

Everything Zucchini • Activist Vegan Doctor

# VEGETARIAN JOURNAL

Science, Caring, and Vegan Living since 1982

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Health • Environment • Ethics

SNAP Budget Meal Plan • page 26  
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# Nutrition Hotline

*This month's Nutrition Hotline addresses vitamin A toxicity and plant foods*

## Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

**QUESTION:** If I eat a lot of carrots and sweet potatoes, do I have to worry about vitamin A toxicity? CL, via e-mail

**ANSWER:** The short answer is, "No, you won't develop a vitamin A toxicity from eating a lot of carrots and sweet potatoes."

There are two forms of vitamin A in food. The first, called preformed vitamin A retinol, or retinyl ester, is found in foods from animal sources including dairy products, fish, and meat. This form of vitamin A would only be found in a vegan diet in supplements and fortified foods. Preformed vitamin A can be chemically synthesized.<sup>1</sup>

The second form of vitamin A comes from provitamin A carotenoids. These substances, which our body uses to make vitamin A, are found in plants, especially dark orange or yellow vegetables and fruits, leafy green vegetables, and tomatoes. The most important provitamin A carotenoid is beta-carotene. The two other provitamin A carotenoids are alpha-carotene and beta-cryptoxanthin. Even large amounts of the provitamin A carotenoids over a long period of time aren't associated with vitamin A toxicity.<sup>2</sup> Some studies

suggest that when blood vitamin A concentrations are high, a lower amount of provitamin A carotenoids are absorbed or converted to vitamin A. If you eat large amounts of food like carrots and sweet potatoes regularly, you may notice your skin has an orangish tint, which is especially visible on the soles of the feet and palms of the hands. This condition, called carotenodermia, is harmless and goes away when carotenoid intake is reduced.

In contrast, excess amounts of preformed vitamin A, either as a single massively large dose, or intakes consistently above what is considered a safe upper level, can cause vitamin A toxicity. Toxicity is usually reported following overuse of supplements containing preformed vitamin A, although there is at least one account of vitamin A toxicity after eating polar bear liver,<sup>3</sup> which is very high in preformed vitamin A. Symptoms of vitamin A toxicity include dizziness, nausea, headaches, and joint and bone pain; vitamin A toxicity can be fatal. Some studies have found that high intakes of preformed vitamin A are associated with reduced bone density and increased fracture risk. Excess intakes of preformed vitamin



A, typically from supplements, during pregnancy, can cause congenital birth defects. The Tolerable Upper Limit Level for preformed vitamin A is 3000 micrograms Retinol Activity Equivalents (10,000 IU) for adults including pregnant women. Provitamin A carotenoids from plants are a good way to get vitamin A without having to be concerned about toxicity. In addition, you'll get other benefits from fruits and vegetables, including fiber and vitamin C.

### REFERENCES:

- 1 Yacoubou, J. *Vegetarian Journal's Guide to Food Ingredients*. vrg.org/ingredients/index.php#vitamin\_a. Partially updated 2010.
- 2 Grune T, Lietz G, et al. Beta-carotene is an important vitamin A source for humans. *J Nutr*. 2010;140:2268S-85S.
- 3 Rodahl K, Moore T. The vitamin A content and toxicity of bear and seal liver. *Biochem J*. 1943-37:166-8.

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The VRG's website is [vrg.org](http://vrg.org).

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please send change of address to P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203. You may also e-mail a change of address to [vrg@vrg.org](mailto:vrg@vrg.org).

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*Vegetarian Journal* is one project of The Vegetarian Resource Group. We are a nonprofit that educates the public about veganism and the interrelated issues of health, nutrition, environment, ethics, and world hunger. To join VRG and receive *Vegetarian Journal* in the USA, send \$25 to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203, or go to [vrg.org/donate](http://vrg.org/donate). Additional donations support our outreach and research.



vrg.org

# Note from the Coordinators



## Vegan on a Budget

**W**ith all the new processed foods out there, sometimes people think being vegan is expensive. Ironically, because of low cost, many societies throughout the world generally ate little meat and mainly plant foods such as beans and rice, hummus, falafel, Chinese greens with bean curd (tofu), dahl and bread, Ethiopian injera and lentils, or a curry. On pages 24-29 Reed Mangels gives a meal plan for those receiving SNAP benefits or others who are on a budget. Thank you to Casey Brown, Lauren Capano, Emily Carter, Amy Dell, Emily Greco, Hannah Greene, Autumn Hengen, and Katie Nunemaker for helping with the research for this piece.

If you are a dietitian picking up this information at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Meeting, we hope that you can share the meal plan and recipes with your clients.

Skyler Kilmer, one of our volunteers, created a meal plan based on food from the Dollar Tree. Unfortunately, many people live in food deserts, where this is their main source of food. Though not optimal, this plan may be helpful to many in that situation: [vrg.org/nutrition/vegan-at-the-dollar-tree.pdf](http://vrg.org/nutrition/vegan-at-the-dollar-tree.pdf)

We know many of you are working on community gardens, farmers markets, and other ways to promote fresh fruits and vegetables. Thank you for your activism. In this issue, Lucía Rivera interviews Ana Negrón, MD (page 35), who promotes whole foods vegan diets to her patients and the community in Pennsylvania.

For those that do have easy access to veggies, get ready to go outdoors with Shannon Cebron's camping and hiking recipes (pages 6-12). Hannah Kaminsky (on pages 16-21) gives new ideas for creative zucchini dishes, and Chef Nancy Berkoff has tips for using fresh spinach (page 34).

The Vegetarian Resource Group's education, research, and outreach is possible only with our many volunteers and hardworking staff. Thank you to Marcy, who continues to teach vegan cooking classes to previously homeless people now in a residential situation; Jason who ensures all our information posted online is working; and our new volunteer coordinator Emilio, who makes sure you receive requested brochures for booths and other educational activities. Emilio is also a great cook of Italian vegan food, having grown up in a deli (family business), and is concentrating on converting those traditional recipes.

Here's to everyone's work for tasty, ethical, and environmentally sound meals.

*Debra Wasserman & Charles Stahler*

Handwritten signatures of Debra Wasserman and Charles Stahler in cursive script.

*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 vegan-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 veganism.

### Memorials & Honorary Gifts

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Make checks payable to The Vegetarian Resource Group and mail to P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203, or donate at [vrg.org/donate](http://vrg.org/donate).

Special thanks to the St. Louis Vegetarian Society for their generous donation towards VRG's Scholarship Program.

A donation was made by the Baskin and Burns families in honor of Arlee's special birthday.

A donation was made by Sondra Kahler in memory of Rex Kahler, and a donation was made by Judy Karpen in memory of Cliff Enz.

## Love Vegetarian Journal

Oh, Zel, how fabulous the Winter Delight recipes all look [*Issue 4 2019*]! The savory walnut sauce is the most delicious I have ever had. You are amazing. And I never seem to have much luck with eggplant although, when it's done right, I love it. I look forward to giving your meatless crumble roasted eggplant my best shot.

The Vegetarian Resource Group sent us a supply of *Vegetarian Journals* and we will give them out when we table again on Thanksgiving or also at the Holiday Market, which attracts thousands here in Eugene, OR. (Last year and the year before, on any given weekend, there were so many, we couldn't keep up with the demand!)

VRG staff: You are amazing as well. We greatly respect and appreciate your well-designed and interesting *Journals* to hand out when we table. They are very popular and always appreciated by everyone, including Eugene Veg Education Network (EVEN)!

Thanks for doing what you do. We are indebted to your kind and generous support of EVEN's vegan education efforts!

*Lin Silvan, Founder/Executive Director, Eugene Veg Education Network, via e-mail*

## Your Online Restaurant Guide is So Helpful!

I just had the pleasure of visiting Spokane, WA, and was so impressed, and delighted, at the vegan restaurants and options I found there! I live in Montana, and believe me, being a vegan, even a vegetarian, in this area is beyond hard for the rest of the population to fathom! The standard offering here is "Well... we have green salads..." HA! I've persisted for 35+ years, and appreciate, perhaps more than most, finding a vegan-friendly atmosphere elsewhere.

Anyhow, one place that I loved, and would most certainly return to if given the chance, is Cascadia Public House. They have a plant-based menu option, and the meal I had was absolutely phenomenal. I had the *Small Planet TLTA*, which was such an amazing sandwich that I took half home. The garlic fries were hands-down the best I've ever had, and only for those who truly LOVE garlic. Here is their website:

[cascadiapublichouse.com](http://cascadiapublichouse.com)

In an effort to help others make vegan choices if traveling, I'm making this offering to your oh-so-helpful restaurant list [[vrg.org/restaurant/index.php](http://vrg.org/restaurant/index.php)]! Thanks for helping us 'out here!' *Kendra S., via e-mail*

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](mailto:vrg@vrg.org) or send a message to us on Facebook: [facebook.com/thevegetarianresourcegroup](https://facebook.com/thevegetarianresourcegroup)

## Coming in the next issue...

## REFRESHING MOCKTAILS

**Plus:** Chilled Soups, Vegan Sugar Update, Colorful and Quick Bowl Meals, and more!

# Take It Outside

by Shannon Cebron

No matter the adventure, everything's better when there's good food to eat and share. My fondest memory of this truism in action is a kayak camping trip with friends last summer. Despite having to tie all of our supplies into kayaks, we somehow created the most wonderful vegan feast, and enjoyed it while watching the sunset on the beach. This collection of recipes is very much inspired by the food we ate that weekend.

