

How Many American Kids are Vegan or Vegetarian?

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# VEGETARIAN JOURNAL

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Health • Environment • Ethics

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# Nutrition Hotline

*When to start feeding infants solid foods*

**Reed Mangels, PhD RD**



**QUESTION:** I'm planning to raise my baby on a vegan diet and wondered what the latest thinking was on starting solid foods.

**M.W., via email**

**ANSWER:** Watching a baby's expressions when they taste a new food is a highlight of parenting so it's natural to want to start feeding solid foods sooner rather than later. It's important, however, to wait until the baby is developmentally ready for solids.

These days, recommendations are to introduce solid foods (or liquid other than breast milk or infant formula) when the baby is around 6 months old.<sup>1</sup> Although there can be some individual variability in terms of when to start solids, the consensus is that earlier than 4 months is too early. Babies younger than 4 months definitely have trouble eating and digesting solids. And, just to lay a popular myth to rest, there's no evidence that starting solids helps babies sleep through the night.

One sign of readiness for solid foods is the disappearance of a reflex that makes it challenging for babies to swallow anything other than liquids. When this reflex is present, a baby will push solid foods out of their mouth

with their tongue instead of using their tongue to move food from the front to the back of their mouth. This reflex goes away between 4-6 months after birth.

Once babies can sit with little or no support and have good head control, they can lean forward to show they want food or lean back and turn away to show they are through eating. This is another sign of being developmentally ready to start solids.

Another sign is showing interest in food—trying to grab what others are eating. Introducing solids before age 4 months increases the risk of obesity<sup>2</sup> because young infants are less able to indicate when they have had enough food.

Generally, there is no reason to wait past 6 months to introduce solids. At 6 months, most babies are ready to develop skills like swallowing solid foods and self-feeding. Waiting too long can increase the risk of later feeding problems.

Nearly one in three infants in the United States are given solid foods much too early—before 4 months.<sup>3</sup> You're already helping your baby to have a good start by planning to feed a healthy vegan diet. Waiting to start solids until

6 months is another positive action that you can take.

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- <sup>1</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Nutrition. Complementary feeding. In: Kleinman RE, Greer FR, eds. *Pediatric Nutrition*, 8th ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2020:639-654.
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# VEGETARIAN JOURNAL

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# Note from the Senior Editor



Photo by Gerard Beck

## Vegan Small Business

**M**y life has been defined by small business. I grew up with parents who own a small business; I co-owned one myself for 20 years. Almost all of the employers I worked for were small or micro businesses. The people behind them offer their creativity, passion, and courage for sale, and when you operate or work for an indie company, you learn the meaning of hustle.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) defines a small business as a firm that has fewer than 500 employees. SBA stats show that businesses with fewer than 100 employees account for 98.2 percent of American businesses, and those with fewer than 20 employees, micro businesses, account for 89 percent. That's millions of jobs.

Layer veganism into the dynamic and you're truly putting your ethics out front. Your purchase supports someone's dream, hard work, and vegan values. These vegentrepreneurs care about providing a truly special service or product. It's a reflection of themselves and their morals. Though I appreciate how large companies are embracing veganism and pushing it into the mainstream, it's critical to remember the independent vegan business people who have been with us all along. They are the innovators and originators of plant-based food, services, and goods. In a world that's becoming more homogenized, this choice and variety are a critical piece of normalizing veganism in the marketplace.

There's huge risk to starting any business, but each cent you spend to support a small, vegan company makes a vegan future more possible for the owners, their employees, and the community in general. And it reflects back into towns, both large and small. Indie businesses make neighborhoods thrive.

I'm pleased to showcase five all-vegan B&Bs on pages 16-22 in this issue. They each offer recipes that have thrilled guests for years. Try Lemon Pepper Tofu for dinner tonight or snack on Coconut Mango Muffins. On pages 6-11, another vegan business owner, Jason Yowell, presents fancy takes on toast. His open-faced BLT on ciabatta (featured on the cover) can win over everyone at the table. Finish your next meal with his Sweet Cream and Fruit Tartine for a delight. Oh—and all the Veggie Bits reviews in this issue feature products created by small businesses.

All dreams start small and grow when nourished. I hope you will enjoy cooking with the vegan small business owners in this issue, and that each time you open your wallet, especially in the current economic climate, you consider shopping small, local, and vegan.

*Rissa Miller*

*Senior Editor of the Vegetarian Journal*

## 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

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My name and address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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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)

Thanks to Judy Karpen for her generous donation in memory of Cliff Enz.

Thanks to Ed Goldstein for his donation in honor of his daughter Leah Goldstein.

Thanks to Betty Gunz for her generous donation.

Thanks to VRG's Board members for their generous donations and commitment to VRG.

## Good to Offer Veggie Burgers at Fast Food Chains

I am David, a 15-year-old life-long vegetarian. I recently read about how Burger King is a U.S. fast food company selling a vegan meat substitute as one of their burgers. In my opinion, "the more the merrier." It is frustrating to go out with friends and not be able to choose something substantial off of the menu. I believe that more major burger chains like Wendy's and McDonald's should offer vegan alternatives in the United States. In conclusion, if they brought out a fresh new item to the menu, it would be in the spotlight for a whole new group of customers to serve.

*David B., via e-mail*

**Editor's Note:** Several fast food restaurant chains have announced they will be adding Beyond products to their menu.

## Thank You for Your Research on Food Ingredients

I was Googling for information on xanthan gum and came across your article on it, [vrg.org/journal/vj2019issue1/2019\\_issue1\\_xanthan\\_gum.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2019issue1/2019_issue1_xanthan_gum.php), and I just wanted to thank you for the work you put into the research and for making it public. I found it useful

and interesting. As a long-time vegan, clear, well-researched info is such a gift because there is a lot of nonsense out there on the web.  
*Fredricka C., via e-mail*

## Comparing the Experiences of Vegan High Schoolers in America

Thanks for the survey. One good thing about the lack of vegan school choices is that you will have some experience with preparing your own food. That's what my daughter-in-law had to do when she became vegetarian in high school.

*Judy M., via VRG Blog*

**Editor's Note:** See: [vrg.org/blog/2021/02/03/comparing-the-experiences-of-vegan-high-schoolers-in-america](http://vrg.org/blog/2021/02/03/comparing-the-experiences-of-vegan-high-schoolers-in-america)

## 50 Ideas for Vegan Lunch Bags

It is fantastic to find resources for vegetarians [[vrg.org/journal/vj2021issue1/2021\\_issue1\\_vegan\\_lunch-bags.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2021issue1/2021_issue1_vegan_lunch-bags.php)] especially at the international level and be able to share information.

*Pascual M., via VRG Blog*

**Editor's Note:** Writer is from Spain and member of the Spanish Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

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...

## HOLIDAY DESSERTS!

**Plus:** *Risk of Viral Pandemics from Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations & Wet Markets, Meal Delivery Kits, Plus More!*

# Raise a Toast

by Jason Yowell

Sometimes, a simple piece of toast just doesn't cut it. You want something a little heartier than a smear of jam on your slice. Time for toast to get an upgrade. While avocado is a modern classic, step outside the box and get something new on top of your toast. Start with my unconventional Frico Caprese—it's like grilled cheese without the sandwich (below). Toast goes savory with creamy herbed cashew cheeze, mushrooms, and caramelized onion atop a baguette (opposite page). Get ready for satisfaction with piled-high Seitan "Brat" Crostini (page 8) and for a fully all-veg toast, make my stunning Sweet Potato Toasts with Beet Purée, topped in a syrupy drizzle of balsamic (page 9). No one will be able to resist my BLT Toasts with rice paper vegan bacon and a saucy splash of fiery mayonnaise (page 10). For a brunch or dessert crunch, try Sweet Cream & Fruit Tartines with your favorite seasonal fruits (page 11). With all this flavor, you can raise a toast for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks!

