All three make delightfully unexpected additions to smoothies, desserts, and other fruit-based treats.

Write to Edward & Sons Trading Company, Inc., at P.O. Box 1326, Carpinteria, CA 93014, or call (805) 684-8500. You can also visit the company's website at <www.edwardandsons.com>.

HOW TO GROW A SCHOOL GARDEN

By Arden Bucklin-Sporer and Rachel Kathleen Pringle



The authors of *How to Grow a School Garden: A Complete Guide for Parents and Teachers* are involved with the San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance. They strongly believe that it is important for children to spend as much time as possible outdoors, both to prevent obesity and to connect with nature. When children (and adults) work with school gardens, they hopefully develop a better understanding of the importance of nutrition and health.

The first half of *How to Grow a School Garden* focuses on creating and developing a school's garden space. The second half of the book includes tips on getting your community involved, raising funds to build and maintain your garden, designing a school garden, and finding the materials you will need. A handful of primarily vegan recipes using crops that may be grown are also featured.

Especially helpful is a section about making the case to build a school garden. Comments include the fact that students who grow their own food are more likely to eat fresh produce and to express preference for these items. Making gardens also encourages creativity and cooperation.

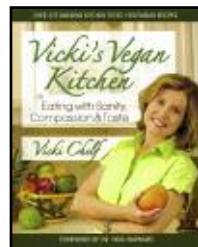
Additionally, the book includes examples of letters to use as guidance when introducing the project

to your community or going after funds. Sample garden designs are also offered, as well as lesson plans that teachers can use year-round.

***How to Grow a School Garden* (ISBN 978-1-60469-000-2)** is 224 pages and includes color photographs that will grab your attention. It is published by Timber Press. This book retails for \$24.95 and can be purchased online or at your local bookstore. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

VICKI'S VEGAN KITCHEN

By Vicki Chelf



Vicki Chelf has been a cooking teacher for years, and *Vicki's Vegan Kitchen* offers a wide range of healthful vegan options. Her creative recipes include Whole Wheat Waffles, Pumpkin Seed Paté, Rosemary and Garlic Focaccia, Petit Coconut-Ginger Scones, Arame-Orange-Watercress Salad, and Chestnut Porcini Bisque. The book also has recipes for Vegan Pesto, Homemade Stuffed Ravioli, Eggplant and Sun-Dried Tomato Pizza, Cajun-Style Okra, Bulgur and Sweet Potato Pilaf, Lentil Pie, Carrot Maple Cake, Melon Sorbet, plus more.

In addition to Vicki's recipes, I was especially impressed with her hand-drawn illustrations. Several of these depict step-by-step instructions to prepare dishes.

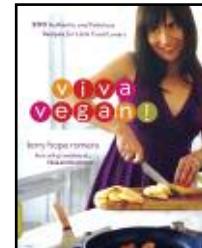
Vicki's Vegan Kitchen includes chapters about kitchen staples, cooking methods, and food preparation techniques, such as baking bread. Useful tips are also provided throughout the book. Although

nutritional analyses are not provided, most of the recipes appear not to be high in fat.

***Vicki's Vegan Kitchen* (ISBN 978-0-7570-0251-9)** is published by Square One Publishers. The book is 320 pages and retails for \$17.95. Purchase this cookbook online or at your local bookstore. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

VIVA VEGAN!

By Terry Hope Romero



Latin cooking can go far beyond chips and guacamole dips! Venezuelan-American vegan chef Terry Hope Romero shows you just how festive and inventive Latin cuisines can be with her new book, *Viva Vegan!*

Among the 200 recipes are Habanero-Melon-Papaya Salsa, Salvadorian Marinated Slaw, Yellow Chile Grilled Tempeh, and Chorizo Seitan Sausages. The book also includes recipes for Braised Brazilian Shredded Kale, Peruvian Potatoes with Spicy 'Cheezy' Sauce, Homemade Soft Corn Tortillas, Black Bean-Sweet Potato Tamales, Corn-Crusted Pumpkin-Potato Empanadas, and so much more.