Plant-based foods are ideal for outdoor experiences; many of them can be safely (and deliciously) enjoyed at room temperature. Most of these recipes are designed to be nutrient dense to fuel your journey.

So stash Trail Mix Cookies (page 10) and Whole Wheat Banana Bread Muffins (page 11) in your backpack and win over everyone on your hike. Warm a batch of Kale & Chickpea Scramble Burritos (page 12) over the campfire for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Paired with crackers, pita, carrot sticks, or celery, Roasted Garlic Everything Bagel Dip (page 8) is sure to re-energize you after a long dog walk at the park. Power your next trail run with a Curried Tofu Salad Sandwich (opposite page) and brighten up any picnic with Watermelon Herb Salad (page 9). However you choose to enjoy nature, take it outside and get going with a full tummy!



# Curried Tofu Salad Sandwiches

(Makes 6)

- 1 pound extra-firm tofu (or use 2 cups cooked and drained white beans)**
- ¼ cup unsweetened almond butter**
- 2 Tablespoons vegan mayonnaise or 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil**
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice**
- 3 Tablespoons miso (or chickpea miso)**
- 1 Tablespoon prepared mustard**
- 1 Tablespoon curry powder**
- 1 Tablespoon maple syrup**
- ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric**
- 1 clove garlic**
- 1 large green apple, cut into matchsticks or diced**
- 3-4 Tablespoons raisins**
- 1 large rib of celery, thinly sliced**
- 12 slices vegan bread of choice**
- Other sandwich toppings such as bean sprouts, lettuce, tomato, etc.**

Drain the tofu and press excess liquid from it, either using a tofu press or by wrapping it in a clean towel and stacking a heavy object on top of it for 10-15 minutes.

Add the tofu (or white beans) to a food processor or blender along with the almond butter, vegan mayonnaise, lemon juice, miso paste, mustard, curry powder, maple syrup, turmeric, and garlic. Process until smooth. Transfer out of the food processor and fold in the apple, raisins, and celery. Taste for seasoning.

Serve as a sandwich by spreading a generous amount of the Curried Tofu Salad between two slices of toasted bread with veggie toppings of choice.

Total calories per sandwich: 344 Fat: 15 grams

Carbohydrates: 41 grams

Protein: 15 grams

Sodium: 671 milligrams

Fiber: 5 grams





## Roasted Garlic Everything Bagel Dip

(Serves 6)

**½ cup raw cashews, soaked in hot water for 30 minutes, then drained and rinsed**  
**3 Tablespoons lemon juice**  
**2 teaspoons white vinegar**  
**2 Tablespoons olive oil**  
**1½ cups cooked white beans (or chickpeas equal to one 15-ounce can), drained and rinsed**  
**1 head roasted garlic (see note)**  
**¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**  
**¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**  
**3 Tablespoons everything bagel seasoning, divided (see note)**

Combine all the ingredients except for the everything bagel seasoning in a food processor or blender, and blend until completely smooth, adding water 1 Tablespoon at a time as needed to blend. Stir in the everything bagel seasoning by hand. Season to taste with additional pepper, lemon juice, or vinegar.

Serve with bagel chips, pita chips, crackers, or carrot and celery sticks.

*Cook's Notes:* To roast garlic, slice off the top of a head of garlic, rub it gently with oil, wrap in foil, and cook in the oven at 350 degrees for about 1 hour, or until tender.

If you cannot find commercial everything bagel seasoning, you can use 2 teaspoons each of poppy seeds, caraway seeds, and sesame seeds, plus ½ Tablespoon dried minced garlic and ½ Tablespoon dried minced onion.

Total calories per serving: 212	Fat: 9 grams
Carbohydrates: 20 grams	Protein: 7 grams
Sodium: 485 milligrams	Fiber: 4 grams



# Watermelon Herb Salad

(Serves 6)

**7-8 cups cubed watermelon (small, seeded melon)**

**1-2 cups cubed cucumber**

**Pinch salt**

**1-2 teaspoons rice vinegar**

**Fresh basil, mint, cilantro, or a combination of all three, to taste**

Place cubed watermelon and cucumber in a colander and lightly sprinkle with salt. Let excess liquid drain while preparing the other ingredients.

Toss the watermelon cubes and cucumber with about 1-2 teaspoon(s) of rice vinegar per cup of watermelon/cucumber, or to taste. Sprinkle generously with fresh herbs and enjoy cold or at room temperature.

Total calories per serving: 56

Carbohydrates: 14 grams

Sodium: 26 milligrams

Fat: <1 gram

Protein: 1 gram

Fiber: 1 gram



# Trail Mix Cookies

(Makes about 30 cookies)

**2 cups rolled oats, divided**  
**¾ cup whole wheat pastry flour (or use  
¾ cup + 1 Tablespoon gluten-free all-purpose  
flour, for a gluten-free version)**  
**½ cup coconut sugar (or organic vegan sugar)**  
**1 teaspoon baking soda**  
**⅓ teaspoon salt**  
**½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**  
**1¼ cups toasted walnuts, chopped**  
**½ cup shelled hemp seeds**  
**½ cup maple syrup**  
**2 Tablespoons water**  
**3 Tablespoons refined coconut oil**  
**2 teaspoons vanilla extract**  
**1 cup vegan trail mix or granola of choice**  
**Cooking spray, to grease the pan**

In a mixing bowl, stir together 1 cup of rolled oats, flour, coconut sugar, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon.

Add the walnuts and hemp seeds to a food processor and process until walnuts form a fine crumb. Add the dry ingredients from mixing bowl to the food processor and process until pulverized.

Add maple syrup, water, oil, and vanilla, and continue to process until smooth, scraping the sides as needed. Remove from the food processor. Stir in the remaining 1 cup of oats and trail mix. Let the dough rest in the fridge for 10 minutes while preheating the oven to 350 degrees.

Lightly spray two baking sheets. Scoop 1 Tablespoon of dough, roll into a ball, flatten slightly, and place on the baking sheet, making sure not to crowd the cookies. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Bake for 10-12 minutes or until cookies just start to brown at the sides. Let cool for a couple of minutes on the baking sheets, then gently remove and transfer to a cooling rack. Store cookies at room temperature.

Total calories per cookie: 153

Carbohydrates: 18 grams

Sodium: 80 milligrams

Fat: 8 grams

Protein: 4 grams

Fiber: 2 grams





## Whole Wheat Banana Bread Muffins

(Makes 12)

- 1 cup mashed ripe banana (about 2-3 medium bananas)**
- ¾ cup coconut sugar (or organic vegan sugar)**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil**
- ½ cup plain, unsweetened vegan milk**
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar**
- 3 Tablespoons water**
- 1½ cups whole wheat pastry flour (or all-purpose)**
- ½ teaspoon baking soda**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**
- ½ cup vegan chocolate chips (optional)**
- ½ cup chopped walnuts (optional)**
- Cooking spray, to grease the pan**

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Lightly spray a muffin pan or line it with cupcake liners.

In a mixing bowl, add the banana, sugar, vanilla, oil, milk, vinegar, and water. Whisk together until smooth. Add the flour, baking soda, and salt, and stir together just until combined (lumps are okay). Stir in the chocolate chips and/or walnuts, if using.

Scoop batter into each muffin tin to fill it about  $\frac{2}{3}$  full. Bake the muffins uncovered for about 30 minutes or until firm but springy to the touch. Let cool before eating.

Total calories per muffin: 112      Fat: 3 grams  
Carbohydrates: 22 grams      Protein: 2 grams  
Sodium: 200 milligrams      Fiber: 2 grams

# Kale & Chickpea Scramble Burritos

(Makes 4)

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil, divided
- 1 russet potato, peeled and cubed
- ½ large yellow or white onion, diced
- 1 bell pepper, seeds and pith removed, diced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeds and pith removed, diced
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ bunch kale (8 ounces or 3-4 cups), de-stemmed and chopped
- 1¾ cups cooked chickpeas (one 15-ounce can), drained and rinsed
- 1 cup salsa of choice
- 4 vegan tortillas, warmed if desired

Warm half of the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the cubed potato and cook, stirring frequently, until softened and browned, about 6-8 minutes. Add the onion and cook for 2-3 more minutes, continuing to stir frequently, until slightly softened. Then add the bell pepper, jalapeño, and spices. Continue cooking over medium-low heat until the potato is fully cooked.

Add kale to the pan. Cover and cook for 3-4 minutes to wilt the kale. Uncover the pan, stir, and continue cooking until kale is tender.