## Frico Caprese

(Serves 12 as an appetizer)

**¾ cup vegan mozzarella-style cheese shreds**

(VioLife worked best in tests)

**1 cup cherry or plum tomatoes**

**Fresh basil, to garnish**

**Balsamic Reduction, to garnish (see page 9)**

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place 1 Tablespoon of vegan cheese shreds in a loose circle, as flat as possible. Repeat with remaining cheese, forming 12 circles. Bake for 15-20 minutes and allow to cool. Frico will crisp up and set as they cool, as they must be firm to support the toppings.

While cheese is baking, slice tomatoes thin, and chiffonade basil by rolling basil leaves and slicing them into thin strips.

### *Assembling Frico Caprese:*

On each frico, alternate between tomato and basil until you have a nicely topped crisp. Drizzle a bit of Balsamic Reduction and serve.

Total calories: 34

Carbohydrates: 5 grams

Sodium: 50 milligrams

Fat: 2 grams

Protein: <1 gram

Fiber: <1 gram



# Mushroom Medley Toasts with Herbed Cashew Cheeze

(Serves 12 as an appetizer)

## *Herbed Cashew Cheeze:*

- 1 cup raw cashews
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice or apple cider vinegar
- 3 cloves fresh garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 3 Tablespoons dried dill

Ideally, Herbed Cashew Cheeze should be prepared the day before. To make cheeze, put the cashews in a small bowl with just enough boiling water to cover, and allow to soak for at least 10 minutes and up to overnight.

When cashews are softened, add to a blender or food processor with half of the soaking liquid, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and paprika. Purée about 3 minutes on high power until the mixture is smooth with no chunks of cashew or garlic remaining. Add more water if needed to achieve a creamy consistency. Move mixture to a

storage bowl and stir in dill. Allow to set up in the fridge for several hours or overnight to thicken.

## *Mushroom Medley:*

- 1 white onion, chopped
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cups mixed mushrooms, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, diced
- ¼ cup walnuts
- 2 Tablespoons liquid aminos or lite soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ⅓ teaspoon ground black pepper
- Finely chopped parsley, for garnish

To make the mushrooms, sauté onions in olive oil over medium heat until translucent, 3-5 minutes. Add chopped mushrooms and garlic, and sauté until mushrooms are tender, about 8-10 minutes.

In a second pan, toast the walnuts until they start to brown and are lightly fragrant. Add to a blender or food processor and pulse until the walnuts are the consistency of bread crumbs. Add mushrooms, liquid aminos, thyme, and pepper to blender with walnuts and process until smooth.

## *Assembling Mushroom and Cheeze Toasts:*

- 1 fresh baguette
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- Herbed Cashew Cheeze
- Mushroom Medley
- Fresh parsley, to garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice a baguette into roughly 1-inch slices and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with olive oil and bake for 10-15 minutes, until toasted.

Spread baguette slices with a generous portion of the cashew cheeze followed by mushroom mixture. Arrange on a serving plate and garnish as desired with chopped parsley.

Total calories: 271  
Carbohydrates: 39 grams  
Sodium: 687 milligrams

Fat: 9 grams  
Protein: 9 grams  
Fiber: 3 grams

## Seitan "Brat" Crostini

(Serves 6 as an entrée)

### *Homemade Seitan:*

#### **Cooking Broth:**

**1 cup of mixed carrots, celery, and onions, diced**  
**4 cloves garlic, minced**  
**1 Tablespoon olive oil**  
**6-8 cups water**

In a large pot, sauté onions, celery, carrots, and garlic in olive oil until tender and aromatic. Add 6-8 cups water and bring to boil once seitan dough is about to be ready. Use to make seitan, as below.

#### **Seitan Dough:**

**1½ cups low-sodium vegetable broth**  
**1 Tablespoon liquid aminos or lite soy sauce**  
**1 teaspoon molasses**  
**1¾ cups vital wheat gluten**  
**¼ cup nutritional yeast**  
**1 Tablespoon smoked paprika**  
**1 teaspoon ground black pepper**  
**1 teaspoon garlic powder**  
**1 teaspoon onion powder**  
**½ teaspoon dried dill**  
**½ teaspoon rubbed sage**  
**⅓ teaspoon ground fennel seed**  
**All-purpose flour, for kneading**

To make seitan, mix broth, liquid aminos and molasses in a small bowl; set aside. In a separate bowl, mix together dry ingredients and make a well. Add in the wet ingredients, working quickly to combine into a spongy dough.

Once the liquids are fully incorporated, turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead vigorously for about 8-10 minutes. Dough will be spongy but moldable. Shape the dough into a 1-inch thick rectangle, about 5 x 7 inches, and slice into six 1-inch thick strips.

Place dough into boiling broth for 60-90 minutes depending on how thick the slices ended up. The dough will initially sink before puffing up to a much larger size and floating to the top. At the end of boiling, the seitan will have a more solid texture and some of the puffiness will have reduced. Remove from broth and allow to cool before serving or storing. Store in cooking broth in the fridge. Seitan keeps for at least a week in the fridge and longer if frozen.

### *Dijon-Maple Sauce:*

**½ cup vegan Dijon mustard**  
**¼ cup lemon juice**  
**¼ cup maple syrup**  
**2 Tablespoons apple cider vinegar**  
**Salt and ground black pepper, to taste**

Whisk all ingredients. Store in the fridge and use in this recipe, or on roasted veggies, or salads. Note, only a portion of the seitan and sauce will be used.

### *Assembling Seitan "Brat" Crostini:*

**1 fresh baguette**  
**4 Tablespoons olive oil, separated**  
**1 green pepper, seeded and chopped into 1-inch squares**  
**1 red pepper, seeded and chopped into 1-inch squares**  
**1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely minced**  
**3 cloves garlic, minced**  
**1 teaspoon chili powder**  
**1 teaspoon ground black pepper**  
**Salt, to taste**  
**2 slices homemade seitan (or plant-based sausages such as Beyond, Field Roast, or Tofurky )**  
**Vegan cheese shreds (optional)**  
**About ⅓ recipe of Dijon-Maple Sauce**  
**Parsley, finely chopped (garnish)**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice baguette into roughly 1-inch slices and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with olive oil, and bake for about 10-15 minutes or until toasted.

In large pan over medium heat, sauté peppers, onions, and jalapeños in olive oil until tender, about 4-6 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in garlic, chili powder, pepper, and salt. Set aside.

Slice seitan into ½-inch slices, add to a pan, and brown on both sides. Once browned, mix into the peppers and onions. If using vegan cheese, add now and cover for cheese to melt with the residual heat.

To assemble the crostini, remove baguette slices from the oven, and spread with a generous portion of the Dijon-Maple sauce. Follow with the veggie and seitan mixture until all ingredients are used. Arrange on a serving plate and garnish with parsley. Serve warm.

Total calories: 348  
Carbohydrates: 45 grams  
Sodium: 563 milligrams

Fat: 11 grams  
Protein: 16 grams  
Fiber: 3 grams



## Sweet Potato Toasts with Beet Purée

(Serves 12 as an appetizer)

2-3 fresh sweet potatoes, firm and free of soft spots

2 Tablespoons olive oil

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 teaspoon ground cumin

*Herbed Cashew Cheeze* (see page 7)

### *Sweet Potato Toasts:*

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut sweet potatoes lengthwise into ½-inch slices. Be sure the slices are roughly the same size for even cooking. Transfer slices to baking sheet in a single layer, brush with olive oil, and sprinkle with salt, pepper, and cumin. Bake for 30-35 minutes until lightly toasted and slightly tender.

2 pounds beets, cleaned

1½ cups water

2 cups balsamic vinegar

### *Beet Purée:*

Trim beet roots, no need to peel. Add to a large saucepan with enough water to partially submerge the beets. Bring to a boil, then reduce to medium heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes until fork-tender. Place beets into blender or food processor and purée until smooth.

### *Balsamic Reduction:*

In a medium saucepan, heat balsamic vinegar until bubbling. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened and reduced by half.