Nutritional analyses are not provided; however, most of the recipes are not high in fat. The cookbook includes color photos and offers helpful tips throughout.

***Viva Vegan!* (ISBN 978-0-7382-1273-9)** is published by Lifelong Books and is 285 pages. It can be purchased online from The Vegetarian Resource Group at <www.vrg.org/catalog>. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

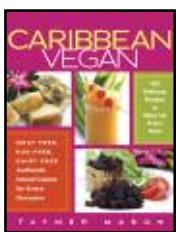
reviews

CARIBBEAN VEGAN

By Taymer Mason

As the title implies, *Caribbean Vegan* focuses on cooking traditions from islands such as Barbados, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Grenada, and the French West Indies. There are over 125 recipes, including a chapter about condiments and sauces, which play a vital part in Caribbean cuisine. Learn how to make Jamaican Jerk Seasoning, Bajan Pepper Sauce, and Trinidadian Coconut Chutney. Breakfast options include Sweet Potato Drop Biscuits and Banana Fritters, while the entrées chapter lets you sample Jerk ‘Sausages,’ Lentil Roast, and Jerk Pizza with Sweet Potato Crust. For dessert, try Gingerbread, Barbadian Coconut Turnovers, or Piña Colada Ice Cream.

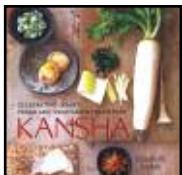
***Caribbean Vegan* (ISBN 978-1-61519-025-6)** is published by The Experiment, LCC, and is 256 pages. It retails for \$18.95 and can be purchased online or at your local bookstore. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.



KANSHA – CELEBRATING JAPAN’S VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN TRADITIONS

By Elizabeth Andoh

It is often difficult to find great-tasting Japanese vegetarian food since many Japanese dishes contain fish sauce or broth. Fortunately,



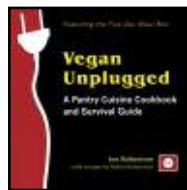
Kansha is a terrific book serving up Japan’s finest vegan cuisine. This cookbook features stocks and soups, rice and noodle dishes, soy-based entrées, desserts, and more. Some wonderful recipes include Festive Flower Sushi Rolls, Miso-Glazed Bitter Melon with Kabocha and Tofu, Candied Sweet Potatoes, and Roasted Rice Dumplings with Sticky-Sweet Soy Sauce.

***Kansha* (ISBN 978-1-58008-955-5)** is a 296-page hardcover book with color photos and is published by Ten Speed Press. It retails for \$35 and can be purchased online or from your local bookstore.

Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

VEGAN UNPLUGGED

By Jon Robertson
with recipes by Robin Robertson



Vegan Unplugged—A Pantry Cuisine Cookbook and Survival Guide teaches readers how to prepare for an emergency, such as a hurricane or earthquake, as well as when you lose power at home.

Chapter 2, “The Five-Day Meal Box,” includes menus and a shopping list for non-perishable items that can be stored in a 50-gallon lidded container. Dishes like Corn Chowder and Beat-the-Blahs Black Bean Patties, Curry in a Hurry, and Layered Tortilla Skillet serve four. Many of the recipes require short cooking times (using a camp stove); others, such as Chickpea Spread, Texas Twister Caviar, and Emergency Gazpacho, require no cooking at all.

Chapter 12, “Emergency Preparedness Guide,” includes a disaster supply kit list. And

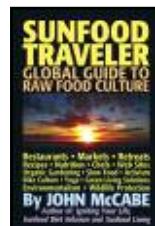
Chapter 13, “The Animals Need a Plan, Too,” reminds you to have an emergency plan for cats, dogs, and other animals in your care.

***Vegan Unplugged – A Pantry Cuisine Cookbook and Survival Guide* (ISBN 978-0-9800131-2-2)** is published by Vegan Heritage Press. It is 202 pages and retails for \$14.95. You can purchase it online at <www.veganheritagepress.com/order.html> or at your local bookstore.

Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

SUNFOOD TRAVELER

By John McCabe



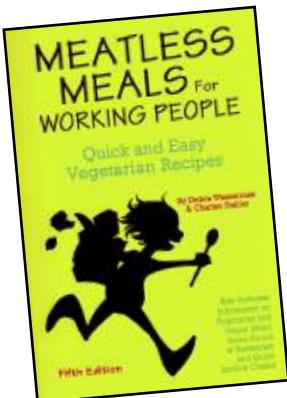
As raw foods establishments become more popular, *Sunfood Traveler: Guide to Raw Food Culture, Restaurants, Recipes, Nutrition, Sustainable Living, and the Restoration of Nature* will become a valuable resource. This new paperback guide provides information about where to find raw foods restaurants and retreats around the world, businesses that promote raw foods, raw foods websites, raw chef training, and so much more.

In addition, the book features a section called “Random Recipes for a Raw Kitchen” with approximately 70 dishes. These include Cabbage Pumpkin Seed Pâté, Sundried Tomato Butter, Stuffed Red Bell Peppers, Veggie Loaf with Gravy, No Bean Hummus, Marinated Mushrooms, Lemon Pudding, Apple Cobbler, Raw Ice Cream, and Holiday Nog.

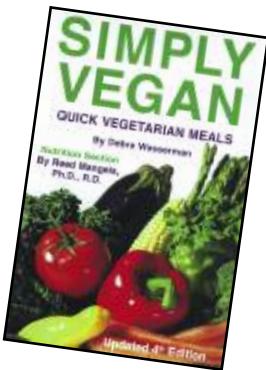
***Sunfood Traveler* (ISBN 978-1-88470-209-9)** is published by Carmania Books. It is 376 pages and retails for \$13.95. Purchase it online or from your local bookstore. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

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 100,000 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 90,000 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.

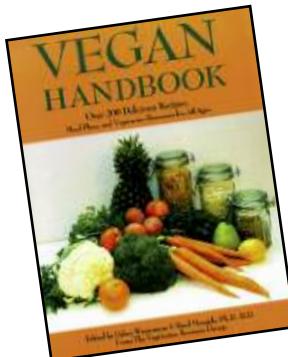
Vegan in Volume (\$20) by Nancy Berkoff, RD. This 272-page quantity cookbook is loaded with terrific recipes serving 25. Suitable for catered events, college food services, restaurants, parties in your own home, weddings, and much more.

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.



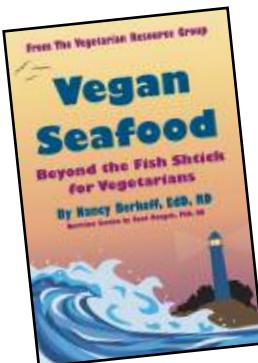
Vegan Handbook (\$20) edited by Debra Wasserman and Reed Mangels, PhD, RD. Over 200 vegan recipes and vegetarian resources. Includes sports nutrition, seniors' guide, feeding vegan children, recipes for egg-free cakes and vegan pancakes, Thanksgiving ideas, vegetarian history, menus, and more. (256 pp.)

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.

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.



Vegans Know How to Party (\$25) by Chef Nancy Berkoff. This 384-page book teaches you how to put on a soiree for vegans and all who enjoy great food! It features over 465 recipes, including appetizers, soups, salads, ethnic cuisine, sandwiches, and—of course—desserts like pies, cakes, and cookies! Also inside are tips for basic party planning, kids' parties, cooking for a crowd, working with a caterer, and more!



Vegan Seafood: Beyond the Fish Shtick for Vegetarians (\$12) by Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD. Chef 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!

Order Form

To order, mail to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203; place your order over the phone Mon-Fri 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time at (410) 366-8343; fax your order form to (410) 366-8804; or order online at our website: <www.vrg.org>.

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For other foreign orders, inquire about shipping charges first.

Mary Ella Steck and Centro Latino

By Veronica Lizaola

MARY ELLA STECK, A SPANISH COURT INTERPRETER and a Vegetarian Resource Group Life Member, has been passionately promoting a vegan diet in Colombia, Missouri, in an attempt to prevent obesity. She decided to volunteer at Centro Latino, which aims to bring health, educational, and cultural benefits to the local Hispanic community through its free and open services, as a way to truly make a difference in Missouri, where 31 percent of Hispanic adults are obese.