Add the entire can of chickpeas to your food processor or blender, and blend until smooth.

Once the kale is cooked, push the potato-veggie mixture in the skillet to one side of the pan, and add remaining olive oil to the empty side. Pour in the chickpea purée and let it cook until bubbling. Then scramble it up by stirring it around, and continue cooking it for another 2-4 minutes, until firmed up slightly. Fold the scramble into the veggies.

Assemble burritos by adding a generous scoop of filling to a tortilla along with ¼ cup of salsa, then roll into a burrito. For storage and transport, wrap burritos in aluminum foil. Serve cold, at room temperature, or reheat in a small cast iron skillet over a campfire!

Total calories per serving: 280      Fat: 6 grams  
Carbohydrates: 50 grams      Protein: 11 grams  
Sodium: 570 milligrams      Fiber: 10 grams



Shannon is a Baltimore-based software engineer, ultramarathon runner, and author of the website *Yup, it's Vegan*. She's willing to try any cooking project once, even if it takes hours, and is known for being extremely picky about vegan cheese.



# NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

## VEGAN Education

VRG volunteer Marcy Schveibinz, who has a degree in nutrition, staffed an outreach booth at Oracle Corporation in Columbia, Maryland, for an employee health and wellness fair. Schveibinz reported that a vegetarian approached the booth stating she was interested in going vegan, and another guest who was a self-described “big meat eater” wanted to know “how easy it is” to transition to veganism, because he “liked the idea.” Schveibinz offered both support, gave the guests ideas for vegan protein sources, and pointed them to VRG’s website, vrg.org, which offers extensive resources, recipes, and more. Another guest at the health fair discussed with Schveibinz how his doctor was encouraging him to go vegan due to health issues.

Schveibinz also led a vegan cooking demonstration about healthful meal preparation techniques for a group of about 15 residents at a low-rent senior community named DePaul House in Baltimore.

The Vegetarian Resource Group submitted testimony to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on horizontal approaches to food standards of identity modernization. You can read VRG’s testimony here: [vrg.org/blog/2019/11/22/vegetarian-resource-group-testimony-submitted-to-food-and-drug-administration-fda-on-horizontal-approaches-to-food-standards-of-identity-modernization](http://vrg.org/blog/2019/11/22/vegetarian-resource-group-testimony-submitted-to-food-and-drug-administration-fda-on-horizontal-approaches-to-food-standards-of-identity-modernization)

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# SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

By Reed Mangels,  
PhD, RD

## A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

### Animal-Derived Products In Health Care

A recent article in a British journal devoted to medical ethics discussed an issue that is rarely addressed—namely, the use of animal-derived components in medical practice. Products from medications to surgical dressings, to anesthesia, and to implants may contain animal products and/or have been tested on animals. With the growing number of vegans in the UK as well as the increased population of those whose religious background proscribes use of animal-derived products, health care professionals are more likely to be asked about the source of ingredients in medications, medical dressings, and devices.

The authors ask, "...what information should or should not be disclosed to patients about the products being used to treat them?" For example, if there is no viable alternative to an animal-derived medication and a vegan patient asks about the medication's origin, should the physician tell the patient that the medication is derived from an animal, knowing that this may lead to the patient's refusing the potentially life-saving medication? What if the patient doesn't ask? Is the physician obliged to tell the patient that the medication is animal-derived? Of course, there is also the issue that it's difficult or impossible to know about the constituents of every medication, dressing, and device. Just as in foods, medications may contain preservatives, stabilizing agents, flavors, and colors that can change over time.

The authors use principles of bioethics to examine these questions and conclude

- "Clinicians should not presume patients are uninterested but rather ascertain if the use of animal-derived constituents is an issue for them. If so, they should, as far as possible, disclose the use of known animal-derived constituents in the patient's care to ensure their concerns are adequately catered for."
- "Clinicians...will need to communicate that insufficient information exists regarding the constituents in every product they are using, and so it is possible that some products may still contain

animal-derived constituents. Any more than this may not be practicable until there have been significant changes in product labelling."

- Patients should be informed if a suitable non-animal derived alternative product exists and, if it does, about the risks and benefits of use of this alternative.
- The health care system has an obligation to ensure that alternative products are available where possible, at least for commonly used products.
- "In instances where a patient...refuses treatment because of unavoidable animal-derived constituents, the patient's wishes must be respected, provided they have capacity to make an informed choice."

We suspect that this is only the beginning of discussions of this complex issue.

Rodger D, Blackshaw, BP. Using animal-derived constituents in anaesthesia and surgery: the case for disclosing to patients. *BMC Med Ethics*. 2019 Feb 18;20(1):14.

### "Healthy Plant Foods" Associated With Less Weight Gain Over Time

A recent study compared weight change in those eating more "healthy plant foods" compared to those eating "less healthy plant foods" or more animal products. Healthy plant foods included whole grains, beans, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and vegetable oils. Less healthy plant foods included fruit juices, desserts, sugar-sweetened beverages, refined grains, and potatoes. Eating habits and weight gain over 20 years of more than 125,000 men and women were assessed. Most gained weight but those eating more "healthy plant foods" gained substantially less weight than those eating more "less healthy plant foods" or more animal products.

Satija A, Malik V, Rimm EB, et al. Changes in intake of plant-based diets and weight change: results from 3 prospective cohort studies. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2019;110:574-582.

## **Eat an Apple Every Day...**

An estimated 14% of Americans age 71 or older have dementia, a general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life. There is currently no effective treatment for dementia, and so some researchers are focusing on slowing or preventing the reduced mental function that appears in some people in middle age and increases their risk of dementia. Diet is a promising area of research. One study first examined more than 3,000 men and women when they were 18-30 years old. Over the next 25 years, researchers tracked what subjects ate and measured their cognitive function using standardized tests. Subjects who ate the most fruits and vegetables had better cognitive function when they were middle-aged compared to those who ate the least. This was particularly true for those eating the most whole vegetables and whole fruits, as opposed to vegetable or fruit juice. In this study, potatoes were not counted as vegetables. The group eating the most vegetables averaged 6.5 servings per day and were compared to the group averaging 1 serving a day. The group eating the most fruit averaged 3.4 servings per day; the group eating the least fruit averaged less than half a serving per day. Tomatoes, dark green vegetables (like kale), deep-yellow/orange vegetables (like carrots and winter squash), avocados, and guacamole were the vegetable sub-groups that had the strongest association with better mental function. These results add to the list of health benefits offered by fruits and vegetables.

Mao X, Chen C, Xun P, et al. Intake of vegetables and fruits through young adulthood is associated with better cognitive function in midlife in the US general population. *J Nutr*. 2019;149:1424-33.

## **Heart Disease and Stroke In Vegetarians**

A recently published study from the UK examined more than 48,000 vegans, vegetarians, fish eaters, and meat eaters, and their risk of heart disease and stroke over an 18-year period. Because of the relatively small number of vegans, they were combined with lacto vegetarians and lacto-ovo vegetarians into a group called “vegetarians.” The vegetarians (including vegans) had a 22% lower risk of heart disease than the meat eaters; fish eaters had a 13% lower risk than the meat

eaters. According to the study’s authors, these results suggest that if 1,000 meat eaters were compared to 1,000 vegetarians, over a 10-year period, there would be 10 fewer cases of heart disease in the vegetarians.

In contrast, vegetarians (including vegans) had a higher risk of a kind of stroke called hemorrhagic stroke and of stroke overall than did meat eaters. This suggests that if 1,000 meat eaters were compared to 1,000 vegetarians, over a 10-year period, there would be three more cases of stroke in vegetarians than in meat eaters. There are two main types of stroke—  
ischemic and hemorrhagic. Ischemic strokes are more common (87% of all strokes) and are due to a blood clot blocking blood flow to the brain. Hemorrhagic strokes are caused by a weakened blood vessel rupturing and bleeding into the brain.

When vegans were examined separately, they had a lower risk of heart disease than meat eaters but a higher risk for stroke, although neither estimate was statistically significant, possibly due to the small number of cases in vegans.

This study’s results are similar to other studies that have reported a reduced risk of heart disease or of dying from heart disease in vegetarians. Up until now, studies of strokes in vegetarians have looked only at the risk of dying from stroke and found no significant difference of dying from stroke by diet group.

The study’s authors note that vegetarians and vegans in this study have lower blood levels of vitamins, and omega-3 fatty acids than do meat eaters and wonder if these differences could have contributed to the higher risk of stroke seen in this study.

There were only small differences in saturated fat and fiber intake between the vegetarian and meat-eating groups. Additional research should be done using groups with larger differences in intakes of saturated fat and fiber.

If other large studies have similar results, it will be important to identify dietary changes vegetarians can make to reduce their risk of stroke without affecting their already reduced risk of heart disease. While we don’t know if lower blood levels of vitamin B12, vitamin D, and omega-3 fatty acids were related to the higher risk of stroke, we do know that having enough of these nutrients is important for good health.