### *Assembling Sweet Potato Toasts with Beet Purée:*

Smear beet purée onto baked sweet potato toasts. Dollop Herbed Cashew Cheeze on top and drizzle with Balsamic Reduction. Serve warm or chilled.

**Cook's Notes:** To save time, buy pre-cooked beets, which are available in many grocery store produce sections. Another shortcut: Look for bottled balsamic glaze with the oils and vinegars at most grocery stores.

Total calories: 166

Carbohydrates: 23 grams

Sodium: 368 milligrams

Fat: 7 grams

Protein: 3 grams

Fiber: 3 grams



## BLT Toasts

(Serves 4 as an entrée)

### *Rice Paper Bacon:*

2 Tablespoons tamari

1 Tablespoon olive oil

½ Tablespoon maple syrup

¼ teaspoon liquid smoke

Pinch ground black pepper

Pinch smoked paprika

4 sheets rice paper

To make the rice paper bacon, preheat oven to 400 degrees and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.

Have two shallow bowls on hand, one to hydrate the rice paper strips and the second to marinate the strips. Fill one bowl with water. In the second bowl, combine all ingredients except rice paper to make the marinade. Stir until marinade is well mixed.

Rice paper has a smooth side and a textured side. Place two sheets together with the smooth sides facing in. Use a sharp pair of scissors to trim the sheets into 5-6 strips. Repeat with second set of rice paper. If the rice paper is stale or the scissors are too dull, the sheets may crack or fall apart.

When strips are cut, run them individually through the water to hydrate. As you pull them out of the water, run your fingers down the strip to remove excess liquid. This step is crucial so that the rice paper can absorb the marinade. Once drained, place each strip in the marinade immediately and allow to rest for a few minutes. Marinade should cover the strips. Note, strips may

remain translucent; this is normal.

Place the strips on the parchment paper and brush with any remaining marinade. Bake for about 3 minutes, then flip and bake for an additional 3 minutes. Allow to cool for 10 minutes before serving so that rice paper bacon can become crispy.

### *Assembling the Toast:*

2 Tablespoons vegan mayonnaise

2 Tablespoons sriracha (or less for less heat)

Ciabatta loaf

2 cloves garlic, peeled

2 cups iceberg lettuce, shredded

1 vine ripe tomato, sliced

8-10 pieces of Rice Paper Bacon

Mix together vegan mayonnaise and sriracha. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice ciabatta horizontally and then in half. Place sliced ciabatta on a baking sheet and toast in the oven for 10 minutes, then flip and toast for another 10 minutes until crisp. Allow to cool a few minutes, then rub cut-side with raw garlic to add subtle flavor. Spread with sriracha-mayonnaise and top with lettuce, tomatoes, and Rice Paper Bacon. Serve immediately.

**Cook's Notes:** Rice paper is usually found in the Asian aisle of large grocery stores.

### *Pictured on the cover.*

Total calories: 367

Carbohydrates: 60 grams

Sodium: 1,353 milligrams

Fat: 9 grams

Protein: 11 grams

Fiber: 3 grams



## Sweet Cream & Fruit Tartine

(Makes 12 as an appetizer or dessert)

### *Sweet Cashew Cream:*

- 1 cup raw cashews
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup or agave nectar
- Pinch of salt (optional)

Ideally, Sweet Cream should be prepared the day before. To make cream, put the cashews in a small bowl with just enough boiling water to cover, and allow to soak for at least 10 minutes and up to overnight.

When cashews are softened, add to a blender or food processor with soaking water, lemon zest and juice, vanilla, maple syrup, and salt. Purée about 3 minutes on high power until the mixture is smooth with no chunks of cashew remaining. Add more maple syrup if a sweeter cream is desired. Move to a storage bowl. Allow to set up in the fridge for several hours or overnight to thicken.

### *Assembling Sweet Cream and Fruit Tartine:*

- 1 fresh baguette
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups of your favorite fruit, such as strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, apples, peaches, etc.
- Fresh mint, to garnish (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice a baguette into roughly 1-inch slices and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with olive oil and bake for 10-15 minutes, until toasted.

Smear toast with Sweet Cashew Cream and arrange fruit on top. If desired, top with a drizzle of maple syrup or fresh mint.

Total calories: 271

Carbohydrates: 41 grams

Sodium: 397 milligrams

Fat: 9 grams

Protein: 8 grams

Fiber: 3 grams



Photos by Rissa Miller  
Blue pottery dish provided by  
Nest Natural Home, [nestnaturalhome.com](http://nestnaturalhome.com)

Jason Yowell is a vegan of five years, an avid hiker and runner, and a competitive cyclist. He owns the Allegheny Trail House in Frostburg, Maryland, [alleghenytrailhouse.com](http://alleghenytrailhouse.com). See more of his tasty vegan food on Instagram at [@plantbased\\_jase](https://www.instagram.com/plantbased_jase)



# SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

By Reed Mangels,  
PhD, RD, FADA

## A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

### Vegetarian Diet Associated with a Lower Risk of Cataract

A cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye. Cataracts affect vision, and eventually, many people need surgery to remove cataracts. Approximately 1.5 million cataract operations are performed every year in the United States. Oxidative stress damages the proteins in the lens and is thought to be a cause of age-related cataracts.

Researchers in Taiwan studied more than 1,300 vegetarians and more than 3,000 nonvegetarians for more than five years to see whether there were differences in the development of cataracts. At the start of the study, subjects' average age was 53 years. The vegetarians were less likely to have diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Compared to the non-vegetarians, the vegetarians ate more vegetables, nuts, soy foods, and whole grains and had higher intakes of vitamins A and C. Being vegetarian was associated with a 20% lower risk of developing a cataract. This difference in risk may be due in part to the vegetarians' higher intake of antioxidants such as vitamins A and C and to the lower incidence of diabetes and other chronic conditions in vegetarians.

Chiu THT, Chang CC, Lin CL, Lin MN. A vegetarian diet is associated with a lower risk of cataract, particularly among individuals with overweight: A prospective study. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2020.

### Vegan Diet Offers Health Benefits Regardless of Blood Type

People with blood type O have a somewhat lower risk of developing heart disease, and those with blood type A have a higher risk than do those with other blood types. Diet books and websites suggest that those with different blood types would benefit from different diets; this idea is not supported by research. Investigators from the Physicians Committee for

Responsible Medicine (PCRM) looked at the response to a lowfat vegan diet in subjects with different blood types. Subjects were on a lowfat vegan diet for 12 weeks. Blood type was determined for 68 subjects. The 20 subjects with blood type A had significantly higher average cholesterol and LDL cholesterol at the start of the study than did subjects with other blood types. The 31 subjects with blood type O had significantly lower average cholesterol and LDL cholesterol at the start of the study than did subjects with other blood types. At the end of the 12-week study, there was no significant difference based on blood type in weight loss or in reductions in total and LDL cholesterol. These results suggest that blood type does not affect response to a vegan diet. Whether a person is type O, A, AB, or B, a healthy vegan diet can promote favorable changes in body fat, body weight, and blood lipids.

Barnard ND, Rembert E, Freeman A, Bradshaw M, Holubkov R, Kahleova H. Blood type is not associated with changes in cardiometabolic outcomes in response to a plant-based dietary intervention. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2020.

### Soy Isoflavones Associated with Moderately Reduced Risk of Heart Disease

Soybeans and foods made with soy contain substances called isoflavones, which are believed to have health effects. Some studies find that the risk of heart disease is reduced with higher isoflavone intakes while other studies do not. These inconsistent results may be due to some studies having a small number of subjects, incomplete assessment of diet composition, and a too-short follow-up period. A recent report attempted to correct these issues. The study had more than 210,000 male and female subjects living in the United States, took place over more than 20 years, and asked subjects about their food choices every four years. This was an observational study, so subjects ate whatever

they wanted and were followed to see who developed heart disease. A higher isoflavone intake was associated with a moderate reduction in the risk of heart disease. Additionally, those eating tofu once or more a week had an 18% lower risk of heart disease than those eating tofu less than once a month. Most study subjects ate 0.11 to 4.24 milligrams of isoflavones per day. When compared to the median intake in Japan of 30 to 35 milligrams of isoflavones per day, this is a relatively low intake. Perhaps an even greater reduction of risk of heart disease would have been seen with a higher intake of isoflavones.