"Dietary changes are what I feel brings people the most benefit—health benefits, environmental benefits, and spiritually a more elevating lifestyle," she said.

Steck has been a vegetarian since 1994 and later transitioned smoothly to a vegan lifestyle. Now, the programs at Centro Latino allow her to promote the nutrition aspect of health, particularly the benefits of a plant-based diet, within her community.

For example, Steck coordinated the center's Fresh Start Program, which challenged willing participants to eat a plant-based diet for a month. Steck was inspired to begin this program from her own experiences. She once committed herself to eating raw for an entire month and found that so many benefits can arise once someone sets aside something in a very dedicated way. Additionally, Steck was inspired by the work of Dr. Baxter Montgomery, a cardiologist in Houston, Texas, who uses nutritional therapy with his patients and has held a month-long 'Boot Camp' to teach them about a natural, holistic way to better their health.

Centro Latino's own Fresh Start Program attracted about 20 people. The participants often attended the program's cooking demonstrations on how to prepare plant-based foods. "People are so used to opening boxes, opening cans, and going through a drive-thru rather than handling fresh lettuce," Steck said. Many participants reported weight loss and a better overall

feeling after the 30-day program, and many continue to implement the healthier diet choices learned from the program into their daily lives.

Steck also got involved with the children at Centro Latino. After a Mexican friend taught her how to make tamales, she adapted the recipe into a vegan version and made tamales with the children of Hispanic immigrants who come to Centro Latino for tutoring with university student volunteers. (For Steck's tamale recipe, visit <www.vrg.org/recipes/>.) Some of the ingredients for the tamales came from the Cesar Chavez Garden that Centro Latino maintains to help promote a fresh, healthy lifestyle in the community.

Likewise, Steck was involved with Veggie Friendly Kids in the Kitchen, Centro Latino's childhood obesity prevention intervention. This program introduced Hispanic children to a vast array of vegetarian products and encouraged them to help in preparing meals. Fresh produce, salads, fruit cups, Smart Dog veggie hot dogs, veggie tacos, and healthy pasta were just some of the offerings, as was an all-important exercise component.

Centro Latino's next plan involves building the *Comedor Popular*, or the People's Diner, a place where the center can educate the community further about cooking with fresh ingredients. Although more funding is still needed, a local architectural company has donated its services, and other nearby companies have generously donated their time. One day, Steck hopes to be able to cook there and bring cultures together.

As far as the future is concerned, Steck is looking forward to a lot of dietary changes in the community. "People are really ready for the benefits of a plant-based diet," Steck said.

Veronica Lizaola is an art history major at the University of Houston and wrote this article during an internship with The V.R.G.



Mary Ella Steck in the Cesar Chavez Garden at Centro Latino



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VRG Outreach Booths

The Vegetarian Resource Group was one of 1,500 exhibitors at BookExpo America in New York City. This three-day event is a huge exposition for booksellers, retailers, and other publishing industry professionals that attracts more than 21,000 participants annually. It was a great opportunity for VRG to hand out literature and make connections with others in the publishing field. Special thanks to Ashley Boss, Heather Gorn, Karen Lazarus, and Veronica Lizaola for helping to staff the VRG booth!



Kudos also to our volunteers who have staffed VRG outreach booths at various events around the country over the past year. These are just a few of them!

- The American Dietetic Association Annual Conference in Boston
- Beth El Green Festival in Baltimore
- The Boston Vegetarian Society Food Festival
- DC Veg Fest in Washington, D.C.
- Latino Festival in Maryland
- The Green Festival in Chicago
- San Francisco Vegetarian Society World Vegetarian Day Festival
- The Veggie Pride Parade in New York City
- And many more!

If you would like to volunteer at VRG booths or would like handouts or books for your own outreach activities, please e-mail vrg@vrg.org or call the office at (410) 366-8343.