Tong TYN, Appleby PN, Bradbury KE, et al. Risks of ischaemic heart disease and stroke in meat eaters, fish eaters, and vegetarians over 18 years of follow-up: results from the prospective EPIC-Oxford study. *BMJ* 2019;366:l4897.

# From A to Zucchini

by Hannah Kaminsky

**L**egend has it that if you live near an avid gardener and happen to leave your gate open, you're liable to discover bundles of zucchini on your front porch come harvest time. Though beloved and perennially popular, zucchini grows in such abundance that even the most fervent fans find themselves at a loss for how to consume such overwhelming bounty. Those without green thumbs often find ourselves in the same situation, with grocery store sales tempting bulk purchases. Luckily, the humble squash is one of the most versatile vegetables around, satisfying from dawn to dusk in both sweet and savory delights.

Much praise has been sung for spiralized zucchini noodles in recent years, but that's not the only way to enjoy raw zucchini. Sliced into paper-thin rounds and tenderized with tangy red wine vinegar and bright herbs, Zucchini Carpaccio takes on Greek inspiration (opposite, page 17).

America's favorite potato chip seasoning can spice up far more than just spuds, as BBQ Zucchini Chips prove (page 19). These crisp rounds are baked rather than fried, which makes for smart snacking. It's no struggle convincing picky eaters to make room for veggies when these smoky, subtly sweet flavors beckon. Shockingly simple to whip up, the hardest part of the recipe is waiting while they bake low and slow for the perfect crunchy texture all the way through.

For the main event, rotund eight-ball (aka globe) zucchini cradle hearty chickpea stuffing that tastes like deconstructed falafel (page 18). For these Falafel-Stuffed Zucchini, mashed chickpeas make the feat possible, baked right inside their own edible containers,

perfect for potlucks, packed lunches, family meals, or even a romantic dinner date.

Though the classic Middle Eastern street food is typically stuffed into fluffy pita, you'll never miss the bread with this alternative edible vessel. Get the full effect by lavishing extra tahini on top of each golden-brown bundle and serving alongside a chopped salad of cucumbers and tomatoes.

Plant-based Zucchini Pâté (page 20) may not sound like much on paper, but this appetizer is greater than the sum of its parts. Caramelized shallot and garlic take the lead through each buttery, silky strand, bound together via sheer brute force. Better than a dip or a spread, this starter is good enough to eat with a fork.

Don't forget to save room for dessert! Zucchini bread is a time-honored staple, ideal for using up massive quantities of the green stuff while creating a good excuse for taking a second helping of the sweet stuff. But there's more to love than just the loaf. Take that same idea and turn it into bite-sized chewy cookies, Zucchini Bread Thumbprints (page 21), enlivened with handfuls of toothsome raisins and walnuts, bolstered by the warm, nostalgic taste of toasted cinnamon.

That alone would be a treat, but don't stop there. Making them into thumbprint cookies creates an indentation that begs to be filled with luscious vegan cream cheese frosting, blended with maple syrup for woodsy sweetness.

Is there really such a thing as "too much zucchini?" Given the incredible range of flavors this unassuming squash can create, zucchini should always be on your grocery list. Soon, neighbors will be begging you for an extra offering.



# Greek Zucchini Carpaccio

(Serves 4)

1 large or 2 medium zucchini (12 ounces total)

¼ cup thinly sliced red onion

3 Tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 Tablespoon minced parsley

1 teaspoon dried oregano

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ cup pitted and sliced kalamata olives

2 Tablespoons toasted pine nuts

¼ cup julienned sundried tomatoes

1 Tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Use a mandoline or very sharp knife to cut the zucchini into paper-thin rounds no more than 1mm thick.

Place slices in a large bowl along with the red onion, and toss with vinegar, parsley, oregano, black pepper, and salt. Be gentle and use your hands if needed to be make sure all the slices are evenly seasoned without breaking the vegetables into pieces.

Arrange in overlapping slices on a large platter, or for an easier, more casual presentation, simply transfer the mixture to a plate. Top with olives, pine nuts, and sundried tomatoes. Just prior to serving, drizzle with olive oil, to taste.

*Cook's Notes:* In keeping with the theme, lightly briny, herbaceous cubes of tofu feta would make an excellent addition and can turn this side salad into more of an entrée. Combine ½ cup apple cider vinegar, 2 Tablespoons nutritional yeast, and 1 teaspoon each dried basil, dried oregano, and salt to make a marinade. Add 1 pound cubed extra-firm tofu and let sit for at least 4 hours or overnight. Drain thoroughly before using.

Total calories per serving: 171

Carbohydrates: 8 grams

Sodium: 523 milligrams

Fat: 15 grams

Protein: 2 grams

Fiber: 4 grams



# Falafel-Stuffed Zucchini

(Makes 6)

- 6 medium eight-ball or globe zucchini (see note)**
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided**
- 1 shallot, finely diced**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- One 14-ounce can chickpeas, drained and rinsed**
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice**
- 1 Tablespoon tahini**
- 1 Tablespoon ground cumin**
- 1½ teaspoons ground coriander**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- 1 cup fresh parsley, minced**
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, minced**



Preheat your oven to 375 degrees and set out either a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or a silicon baking mat.

Slice the stems off the zucchini about half an inch from the top and set aside. Using a pointed teaspoon, grapefruit spoon, or melon baller, hollow out the insides, leaving about a ¼-inch thick wall on the sides and bottoms. Discard innards or reserve for another recipe. (It's great in vegetable soups or even hidden in smoothies!)

Brush the zucchini shells lightly with olive oil, inside and out. Place the squash shells and tops on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 10-15 minutes, until fork-tender but still firm.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling. Begin by heating 1 Tablespoon of oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat and sautéing the shallot and garlic. When softened and aromatic, add the chickpeas and lemon juice, cooking for another 5 minutes. Roughly mash the chickpeas, leaving some whole, to achieve a coarse but creamy texture.

Stir in the remaining ingredients, mixing well to incorporate. Spoon the chickpea filling into the parbaked zucchini, packing it lightly and mounding it just beyond the top of the squashes.

Return the baking sheet to the oven and bake until the exposed filling is lightly browned, about 30-35 minutes. Serve right away while piping hot or let cool to enjoy at room temperature.

*Cook's Note:* Standard zucchini can be used instead of eight-ball or globe zucchini. Simply slice them in half, scoop out the innards, and proceed with the recipe.

Not a fan of cilantro? Use more parsley instead.

Total calories per serving: 158	Fat: 7 grams
Carbohydrates: 20 grams	Protein: 7 grams
Sodium: 317 milligrams	Fiber: 6 grams

# BBQ Zucchini Chips

(Serves 4)

**1 very large or 2 medium-large zucchini  
(1 pound total)**

**1 Tablespoon apple cider vinegar**

**2 teaspoons olive oil**

**1½ teaspoons smoked paprika**

**1 teaspoon nutritional yeast**

**1 teaspoon onion powder**

**1 teaspoon coconut sugar**

**¼ teaspoon chili powder**

**½ teaspoon salt**

Preheat oven to 300 degrees and set out two baking sheets lined with parchment paper or silicon baking mats.

Use a mandoline or very sharp knife to cut the zucchini into 1mm-thick slices, keeping them as consistent as possible. This will allow them to cook more evenly, ensuring crispness throughout.

Place slices in a large bowl and toss with all remaining ingredients, distributing the spices and coating the pieces well.

Place the zucchini on prepared baking sheets, spreading them out so that none overlap. Bake for about 1 hour, rotating the sheets every 15 minutes, until golden brown and dry to the touch.

Let cool completely before serving or storing in an airtight container for up to 3 days. They may lose crispness over time but will still taste just as good.

*Cook's Note:* Prefer to take it low and slow? Use a dehydrator for a raw preparation. Allow 8-12 hours at 125 degrees for the zucchini to properly dry to an optimal, perfectly crisp texture.

Shown in photo served with vegan BBQ sauce for dipping.

Total calories per serving: 45

Carbohydrates: 5 grams

Sodium: 303 milligrams

Fat: 3 grams

Protein: 2 grams

Fiber: 1 gram



# Zucchini Pâté

(Serves 8-10)

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3-4 large zucchini (2 pounds total), shredded
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 Tablespoon fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- Cooking spray, to grease the ramekins

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic, zucchini, salt, and pepper. Cook for 10 minutes before adding in the lemon juice, thyme, and lemon zest. Reduce heat to medium-low, and cook, stirring

occasionally, until liquid evaporates, and mixture is silky, tender, and lightly caramelized, about 1 hour.

While still hot, pack the mixture firmly into two pre-sprayed 4-ounce ramekins, pressing it firmly with a spatula to compact the strands. Chill thoroughly in the fridge, for at least 2-4 hours, before serving.

To unmold, run a thin knife around the edges of the ramekin before inverting it onto a plate. Tap the bottom hard and allow gravity to do the rest of the work. Serve with crackers, toast, or chips.

Covered with plastic or stored in an airtight container in the fridge, the pâté will keep for up to one week.