Ma L, Liu G, Ding M, et al. Isoflavone intake and the risk of coronary heart disease in US men and women: Results from 3 prospective cohort studies. *Circulation*. 2020;141(14):1127-1137.

## Plant-Based Protein as Effective as Animal-Based Protein for Strength Training

Those doing strength training typically want to build muscles. Both resistance training and a protein-rich diet have been shown to build muscle. Does it matter if the protein comes from plants? A recent study investigated the effects of protein source on strength training.<sup>1</sup> Subjects were 19 young men who had been vegan for at least a year and 19 young men who were nonvegetarians. Subjects were physically active but had not done strength training for at least a year before the study started. During the study, all subjects participated in a 12-week, twice-weekly, supervised strength training program. Their daily protein intake was increased to 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram body weight using protein supplements (soy for vegans, whey for nonvegetarians) in addition to their usual diet. While somewhat higher protein is associated with gains in muscle during strength training, no further gains are seen beyond an intake of 1.6 g/kg.<sup>2</sup>

Both groups had a similar increase in muscle mass and strength over the 12-week study. These results suggest a vegan diet containing generous amounts of protein, along with strength training, can increase strength and muscle mass. This study didn't examine the effectiveness of lower (but adequate) amounts of plant-based protein during strength training.

<sup>1</sup> Hevia-Larraín V, Gualano B, Longobardi I, et al. High-protein plant-based diet versus a protein-matched omnivorous diet to support resistance training adaptations: A comparison between habitual vegans and omnivores. *Sports Med*. 2021;10.

<sup>2</sup> Morton RW, Murphy KT, McKellar SR, et al. A systematic review, meta-analysis, and meta-regression of the effect of protein supplementation on resistance training-induced gains in muscle mass and strength in healthy adults. *Br J Sports Med*. 2018;52(6):376-384.

## New Report Connects Food Choices and Climate Change

An international collaboration, *The Lancet Countdown*, provides an independent system that tracks the global health profile of the changing climate. Their report for 2020 includes some sobering information about our food choices and their effects on climate change and health. The food system accounts for 20-30% of global greenhouse gas emissions, most of which are from dairy and meat production. Emissions from livestock have increased by 16% since 2000; the vast majority of these emissions (93%) are from ruminant animals. Excess consumption of red meat is estimated to have contributed to 990,000 deaths worldwide in 2017 (the most recent year for which figures are available). This is a 72% increase in the number of deaths attributed to excessive red meat consumption since 1990.

One conclusion of this report is, "Excessive consumption of red meat brings considerable health consequences, and plant-based sources that are less emissions-intensive are important alternatives, particularly in Europe and the Americas where per-capita emissions are high."

The report also shows the effects of climate change on the food supply. Rising temperatures and increasingly frequent extreme weather events threaten global food security. There has been a 1.8-5.6% decline in yield potential for corn, rice, soy, and winter wheat over the past 38 years. It is increasingly difficult to even maintain current crop production levels.

Watts N, Amann M, Arnell N, et al. The 2020 report of *The Lancet Countdown* on health and climate change: responding to converging crises. *Lancet*. 2021;397(10269):129-170.

# Book Reviews

## The Vegucated Family Table

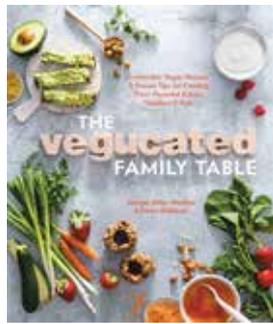
By Marissa Miller Wolfson and Laura Delhauer

Are you searching for a book geared towards feeding vegan babies, toddlers, and kids? *The Vegucated Family Table* features 125 vegan recipes, helpful nutrition information (written by The Vegetarian Resource Group's Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels, PhD, RD), and numerous tips. The book certainly will make raising vegan children easier and provides solid information you can show your family and child's doctor to ease any of their concerns.

The nutrition information includes charts listing good sources of protein, calcium, iron, zinc, omega-3s, and various vitamins. You will also find sample weekly menus for 6- to 12-month-olds. Another section of the book covers information on handling kid-centric holidays, as well as school lunches.

Featured recipes include Cashew Creamed Kale, White Bean Wonder Waffles, Baked Kale Chips, Roasted Herbed Chickpeas, Sesame Tofu Sticks, Tempeh Tacos, Moo-Free Fudge Pops, and more.

*The Vegucated Family Table* (ISBN 978-1-98485-717-0) is a 240-page book. It is published by Ten Speed Press and retails for \$24.99. Find this book online or at your local bookstore. *Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator*



*Revitalizing Judaism*. However this is a good start for an overview of ideas related to Judaism and veganism. You can then explore more in depth topics that pique your interest. Since Christianity and Islam have their roots in Judaism, the book would be helpful to readers interested in those other religions by giving a starting point.

Many people see religion as a way to promote a better world and become a better person. Religion is also used to justify your being above others, whether it be economic or political, and even extending to slavery and killing. Religion for both sides generally means community, traditions, comfort in bad times, and celebration in good times, ranging from birth to wedding to death. As humans, most of us, including atheists, generally use our beliefs for all of this.

Richard starts with the idea that G-d's original diet in the Garden of Eden was vegan. Even religious people who believe in a strict interpretation of the bible would agree with this. Richard then makes the case how this is the diet that G-d really wants us to follow for health, compassion, respecting G-d's creatures, and environmental reasons. Eating animal products becomes a concession to man and woman's weakness, not a command. According to Rabbi Kook, first chief rabbi of pre-state Israel, and others, the Messianic period would be vegetarian, based on Isaiah's prophecy that "a wolf shall live with a lamb... and a lion, like cattle, shall eat straw... They shall neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mount." The two ideal times in Jewish thought are vegan—The Garden of Eden and the Messianic period. Richard makes his case about health, the environment, world hunger, and treatment of animals, and how all these are related to the Torah, Jewish thoughts, and Jewish teachings throughout the ages. He gives opinions on how Jewish holidays are connected to veganism, and a vegan view of biblical animal sacrifices. A chapter talks about use of leather ritual objects such as *tefillin* (used at times when praying) and *mezuzot* (on Jewish doorposts). He is trying to strike a compromise. This may not make strict vegans happy, but reminds people that veganism isn't the religion, but veganism is a way to practice your religion. For vegan activists out there, understanding religious ideas, can be an additional method to promote their cause. For religious people, veganism can be another way to live their religious beliefs.

*The Vegan Revolution* (ISBN 978-1-59056-627-5) is a 272-page book and can be purchased from your favorite online retailer or at [lanternpm.org/books/vegan-revolution](http://lanternpm.org/books/vegan-revolution). *Charles Stahler/VRG Co-Coordinator*

## Vegan Revolution

By Richard H. Schwartz, PhD

Richard Schwartz has been promoting Judaism and vegetarianism for almost 40 years, since the publication of his book aptly named *Judaism and Vegetarianism* in 1982. Richard uses his books as a "business card" so he can advance the cause of vegetarianism in media ranging from *The New York Times* to *The Jerusalem Post* to *Mad Magazine*. Richard and his publisher Martin Rowe/Lantern Publishing's goals are not fame and getting rich, but promoting ideas they consider important.

Not all Jewish people or those in or outside of the vegan movement will agree with the statements in their newest book, *Vegan Revolution, Saving Our World*,



# Cholesterol in Plants?

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

**A**lthough we usually think of cholesterol as coming from animal products, plants contain very small amounts of cholesterol.<sup>1</sup> The cholesterol content of plants is estimated to be hundreds to thousands times less than that of animals.<sup>2</sup> These low levels of cholesterol mean that plants' contribution to dietary cholesterol intake is extremely small. We were only able to find estimates of cholesterol amounts in plant oils but not in whole plant foods. Corn oil, for example, is reported to have 55 milligrams of cholesterol in a kilogram of oil.<sup>1</sup> This works out to less than 1 milligram of cholesterol in a Tablespoon of corn oil. In contrast, one egg yolk has 184 milligrams of cholesterol.

Plants contain much higher amounts of substances similar to cholesterol but with a slightly different structure called phytosterols or plant sterols. Manufacturers use plant sterols to make cholesterol which is sometimes used in pharmaceuticals.

Vegans and lacto-ovo vegetarians have higher mean intakes of phytosterols than do nonvegetarians.<sup>3</sup> This may be a benefit of a plant-based diet since higher consumption of plant sterols is associated with lower blood cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol levels.<sup>4,5</sup>

## References:

<sup>1</sup> Behrman EJ, Gopalan V. Cholesterol and plants. *J Chem Educ.* 2005;82:1791–1793.

<sup>2</sup> Sonawane PD, Pollier J, Panda S, et al. Plant cholesterol biosynthetic pathway overlaps with phytosterol metabolism. *Nat Plants.* 2016;3:16205.

<sup>3</sup> Jaceldo-Siegl K, Lütjohann D, Sirirat R, Mashchak A, Fraser GE, Haddad E. Variations in dietary intake and plasma concentrations of plant sterols across plant-based diets among North American adults. *Mol Nutr Food Res.* 2017;61(8):10.

<sup>4</sup> Andersson SW, Skinner J, Ellegård L, et al. Intake of dietary plant sterols is inversely related to serum cholesterol concentration in men and women in the EPIC Norfolk population: a cross-sectional study. *Eur J Clin Nutr.* 2004;58(10):1378-85.

<sup>5</sup> Klingberg S, Ellegård L, Johansson I, et al. Inverse relation between dietary intake of naturally occurring plant sterols and serum cholesterol in northern Sweden. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2008;87(4):993-1001.

# Home Away from Home

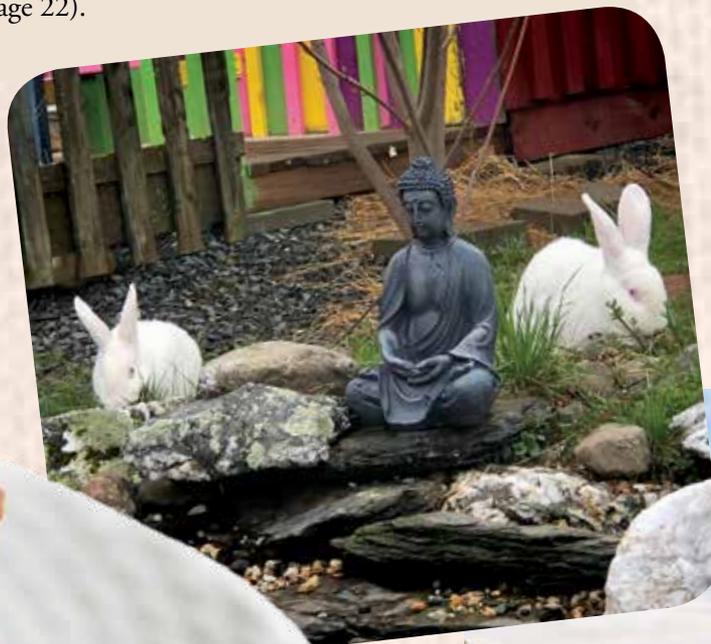
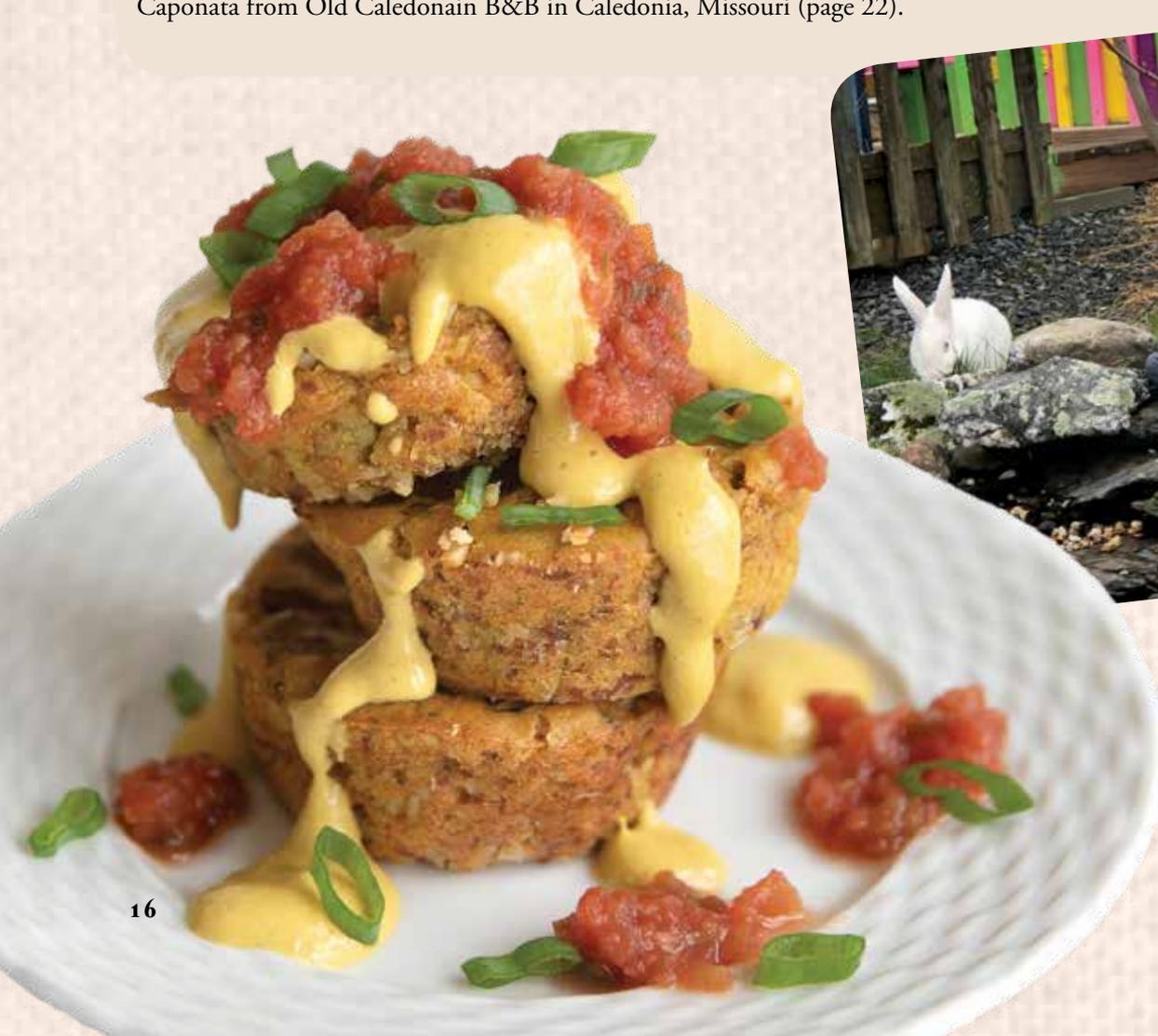
Compiled by Rissa Miller

Imagine waking to the aroma of just-brewed coffee, your breakfast fresh from the oven as you take your seat at the table. Who couldn't get used to that sort of pampering? Bed and Breakfast inns, including the five featured in this article, offer unique guest experiences based on the innkeepers' tastes and interests, as well as the region.