Total calories per serving: 36

Carbohydrates: 5 grams

Sodium: 230 milligrams

Fat: 2 grams

Protein: 1 gram

Fiber: 1 gram



# Zucchini Bread Thumbprints

(Makes about 16 cookies)

**1 cup shredded zucchini**  
**¼ teaspoon salt**  
**½ cup vegan margarine, at room temperature**  
**½ cup organic brown sugar, firmly packed**  
**⅓ cup organic granulated sugar**  
**1 Tablespoon ground flaxseeds**  
**1 Tablespoon aquafaba (liquid found in a can of chickpeas)**  
**1¾ cups all-purpose flour**  
**1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**  
**¼ teaspoon baking soda**  
**½ cup unsweetened, shredded coconut**  
**¼ cup raisins, roughly chopped**  
**¼ cup walnuts, roughly chopped**  
**½ cup vegan cream cheese, at room temperature**  
**2 Tablespoons maple syrup**  
**¼ teaspoon vanilla extract**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and set out a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or a silicon baking mat.

Spread the zucchini out on a clean dish towel and sprinkle with salt. Toss, and let sit for 10-15 minutes. Press firmly to blot away the excess liquid; set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, cream together the vegan margarine and both sugars. When smooth, add the flaxseeds and aquafaba, beating once more.

In a separate bowl, stir together the flour, cinnamon, baking soda, coconut, raisins, and walnuts. Make sure everything is evenly distributed. Slowly add the dry mixture into stand mixer bowl. Pause as needed to scrape down the sides of the bowl with a spatula.

If the mixture is particularly sticky, chill for at least 30 minutes before proceeding.

Scoop out about 2 Tablespoons of dough for each cookie, rounding the balls between the palms of your hands. Moisten your hands lightly to make smoother spheres. Use your thumbs to press a deep indentation into the center of each cookie.

Bake for 12 minutes, pull the sheet out of the oven, and use a melon baller or spoon to press the centers back down again, as they will likely rise and spread lightly in the baking process. Return the cookies to the oven for an additional 5-8 minutes, until lightly browned on the bottoms. Let cool completely.



Meanwhile, prepare the filling by beating together the vegan cream cheese, maple syrup, and vanilla extract until completely smooth. Spoon into the indentations.

Filled cookies will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to three days or in the fridge for up to a week. If filling and cookies are kept separately, they can be kept in the freezer for up to a month.

*Cook's Note:* Eat these cookies as a treat!

Total calories per cookie: 204

Carbohydrates: 27 grams

Sodium: 150 milligrams

Fat: 10 grams

Protein: 2 grams

Fiber: 1 gram

Hannah is the author of the cookbooks *Easy as a Vegan Pie*, *Sweet Vegan Treats*, *Vegan à la Mode*, and *Vegan Desserts*. She is a baker, writer, and photographer and is currently working towards her BFA in photography.



Photos by Hannah Kaminsky

# The VRG's 2019 Video Contest Winners

Opt for More Plant-Based Foods



## The Power of Plant-Based Diets

By Adam Vossen

During my formative teenage years, I spent hours upon hours getting lost on random websites and videos. One day, I stumbled upon a video that changed my life. *Why You Should Go Vegan* was the title, and watching it led me into weeks of research and questioning of my past and future eating habits. After about a month of contemplation, I decided to make the move to go vegetarian, and a couple months after that, I took it to the next level and went vegan.

I've always had a gray cloud of anxiety floating over my head regarding animal abuse and climate change, and I finally felt like I was doing something to combat that. Not only did this lifestyle change prompt internal gratitude, it also provided me with a new community and identity I felt I lacked. I was constantly motivated and inspired by the fact that my food choices were helping my body, the planet, and the animals. Today, I define my vegan lifestyle as a project larger than myself, where my diet is 100% plant-based and I prioritize the environment, animal rights, and my health over my taste buds.

See: [youtube.com/watch?v=v=5gpsoiuUKrI&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v=5gpsoiuUKrI&feature=youtu.be)

Video scholarships have been given in honor of W.M. Zahn, who was a great mentor.

View winners of the video contest at [vrg.org/veg\\_videos.php](http://vrg.org/veg_videos.php)

The deadline for the next VRG video contest is July 15, 2020.

See: [vrg.org/videoscholarship.php](http://vrg.org/videoscholarship.php)

For information about VRG's separate College Scholarship Contest for high school seniors (One \$10,000, two \$5,000 awards), see: [vrg.org/student/scholar](http://vrg.org/student/scholar).

To support The Vegetarian Resource Group scholarships and internships, donate at [vrg.org/donate](http://vrg.org/donate) or mail to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203.

## It's Easier than Most People Think!



### Go Vegan to Save the Trees By Dayana Love

I am interested in veganism for multiple reasons. First is my health. I've watched multiple documentaries on the harmful effects that animal products have on your body. I feel that the only logical step for me to take is to cut them out of my diet. Second, I am very passionate about the environment, and learning about the negative effects livestock production has made me eager to switch to a vegan diet. Finally, I am a huge animal lover and would like to align my diet with my values.

See: [youtube.com/watch?v=JchFSDPRIy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JchFSDPRIy)

### Our Trees are in Danger



### Living the Vegetarian Lifestyle By Dharshan Varia

I am interested in vegetarianism because of the overwhelming health benefits I have seen associated with this diet. Additionally, morally, it does not sit well with me that we must kill animals and let them suffer for personal satisfaction when there are plant-based options available.

In the past few years, I have been really interested in vegetarian restaurants and cooking. I have learned how to effectively substitute plant-based proteins for meats while still maintaining the overall flavor of a meal. I believe that vegetarianism is a growing trend and I hope that my interest in vegetarianism will allow people to learn about environmental, health, and moral benefits associated with vegetarianism.

See: [youtube.com/watch?v=nt7nD8zIF1A&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt7nD8zIF1A&feature=youtu.be)

## Bequests

The VRG depends on the generous contributions of our members and supporters to continue our educational projects. Though the world may not become vegan 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 veganism.
- 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.

# Low-Cost Vegan Menus

Based on USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Budget  
by Reed Mangels PhD, RD

In 1931, in the midst of the Great Depression, experts suggested, “that when there is little money to spend for food, the diet should be built around the grain products and milk, with enough vegetables and fruits to supply the necessary additional vitamins and minerals.... The fruits and vegetables should be those that are in season and where possible, less expensive in price. Tomatoes, cabbage, carrots, and onions are all inexpensive vegetables.”<sup>1</sup> If we replace milk, which we can assume meant cow’s milk in America in 1931, with soymilk, this statement can be said to promote a vegan diet as a relatively low cost way to meet nutritional needs.

How inexpensive can a vegan diet be and still provide health-supporting food without requiring hours of travel to different stores and lots of meal preparation? Sometimes vegan diets are perceived as expensive. Our experience has been that they can be pricey if we choose lots of convenience foods and out-of-season produce, and mainly shop at specialty stores. We’ve also found that vegan diets can be incredibly inexpensive and can be planned using foods that are readily available in supermarkets and big-box stores. We decided to plan a week of vegan menus whose cost would not exceed the food cost allotment from the United States Department of Agriculture’s food assistance program.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program that provides nutrition benefits to low-income individuals and families. These benefits are used at stores to purchase food. The program is administered by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). According to the most recent report, more than 36 million individuals, about 11% of the population, will participate in SNAP in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

Households that participate in SNAP are expected to spend about 30% of their own resources on food. The allotment (total amount of SNAP

benefits) for a household is calculated using a maximum monthly allotment and subtracting 30% of a household’s net monthly income. The maximum monthly allotment provides an indication of the government’s expectation of food costs for a household. For example, the maximum monthly allotment for a four person household is \$646 dollars for households in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia. This works out to \$148.26 to feed a family of four for 7 days (using 30.5 days/month). The allotments are different in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.<sup>3</sup>

We planned a week’s worth of vegan menus for a family of 4 consisting of a 40-year old male, a 40-year old female, their 13-year old son, and their 6-year old daughter. This family lives in an urban area. Menus were planned to meet the needs for most nutrients, to provide adequate calories, to use foods that would be available in chain grocery stores, and to be easy to prepare.

Weekday breakfasts and lunches required little preparation time; lunches were often based on leftovers. We planned on children packing lunch, since few schools have vegan options.

We sent volunteers to stores to check prices and item availability, and modified menus as necessary. When finding the cheapest price to use at stores, in general we looked for off-brand/store-brand versions of the ingredients. At times, the store brands came in sizes that were far larger than what was necessary for the recipe, so we looked for smaller, cheaper variations of the product. For products that would be used many times and would not go bad quickly, such as peanut butter or jelly, we used the price for the larger size packages. For products like spices, sometimes the store-brand sizes were too large, and even though they offered a better per-ounce price, they still cost more than the name-brand product for what was actually needed. In those cases, we opted to use the smaller package size. We used the regular price of items, rather

**Vegan diets  
can be incredibly  
*inexpensive*  
and planned using  
foods that  
are  
*readily available***

than sale prices since sales are usually for a limited amount of time and don't reflect the price that a shopper could expect to pay.