Within this group, discover gardens, a spa, animal sanctuaries, and on-site hiking trails. Remember, innkeepers act as chef, housekeeper, tour guide, local history expert, marketer, gardener, server, decorator, handy-person, and business owner, all wrapped into one. It's their hope to make every guest's stay comfortable by offering warmth and hospitality. They can point you to restaurants with vegan options, historic sites, local events, and more to enhance your trip.

Breakfast is one of the most satisfying parts of staying at a B&B. Every innkeeper is proud of their culinary offerings, and these vegan hosts/hostesses deliver the deliciousness to your plate every morning. Until you can pack a bag and stop at every one of these all-vegan businesses, use these recipes to travel to the B&Bs from home.

Start in New Lebanon, New York, with Tofu Quiche Muffins at Red Robin Song Guest House B&B (opposite page). Next, get a taste of the exotic with Jen's Coconut Mango Muffins from Deer Run B&B Inn in the Florida Keys (page 18). You'll fondly recall the weekend brunches, especially the Lemon-Pepper Tofu with Roasted Veggies (page 19), from the Ginger Cat B&B near Watkins Glen, New York. In Shepherdstown, West Virginia, you'll enjoy your Tofu Benedict Florentine with Hollandaise Sauce from Sundogs B&B (page 20). And finally, wind down with Caponata from Old Caledonain B&B in Caledonia, Missouri (page 22).



# Tofu Quiche Muffins

Red Robin Song Guest House B&B

New Lebanon, New York

redrobinsongguesthouse.com

(518) 794-0186

(Makes 12 muffins)

## Quiche Muffins:

½ cup unsweetened vegan milk

¼ cup cornstarch

16 ounces silken firm tofu

¼ cup chickpea flour

½ cup nutritional yeast

1 Tablespoon lemon juice

¼ teaspoon onion powder

¼ teaspoon turmeric

⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper

1 cup chopped spinach

1 cup chopped mushrooms

¼ cup chopped chives

3-4 cloves fresh garlic, crushed

1 cup almonds (or use almond meal)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Whisk milk and cornstarch in bowl until blended.

In blender or food processor, mix tofu, chickpea flour, nutritional yeast, lemon juice, onion powder, turmeric, and pepper.

In a large bowl, combine the tofu mixture, blended milk and cornstarch, spinach, mushrooms, chives, and garlic.

Blend almonds in food processor until a fine powder is achieved or use pre-ground almond meal. Using

a silicone muffin pan, sprinkle almond meal on bottom and press on sides to form a crust. Fill cups ¾ full with quiche mixture.

Bake for 50 minutes and allow muffins to set at room temperature for 15 minutes.

The quiche can be made a day ahead and reheated.

## Cheezy Sauce:

½ cup soaked raw cashews

¾ cup unsweetened vegan milk

1 cup nutritional yeast

½ cup rolled oats

1 small yellow onion

**Suggested table condiments: Extra crushed garlic, salsa, paprika, salt, and pepper**

Soak cashews overnight in enough water to cover.

Discard water and purée all ingredients in blender until smooth and silky. Warm over medium-low heat in a saucepan until ready to serve.

**Cook's Note:** If Cheezy Sauce consistency seems too thick, add water or vegetable broth while heating and mixing. Thickness may vary. Can be made a day ahead of serving and stored in the fridge.

Serve quiche muffins with a small amount of Cheezy Sauce drizzled on top with extra in a gravy boat or bowl on the table.

Total calories: 247

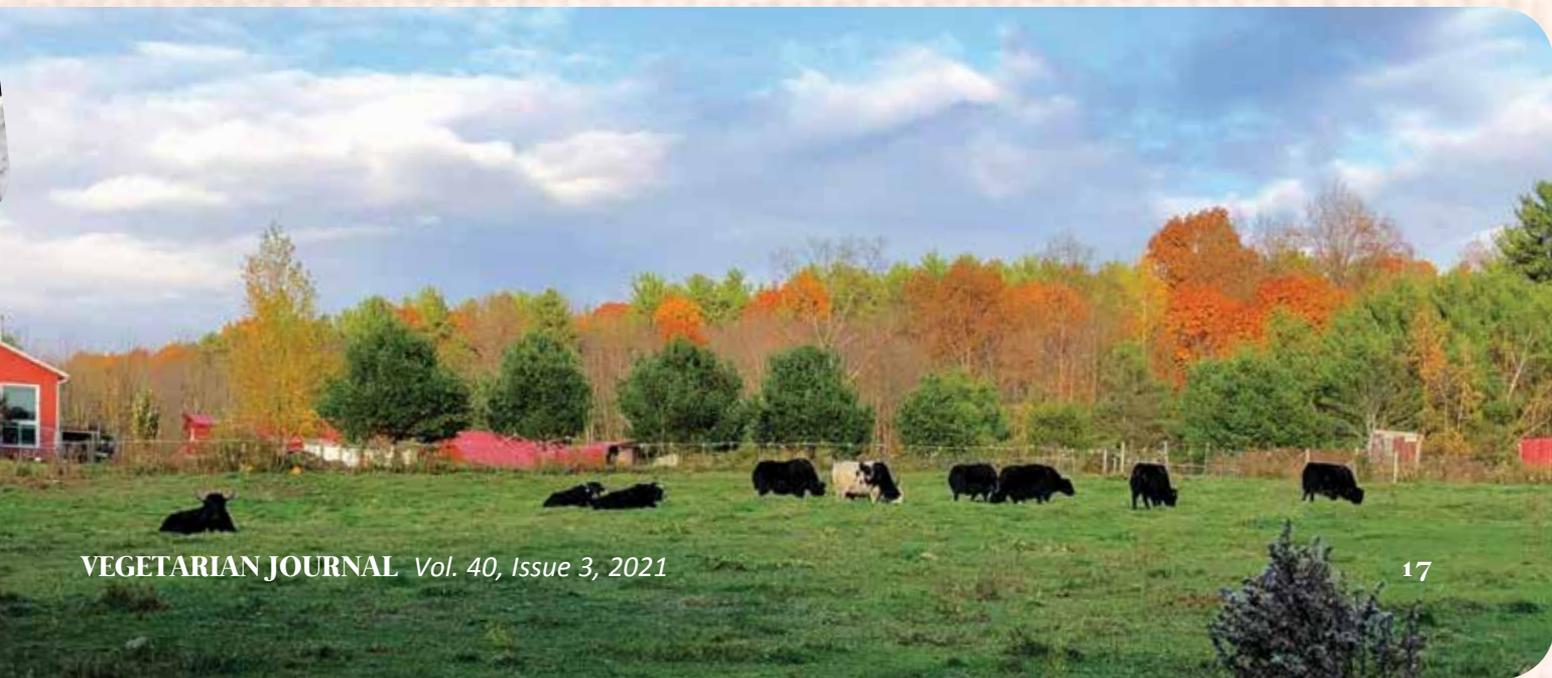
Carbohydrates: 22 grams

Sodium: 35 milligrams

Fat: 11 grams

Protein: 19 grams

Fiber: 8 grams



# Jen's Coconut Mango Muffins

Deer Run B&B Inn, The Keys, Florida  
deerrunontheatlantic.com  
(305) 872-2015  
(Makes 10 muffins)

- 1 cup finely shredded unsweetened coconut
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 Tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup full-fat coconut milk or coconut cream
- 2 Tablespoons unrefined coconut oil
- 2 Tablespoons unsweetened applesauce
- 1 flax egg (2 Tablespoons warm water with 1 Tablespoon flax seed meal)
- ½ cup organic sugar
- 2 teaspoons coconut extract
- 1 cup finely-diced fresh mango

Preheat a skillet over medium heat, add the unsweetened coconut shreds, and stir until lightly browned. Remove from heat, set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Either line muffin tins with cupcake liners, or spray with cooking spray. Sift dry ingredients.

Blend wet ingredients in a blender or food processor. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients, gently mix with a spatula to start to combine. Add toasted coconut, and mix a little more. Add in mango and fold together until fully combined. Do not overmix batter or muffins will be tough.

Portion batter into prepared muffin tins. Bake for 22-27 minutes and check for doneness with a toothpick. If still wet inside, bake a few more minutes.

Remove from oven, allow to cool 5 minutes in the pan, then remove from pan to finish cooling.

**Cook's Note:** Be careful you're not fooled that the muffins are still wet inside by sticking the toothpick in a chunk of mango! Another reason a smaller dice works better.

Total calories: 273  
Carbohydrates: 36 grams  
Sodium: 229 milligrams

Fat: 13 grams  
Protein: 4 grams  
Fiber: 2 grams



For a complete listing of fully vegan and/or vegetarian B&Bs, visit our blog at [vrg.org/blog/2021/04/28/vegan-bed-breakfast-establishments-and-other-bbs-that-accommodate-vegans/](http://vrg.org/blog/2021/04/28/vegan-bed-breakfast-establishments-and-other-bbs-that-accommodate-vegans/)



# Lemon-Pepper Tofu with Roasted Veggies

Ginger Cat B&B, Rock Stream, New York  
gingercat-bb.com  
(607) 535-9627  
(Serves 4)

- 16 ounces extra-firm tofu, cut into 8-12 slabs
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons sesame oil
- 2 Tablespoons water or low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1½ Tablespoons liquid aminos, lite soy sauce, or tamari
- 4 cloves fresh garlic, or more, to taste, minced
- ½ teaspoon liquid smoke
- 1½ Tablespoons salt-free lemon-pepper seasoning blend, or to taste
- 3½ cups chopped vegetables (for example, broccoli, cauliflower, winter squash, carrots)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a rimmed cookie sheet with foil; it's important for browning and clean up. Prick each slab with a fork several times. Thinner slabs will result in chewier slices; thicker slabs will be more tender.

Mix together olive oil, sesame oil, water or broth, liquid aminos, garlic, and liquid smoke. Dip the tofu slices in the mixture, coating both sides, and place on the cookie sheet. Sprinkle lemon-pepper on one side of tofu, then flip and sprinkle the other side.

Bake tofu on one side for 20 minutes; flip and bake another 20 minutes.

Use remaining marinade to coat vegetables and bake on a second lined cookie sheet. Stir after 20 minutes, when tofu is flipped.

As tofu cools, it will toughen up. Serve tofu over roasted veggies. Tofu slabs are great also in sandwiches or diced and put into salads or soup.

Total calories: 261  
Carbohydrates: 11 grams  
Sodium: 237 milligrams

Fat: 20 grams  
Protein: 13 grams  
Fiber: 3 grams



# Tofu Benedict Florentine with Hollandaise Sauce

Sundogs B&B, Shepherdstown, West Virginia  
sundogsbb.com  
(703) 581-9805  
(Serves 4)

16-ounce block extra-firm tofu  
¼ cup lite soy sauce plus ¾ cup water for marinade  
4 vegan English muffins  
2 teaspoons your favorite vegan margarine  
10-16 ounces fresh baby spinach  
1 teaspoon olive oil  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
1 package vegan bacon (such as Lightlife, Sweet Earth, Upton's, or Yves)  
1 recipe Hollandaise Sauce (see below)  
Paprika to garnish  
Chopped fresh parsley, to garnish

Press and drain tofu for at least one hour. Slice tofu into 12 slices and marinate for one hour in soy sauce and water combination. Drain and pat dry.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Put tofu in single layer on a baking sheet lined in parchment, and bake until lightly

browned, about 10 minutes per side. Rotate pan once during baking.

While tofu is baking, split and toast English muffins. Smear each half with ¼ teaspoon of vegan margarine and set aside. Sauté spinach in olive oil over medium heat until just wilted, 3-5 minutes, and season as desired with salt and pepper. Set aside. In the same pan, sauté 8 slices of vegan bacon according to package directions until crispy. Set aside.

## *Hollandaise Sauce:*

¼ cup coarsely chopped onion  
2 Tablespoons olive oil  
1½ cups unsweetened vegan milk (we prefer soy)  
2 Tablespoons + 1 teaspoon arrowroot powder  
1 teaspoon vegan bouillon (such as Better Than Bouillon Reduced Sodium Vegetable Base or Edward & Sons Garden Veggie Bouillon)  
¼ teaspoon ground turmeric  
¼ cup vegan white wine (or water)  
3 Tablespoons white wine vinegar  
2 Tablespoons nutritional yeast  
2 Tablespoons lemon juice  
¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste

In a medium saucepan, sauté onion in olive oil over medium heat for 3-4 minutes. Meanwhile in a bowl,



whisk together vegan milk, arrowroot powder, vegan bouillon, and turmeric.

Add white wine and white wine vinegar to the onions. Turn down the heat and gently reduce liquid over low heat to about 2 Tablespoons, approximately 15 minutes. Once reduced, add milk mixture and immediately sieve out the onion solids. Over medium heat, whisk continuously for 5-7 minutes until the sauce thickens. Whisk in nutritional yeast, lemon juice, and salt. If thinner sauce is desired, add more water.

Cover, turn off heat and allow to rest for about 15 minutes so flavors can meld. Serve slightly warm. Reheat gently if necessary. Sauce may thicken as it cools; add more water if needed, as texture can vary.

### *Assemble the Tofu Benedicts:*

Place two English muffin halves on a plate. Top each with 1 slice of vegan bacon, a layer of sautéed spinach, and 1 or 2 slices of baked tofu, and gently ladle warmed Hollandaise sauce over the top. Sprinkle with paprika and chopped parsley. Serve warm.

**Cook's Note:** For a gluten-free version, use gluten-free tamari for the tofu marinade, swap hash brown patties for the English muffins, and be sure to select gluten-free vegan bacon. Also use a gluten-free bouillon in the sauce.

Total calories: 501

Fat: 23 grams

Carbohydrates: 42 grams

Protein: 31 grams

Sodium: 1,661 milligrams

Fiber: 7 grams



# Caponata

Old Caledonian Bed & Breakfast, Caledonia, Missouri  
oldcaledonian.com

(573) 779-1300

(Makes about 1 quart)

- 1 large eggplant
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 medium onion, sliced thin
- 2 stalks celery, sliced thin
- 2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 red bell peppers, or one 12-ounce jar roasted red peppers, diced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 pound roma tomatoes peeled and seeded, or one 14-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 3 Tablespoons capers, rinsed
- 3 Tablespoons pitted Kalamata olives, coarsely chopped
- 2 Tablespoons organic sugar
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 3 Tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Pierce the eggplant in several places with a fork, place on a parchment-lined

baking sheet, and roast until softened and partially deflated, about 40-50 minutes. Set aside to cool.

In a large, heavy skillet (cast iron or non-stick work best), heat 1 Tablespoon olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions and celery, and sauté until the onions are softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant. Add the peppers. Cook a bit and add a dash of salt—this will extract some of the water from the peppers.

Once the liquid from the vegetables subsides, loosely chop the eggplant and add with remaining olive oil. Cook until eggplant breaks apart and starts to create a thickened texture, about 5 minutes.

Add the tomatoes, oregano, and another dash of salt. Cook until the tomatoes reduce to make the mixture thicken again, about 5 minutes.

Add the capers, olives, sugar, red pepper flakes, and vinegar. Lower the heat to medium-low and cook for another 15-20 minutes until the celery is tender and the mixture smells fragrant. It will be pleasantly and spreadably thick, and has a sweet-and-sour taste. Season with salt and pepper, as desired.