The total cost of the menu was based on the amount of food actually used unless the food was perishable. For example, a container of salt might cost 89 cents but only 2 cents worth of salt would be used. We expect that some items will already be on hand and that this will balance out the cost of buying a larger amount of other items than is needed for a week.

Research volunteers went to stores in Maryland and

Iowa. The cost of the menu and availability of foods varied as indicated in the table below. In many cases, if items were not available, we were able to use nutritionally similar substitutes. For example, if frozen collards were not available, we replaced them with fresh collards or frozen kale. In some cases, an additional store would need to be visited for a few products. For example, we did not find tofu at Walmart in Iowa, but it is available at other stores. In most cases, food for a family of four for a week cost less than the SNAP allotment of \$148.26.

<b>Store, Location</b>	<b>Menu Cost for 1 Week of Food for Four People</b>	<b>Number of Items Not Available at Store</b>
Giant Food Stores, Maryland	\$151.37	0
Save-A-Lot, Maryland	\$102.28 (\$123.56)*	6 – tofu, soymilk, vegetarian baked beans, water chestnuts, soy sauce, whole-wheat tortillas
Walmart, Maryland	\$136.21	0
ALDI, Maryland	\$117.46 (\$135.03)	9 – lentils, red lentils, split peas, tofu, cayenne pepper, vegetarian baked beans, water chestnuts, popcorn, whole-wheat tortillas
All above stores in Maryland, combined using lowest price for each food	\$96.78	0
Walmart, Iowa	\$130.74 (\$138.02)	1 – tofu
ALDI, Iowa	\$134.35 (\$148.80)	7 – tofu, lentils, red lentils, split peas, popcorn, water chestnuts, whole-wheat tortillas
All above Iowan stores, combined using lowest price for each food and making substitutions for unavailable foods	\$116.63 (\$123.91)	1 – tofu

\*Amount in parentheses is the cost with all items included.

Cost of missing items was estimated based on other area stores.

As you can see from the table on page 25, if you are able to shop at several stores, choosing the lowest-priced items from each store, your grocery bill may be lower than if you only shop at one store. However, time and transportation costs often limit people to shopping at one store. You can still have low-cost, healthy meals without going to three or more stores each week. We did not visit stores like Costco or Sam's Club, which require a yearly membership fee. If you can afford the membership and the cost of purchasing large quantities of staple foods like dried or canned beans, pasta, aseptically packaged soymilk, grains, and cereal, you may cut costs even more.

We developed the menus mainly using canned beans and a few quick-cooking dried beans. If you have the time to soak and cook other dried beans, this may be a less expensive option than canned beans. Cooked dried beans can be packaged in freezer-safe containers and frozen for later use.

Seasonal produce may be less expensive and can replace some of the fruits and vegetables we include in the menus. Prices for some produce may occasionally be lower at farmers markets; a growing number of farmers markets are redeeming SNAP benefits.

The menus were planned to use leftovers, thus reducing food waste and saving time on meal preparation.

Whether you're a student on a limited budget, a parent trying to feed your kids healthy foods while paying rent and dealing with other expenses, or an older adult on a fixed income, choosing a vegan diet can be a way to save money while eating a healthy, whole foods diet. The menus that are included in this project can be used by SNAP participants and others who need ideas for low-cost foods.

Thank you to our volunteers who contributed to this project: Casey Brown, Lauren Capano, Emily Carter, Amy Dell, Emily Greco, Hannah Greene, Autumn Hengen, and Katie Nunemaker.

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# SNAP Weekly Low-Cost Vegan Menu

	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>Breakfast</b>	Pancakes* with blueberries and pancake syrup Orange	Whole-grain cereal with soymilk and banana Whole-wheat toast with jam or fruit spread	Oatmeal with peanut butter Orange Soymilk (optional) Whole-wheat bread (optional)	Peanut butter toast with a sliced banana and cinnamon Apple (optional) Soymilk	Whole-grain cereal with soymilk and banana Whole-wheat toast with jam or fruit spread	Peanut butter toast with a sliced banana and cinnamon Soymilk	Tofu scramble* Hash browns* Orange Soymilk
<b>Lunch</b>	Baked bean and pasta casserole* Steamed broccoli Peanut butter on whole-wheat bread (optional)	Wrap with black beans and sweet potato Cantaloupe cubes	Garbanzo spread* sandwich Carrot sticks Banana (optional)	Wrap with black beans and sweet potato Banana or orange	Spicy red lentil dish* with brown rice (leftover from Wednesday) Collards (leftover from Wednesday) Apple	Sweet bean sandwich spread* on whole-wheat bread Orange	Pasta fruit salad* Chickpeas Whole-wheat bread (optional)
<b>Dinner</b>	Black-eyed peas and collards* Mashed sweet potato Soymilk Peanut butter on whole-wheat bread (optional)	Broccoli and tofu sauté* with brown rice Corn on the cob Whole-wheat bread (optional)	Wayne's Tofu Chili* on whole-grain pasta Steamed kale Soymilk	Spicy red lentil dish* on brown rice Cooked collards Soymilk (optional)	Black bean burgers* on whole-wheat buns with sliced tomato Baked sweet potato Steamed broccoli	Fried rice* Sautéed tofu* Mashed sweet potato Whole-wheat bread	Lentil soup* Whole-wheat bread Carrot sticks
<b>Snack</b>	Cantaloupe cubes Whole-grain crackers with split pea dip*	Carrot sticks with peanut butter Popcorn	Peanut butter sandwich Apple	Carrot sticks with split pea dip* (leftover from Sunday) Popcorn	Whole-grain crackers with split pea dip* (leftover from Sunday)	Carrot sticks with peanut butter Soymilk (optional)	Raisin cookies* Banana Soymilk

\*Recipe provided either on pages 28-29 or online at [vrg.org/nutrition/snap-weekly.php](http://vrg.org/nutrition/snap-weekly.php)

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## Pancakes

Recipe by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD  
(Makes 14)

**1¾ cups all-purpose flour**  
**1 Tablespoon plus 2¼ teaspoons baking powder**  
**⅓ teaspoon salt**  
**½ Tablespoons vegan sugar**  
**1¾ cups soymilk**  
**5½ Tablespoons oil, divided**  
**Blueberries (optional)**

In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar. Add soymilk and 3½ Tablespoons of oil, and mix until flour is moistened. Place the remaining 2 Tablespoons of oil in a large skillet and heat on medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, pour batter into circles about 4 inches across. Cook a few minutes on one side, until bubbly, and then flip and cook on the other side about 2 more minutes or until golden brown.

Total calories per pancake: 122      Fat: 6 grams  
Carbohydrates: 15 grams      Protein: 2 grams  
Sodium: 209 milligrams      Fiber: 1 gram

## Lentil Soup

From *The Lowfat Jewish Vegetarian Cookbook*  
by Debra Wasserman  
(Serves 4)

**2 onions, peeled and chopped**  
**2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced**  
**2 teaspoons vegetable oil**  
**½ teaspoon dried basil**  
**½ teaspoon oregano**  
**One 6-ounce can tomato paste**  
**2 cups dried brown lentils**  
**10 cups water**  
**Salt to taste**  
**One 10-ounce package frozen spinach**

In large pot sauté onions and garlic in oil over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Add remaining ingredients except spinach, cover, and simmer 40 minutes over medium heat. Add spinach. Cook 25 minutes longer until lentils are soft.

Total calories per serving: 438      Fat: 4 grams  
Carbohydrates: 77 grams      Protein: 29 grams  
Sodium: 279 milligrams      Fiber: 15 grams

## Black Bean Burgers

Adapted from *Simply Vegan* by Debra Wasserman  
(Makes 11 burgers)

**4 cups cooked black beans, mashed**  
**2 stalks celery, finely chopped**  
**2 carrots, finely chopped**  
**½ small onion, minced**  
**½ cup whole-wheat flour**  
**Salt and pepper, to taste**  
**4 teaspoons vegetable oil**

Mix ingredients except the oil in a bowl. Form 11 flat patties. Fry in an oiled pan over medium-high heat until lightly browned and cooked through, about 3-4 minutes per side.

Total calories per burger: 111      Fat: 2 grams  
Carbohydrates: 18 grams      Protein: 5 grams  
Sodium: 215 milligrams      Fiber: 6 grams

## Wayne's Tofu Chili

Recipe by Wayne Smeltz adapted from  
*Simply Vegan* by Debra Wasserman  
(Serves 4)

**12-ounce block firm tofu, cubed into small pieces**  
**1½ Tablespoons vegetable oil**  
**1½ medium onions, chopped**  
**2 green peppers, chopped**  
**¾ 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes**  
**(remainder can be frozen for future use)**  
**One 15-ounce can black-eyed peas,**  
**rinsed and drained (see note below)**  
**One 15-ounce can kidney beans,**  
**rinsed and drained**  
**1 large jalapeño pepper, minced**  
**Garlic and chili powder, to taste**

Sauté tofu in oil for 10 minutes. Add onions and green peppers, and stir-fry 5 minutes longer. Lower heat. Add tomatoes, black-eyed peas, beans, jalapeño, and optional spices. Simmer for 12 minutes.

*Cook's Note:* Can't find black-eyed peas? Substitute black beans, navy beans, or pinto beans in this recipe.

Total calories per serving: 555      Fat: 14 grams  
Carbohydrates: 84 grams      Protein: 32 gram  
Sodium: 500 milligrams      Fiber: 22 grams

## Pasta Fruit Salad

Adapted from *Simply Vegan* by Debra Wasserman  
(Serves 4)

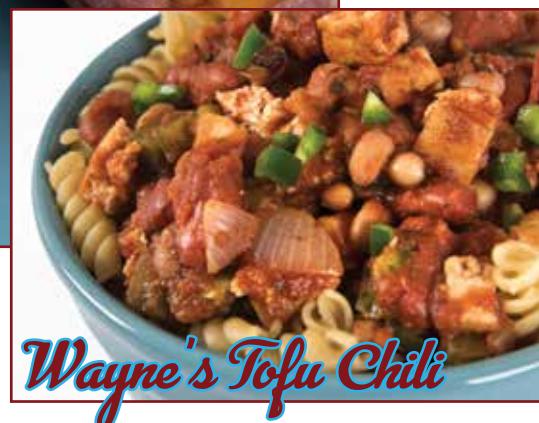
- 3 cups cooked whole-grain pasta
- 3 apples, cored and chopped
- 3 scallions, finely chopped
- 7.5 ounces water chestnuts, drained and chopped
- ¾ cup raisins

Combine ingredients in a bowl. If time permits, chill before serving.

Total calories per serving: 316      Fat: 1 gram  
Carbohydrates: 80 grams      Protein: 4 grams  
Sodium: 40 milligrams      Fiber: 9 grams



Photos by Rissa Miller



Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, is VRG's Nutrition Advisor and a regular Vegetarian Journal columnist. She is the author of *Your Complete Vegan Pregnancy* and contributed to *Simply Vegan*, and *The Vegan Handbook*.



# Veggie Bits

## Tangy, Dippable Vegan Cheese

Grab some hard pretzels and a tub of Miyoko's Roadhouse Cheese Spreads. The innovative minds



at Miyoko's have done it again with these flavorful and robust soft vegan cheeses. Available in Biergarten Garlic Chive, Cheers to Cheddar, and Spicy Revolution, their smooth cashew-based dips are creamy and spreadable with sharp, deep flavor. Perfect for parties, picnics, or even watching a game at home with some beer and chips. Testers also liked them as a sandwich spread instead of hummus. Gluten-free, non-GMO, and organic. Available at major retailers. [miyokos.com](http://miyokos.com)

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor

## Pop a Refreshing Wine Can

The trend of canned, low-alcohol wine has taken off, and for vegans, Better Wine has four tasty options: Dry Rosé Cider, Nitro Rosé Spritzer, Red Wine Spritzer, and White Wine Spritzer. Made in small batches in Maryland, these canned wines have no added sugar, no additives, and only 90 calories per can. They're handy for picnics, parties, and BBQs, with light flavors. Testers found the White Wine Spritzer fun and fizzy, with the dryness of white, while still imparting a fruity undertone. The Red Wine Spritzer was a group favorite, and has notes of plum and black currant with an elegant ruby color—pairs well with heartier food. Both Rosé cans were popular, with hints of cranberry and tart cherry, ideal for slow sipping on a warm evening, and they paired well with salty snacks. All are gluten-free and unfiltered (vegan with no isinglass), and have no artificial anything. Available in liquor stores and shipping possible to 40 states. [www.better.wine](http://www.better.wine)

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



## Viva los Burritos Veganos!

If you find yourself in need of a quick bite at the office or a meal you can take in the car, Daiya has it wrapped up! Their easy-to-heat burritos pack a punch and fulfilled my hunger. For breakfast, try Homestyle or Fiesta varieties. Savory burritos include Santa Fe, Santiago, Tex-Mex, and Tuscan. The Sante Fe burrito has a mix of saucy and spicy ingredients, including peppers, potatoes, rice, and meatless crumbles, making it one hot enchilada! Tex Mex includes beans, rice, and a variety of spices that combine for a complex, bold taste loaded with different textures. I found the burritos had a mouth-watering aroma that made me eager to eat them before they cooled. For a little extra pop, try topping with your favorite vegan salsa. All varieties are gluten- and soy-free. Available at major retailers. [daiyafoods.com](http://daiyafoods.com)

Autumn Hengen, VRG Intern



## Crunchy Cruciferous Love

Savory and habit-forming, these vegan snappy, cheesy crackers by From the Ground Up may become your new obsession. Yes, they're really made from cauliflower and come in cheddar, nacho, and sea salt flavors. You can also get them shaped like stars (adorable floating in tomato soup) in cheddar and pizza flavors. If you're missing those square cheesy snacks from your youth—you know, the ones that rhyme with bits—this is what you've been looking for! Also available in pretzel shapes. Please note, this is not a low-sodium food. Gluten-free and non-GMO.

Available at major retailers and online.

[fromthegroundupsnacks.com](http://fromthegroundupsnacks.com)

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



# Vegetarian Resource Group Catalog

**Vegan in Volume** (\$20) by Chef Nancy Berkoff. This 272-page quantity cookbook is loaded with terrific recipes serving 25. Try Curried Vegetables with Polenta, Eggplant Lasagna, Mushroom-Asparagus Risotto, Spicy Bean Cakes with Fruit Salsa, Veggie Spring Rolls, Homestyle Molasses Cookies, Sophisticated Poached Pears, and more.

Suitable for parties in your own home, catered events, college food services, restaurants, weddings, and much more.

**The Joy of Vegan Baking (Revised and Updated)** (\$24.99) by Colleen Patrick-Goudreau. Find more than 150 traditional treats and sinful sweets, as well as beautiful photos, in this 304-page book.

Some of the baked good recipes include Apple Cake, Blueberry-Lemon Muffins, Chocolate Cheesecake, Chocolate Cherry Strudel, Cinnamon Rolls, Coffee Cake, Irish Soda Bread, Gingerbread Cookies, Lemon Bars, Mexican Wedding Cookies, Pumpkin Pie, and many others.

**The Lowfat Jewish Vegetarian Cookbook** (\$15) by Debra Wasserman. This 224-page vegan cookbook features over 150 lowfat traditional Jewish recipes from around the world. Enjoy Cake-Like Rye Bread, Russian Flat Bread, Lebanese Walnut Spread, Mock Chopped Liver, Armenian Tomato Soup, Polish Plum and Rhubarb Soup, Bulgur and Grape Salad, Polish Dilled Cucumbers, Russian Eggplant and Pomegranate Salad, Potato Knishes, Romanian Sweet Pasta, Moroccan Couscous, Hamentashen, Sweet Fruit Kugel, etc. Also find 33 Passover dishes and many Rosh Hashanah dinner suggestions.

**Plant-Powered Families** (\$19.95) by Dreena Burton. This 308-page cookbook features

over 100 family-friendly whole-food vegan recipes and photos. Start your morning with Creamy Breakfast Rice Pudding or French Toast. Lunch includes Red Lentil Hummus, Chickpea Nibbles, or Artichoke Spinach Dip, and for dinner try Creamy Fettuccine, Smoky Bean Chili, and Ultimate Teriyaki Stir-Fry. Desserts include Almond Butter Fudge or "Nicer" Krispie Squares.

**Vegan Meals for One or Two—Your Own Personal Recipes** (\$15) by Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD. Whether you live alone, are a couple, or are the only one in your household who is vegan, 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.

**Simply Vegan** (\$15.95) by Debra Wasserman and Reed Mangels, PhD, RD. These 224 pages contain more than 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 100,000 copies have been sold.

**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 dishes such as Creamy Carrot Soup, Tangy Tofu Salad, Baked Bean Quesadillas, Lentil Chili, Asian Noodle Bowl, and French Toast.





# Reviews

## Our Symphony with Animals

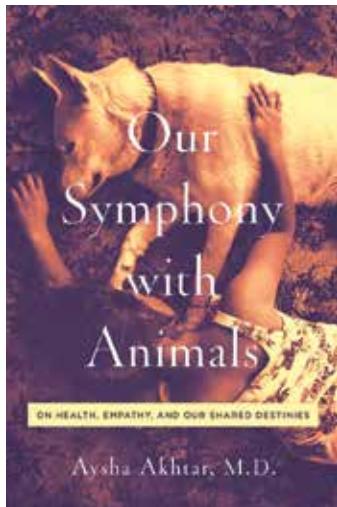
By Aysha Akhtar, MD

In her collection of heart-warming and gut-wrenching stories, Dr. Akhtar draws an indisputable connection between humans and animals. The narrative format of the book provides a beautiful backdrop to the scientific- and research-based information she provides. If anyone ever doubted that animals hold a special place in our hearts, this book would call their beliefs into question.

Dr. Akhtar gives the reader insight into her own trauma and follows the lives of other individuals enduring pain. These deeply emotional stories show the hidden reality of human suffering, and how people find ways to cope despite their circumstances. The first section of this book illustrates how companion animals have helped (or some say, have saved the lives of) those facing issues such as homelessness, AIDS, PTSD, domestic violence, abuse, and incarceration. The book goes on to argue that, when confronted with these devastating life events, animals can help people find their voice to advocate for themselves, gain the courage to face their demons, and offer a sense of peace, happiness, and purpose in difficult times.

The book takes the reader through the evolution of the medical understanding of this phenomenon, from doctors discounting every claim that animals could help in the healing process to the introduction of therapy dogs in courtrooms to help abuse victims tell their stories.

The second section of this book details the horrors of animal abuse as seen through the actions of a serial killer and through industrial agriculture businesses. Dr. Akhtar takes the reader along as she talks with a convicted murderer, shadows the NYPD Animal Cruelty Investigation Squad, and tours animal agriculture farms. This section pulls no punches as it describes the reality of animal agriculture and the negative effects on animals and the community. While this part of the book may be difficult to read, it is an



important aspect of any discussion of humans' relationship with animals, and it is told in such a way that incites action.

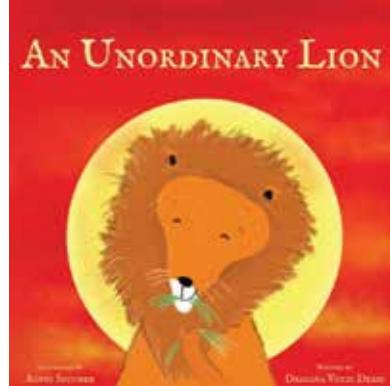
The personal stories are intertwined with research from around the globe, producing a non-fiction book that feels just as compelling and engaging as a fiction novel. With its love stories between goats and dogs, and its broad scientific scope, this book is a must-read for animal-lovers and neuroscience-enthusiasts alike.

*Our Symphony with Animals* (ISBN: 978-1643130705) is a 336-page book. It is published by Pegasus Books and retails for \$16. You can purchase this book online or at a bookstore. *Reviewed by Amy Dell, VRG Intern*

## An Unordinary Lion

By Dragana Vucic Dekic

Young readers will enjoy this rhyming tale about a ferocious lion who was pretty ordinary until the day he injures himself. He becomes unlike other lions that can run fast to catch their prey and must rely on plants for nourishment. He learns from other plant-eating animals, and realizes that he, too, can be plant-strong.



The injury helps him reflect on the harm he was causing other animals. He realizes a fringe benefit of eating plants is kindness and, in the end, embraces his new lifestyle.

The story teaches young readers about different animals that thrive only on plants and helps them to identify with the lion in how he showed compassion towards other living beings. Another moral of the story that kids will learn is that you can turn an unfortunate situation into something positive.

*An Unordinary Lion* (ISBN: 978-1093275704) is published by Dragana Vucic Dekic for young readers and is appropriate for ages 4-8. This 29-page soft cover picture book retails for \$9.95 and can be purchased online. For more information about other books by the author, visit the author's blog at momthemuse.com

*Reviewed by Marcy Schveibinz, VRG Volunteer*

# Vegan Cooking

## Quick and Easy Ideas for

# SPINACH

by Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD

**S**pinach was a Mediterranean secret for centuries. This deep green mystery is thought to have originated in Persia and was brought to Spain by the Moors. Eventually, spinach spread throughout Europe and became very popular.

Catherine de Medici of Italian royalty fame, enjoyed this leafy veggie so much that when she married the king of France, she brought cooks from her native Florence to prepare her favorite greens. To this day, dishes garnished with spinach are called “à la Florentine.”

There are practical advantages to consuming spinach. Spinach has great texture and flavor, adding pizzazz to salads and side dishes. This leafy green is a great source of folic acid, potassium, and vitamin A, as well as iron and vitamin C. In the Middle Ages, spinach was eaten to

prevent scurvy. Just for good measure, spinach also has small amounts of niacin, phosphorus, and zinc.

Treat yourself like royalty and procure some fresh spinach. Though there are 25 varieties of spinach, there are three main types: flat-leaf, savoy (identified by its crinkled, curly leaves), and semi-savoy, which is a hybrid between the two. When shopping you can usually find fully mature spinach, which has broad leaves, or baby spinach. Whichever type you choose, be sure the leaves are dark green and crisp. Carefully wash fresh spinach to eliminate sand that can cling to the leaves. Bagged spinach comes washed. Some bagged spinach comes as a kit with all the trimmings to create a spinach salad.

Remember that spinach is mostly water, so a pound of spinach will probably make only two portions. And because spinach is mostly water, store it in the refrigerator and use within two days.

Use spinach anywhere you normally use lettuce—on sandwiches, chopped in wraps or tacos, or in salads. Fresh spinach is a hearty base for entrée salads. Toss fresh spinach with finely diced pineapple, sliced strawberries, chopped pistachios, sunflower seeds or soy nuts, and nutritional yeast. Create a dressing with balsamic vinegar, pineapple juice, and touch of mustard.

To quickly (and we mean quickly) cook spinach, spray a frying pan with vegetable oil, sprinkle in some chopped fresh or dried garlic, and get the pan hot. Toss in the spinach and flash sauté, turning constantly. This should take one or two minutes, tops.

Use your stove-sautéed spinach as a hot or cold vegetable with your entrée, as part of a sandwich filling, to top pizza, or added to a tofu scramble. If you would like to make “creamed” spinach, whisk crumbled silken tofu or vegan sour cream into the sautéed greens, just as you are removing them from the stove. If you have leftover cooked spinach, you can purée it and add it to hummus, salad dressings, or soups.



Photo by Rissa Miller

Ana Negrón, MD

# Healing from the Kitchen

by Lucía Rivera



Photo by Matt Walker

A doctor focused on improving patients' health through plant-based vegan nutrition may not be common; however, Dr. Ana M. Negrón believes it's the right approach to cultivating a healthy life experience.

"Though I transitioned to a plant-based (whole foods, vegan) diet around 1987, it was not until I studied a vast amount of research that I began to discuss plant-based diets in earnest with my patients—that was in 2003," Negrón said. "Before then, I did not have the education necessary to confidently prescribe this as the primary medical intervention for diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, acne, asthma, inflammatory bowel disease, and so much more."

Now, she educates every patient on how to adopt and sustain a whole foods vegan diet. Negrón runs a nutrition consultation firm called Practice Wellness: Beyond a Wish in Haverford, Pennsylvania. In addition, she educates resident physicians about the role of food

in medicine and does community work to spread the benefits of plant-based food.

Negrón describes *ahimsa*, which is respect for all living things and avoidance of violence toward others, as a vegan philosophy that is at the center of her work now. Her medical approach eliminates processed and animal-based foods and advocates consuming whole plant foods.

Having attended medical school in Puerto Rico, where she grew up, Negrón also offers medical care in her native tongue, Spanish.

"There are not that many plant-based physicians and even fewer fluent in Spanish," she stated.

As a national and international lecturer, she educates people about the connection among food, health, and environment. As a board certified plant-based family physician, she urges people to seek healthy ways to treat medical issues, and offers real life suggestions in her book, *Nourishing the Body and Recovering Health*. She believes it is crucial for one to reconnect with the body and use pharmaceuticals only when necessary.

Through her work promoting organized health changes for her patients, Dr. Negrón has been able to teach the benefits of being kind to one's body and treating symptoms sourced back to daily choices.

"Remember that most of the diseases that run in families do so through the kitchen," she said. "We get all the calcium, protein, fat, and carbohydrate we need by consuming an abundance of plants in a great variety of colors every day."

Lucía is a high school student and long-distance VRG intern in southern California. She has been a vegetarian for almost ten years and spends her spare time volunteering, reading, and baking.





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Grain Bowl from  
Miss Shirley's Cafe/Baltimore

## Let's Go Out for Dinner!

Whether you live in the USA or Canada or are visiting either country, check out VRG's online veg restaurant guide. You'll find a list of vegan-friendly restaurants, including all types of ethnic cuisines, gourmet establishments, bakeries, quick-service places, food trucks, market stalls, and more.

[vrg.org/restaurant/index.php](http://vrg.org/restaurant/index.php)



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## Enter VRG's Video Contest

Each year, The Vegetarian Resource Group invites the public to make positive videos about a vegetarian/vegan topic, such as food, nutrition, water usage and veganism, or animal rights, and enter our contest for a chance to win cash prizes. View previous winning videos here:

[vrg.org/veg\\_videos.php](http://vrg.org/veg_videos.php)



This year's deadline is July 15, 2020!  
Apply here: [vrg.org/videoscholarship.php](http://vrg.org/videoscholarship.php)

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