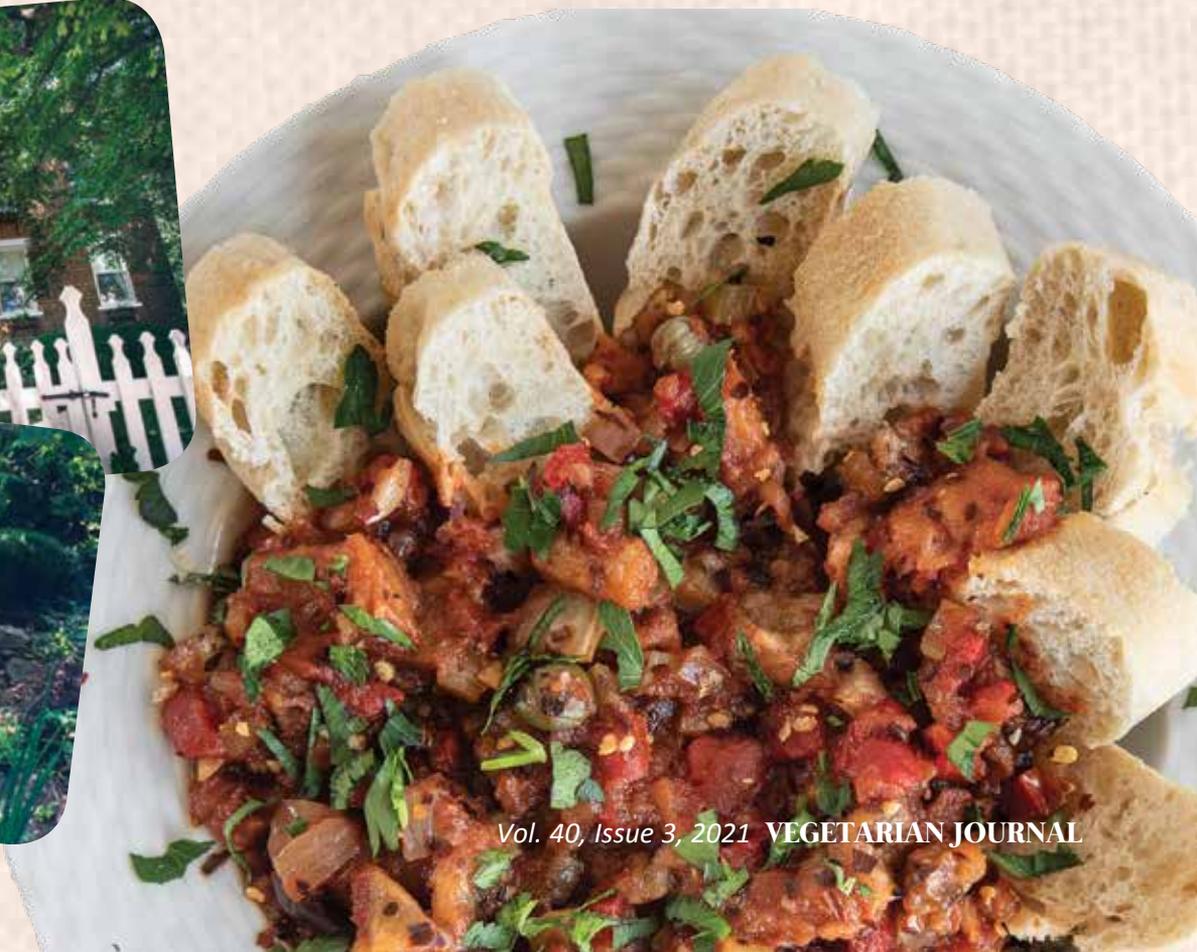
Remove from heat, stir in the parsley, and cool to room temperature. Serve with warm, crusty Italian bread, over pasta, or on a sandwich—wherever you like!

Total calories per ½ cup: 93  
Carbohydrates: 13 grams  
Sodium: 111 milligrams

Fat: 5 grams  
Protein: 2 grams  
Fiber: 4 grams



Food Photos by Rissa Miller



# HOW MANY YOUTH IN THE U.S. ARE VEGAN? HOW MANY TEENS EAT VEGETARIAN WHEN EATING OUT?

## The Vegetarian Resource Group asks in a YouGov Poll

By Charles Stahler and Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

With Target selling almond and soy milk, Burger King carrying the Impossible Burger, and Dunkin offering Beyond Sausage, it seems there is an explosion of interest in vegan foods. However, The Vegetarian Resource Group wanted to know how many young vegans there are.

In a national survey commissioned by VRG and conducted online by YouGov, we asked the following question in 2021 of 8- to 17-year-olds:

**Which one of these best describes your eating behavior? Please choose one option.**

- I never eat meat, fish, seafood, poultry (for example, chicken or turkey), dairy, or eggs.
- I never eat meat fish, seafood, or poultry (for example, chicken or turkey), but I eat dairy and/or eggs.
- I never eat meat, fish, seafood, poultry (for example, chicken or turkey), dairy, or eggs when eating out or getting take out, but eat one or more of these foods at home.
- I never eat meat, fish, seafood, or poultry (for example chicken or turkey) when eating out or getting takeout, but eat one or more of these foods at home.
- When eating out or getting takeout, I sometimes eat meals without meat, fish, poultry (for example chicken or turkey), dairy or eggs.
- When eating out or getting takeout, I sometimes eat meals without meat, fish, or poultry (for example, chicken or turkey).
- None of these.

We considered those who never eat meat, fish, seafood, or poultry, plus those who never eat meat, fish, seafood, poultry, dairy, or eggs, as vegetarian. We classified that second category of vegetarians who don't eat dairy or eggs also as vegan. Because we use the word "never" and don't just ask if a person considers him/herself vegetarian, our numbers may be lower than others. We did not ask about honey.

More than half (53%) of youth (8- to 17-year-olds) sometimes or always eat vegetarian meals when eating out. About one fifth (21%) of U.S. youth always or sometimes eat vegan meals when eating out. Five percent of American youth are vegetarian (including vegans) all the time. One percent of females are vegan, and three percent of males are vegan. The Northeast, Midwest, South, and West all had two percent vegan. However, as far as eating vegan meals sometimes or all the time when eating out, it was 30% for the Northeast, 15% for the Midwest, 18% for the South, and 26% for the West.\*

Since 53% of youth eat at least some vegetarian meals when eating out, and two in five of those are at least sometimes eating vegan meals when dining out, this has strong implications for food companies and restaurants, with substantial incentive for producing vegan dishes.

### TOTALS

- 5% Vegetarian (including vegans) (Never eats meat, fish, seafood, or poultry).
- 2% Vegan (Never eats meat, fish, poultry, dairy, or eggs).
- 21% Sometimes or always eats vegan meals when eating out.
- 53% Sometimes or always eats vegetarian (including vegan) when eating out
- 2% Always eats vegan meals when eating out, but not at home.
- 2% Always eats vegetarian meals (not including vegan) when eating out, but not at home.
- 17% Sometimes eats vegan when eating out.
- 27% Sometimes eats vegetarian (not including vegan) when eating out.
- 49% 13- to 17-year-olds sometimes or always eat vegetarian (including vegan) meals when eating out
- 57% 8- to 12-year-olds sometimes or always eat vegetarian (including vegan) meals when eating out

In another question within this poll, we asked respondents their two most important reasons for food choices (see table at bottom of this page). The top reason by far was taste for 62% of those who at least sometimes eat vegetarian meals when dining out, and 78% of those who don't eat any vegetarian meals. Second was my health and eating healthy foods for 31% of those who ever eat vegetarian meals when dining out and 21% of those who don't eat vegetarian meals.

What vegetarian products will American youth purchase? We asked the following additional question, which may be of interest to food companies, food services, restaurants, marketers, researchers, students, and media.

**If you were looking to buy a vegetarian product, which of these would you choose? Please choose as many answers as you'd like.**

### MY FAVORITE VEGGIE BURGER COOKED ON THE SAME GRILL WHERE MEAT IS COOKED, IF THE GRILL IS CLEANED FIRST

- 15% Total
- 19% Northeast
- 14% Midwest
- 13% South
- 18% West
- 23% Male 8- to 12-years-old
- 15% Male 13- to 17-years-old
- 14% Female 8- to 12-years-old
- 12% Female 13- to 17-years-old
- 24% Eat some or more vegan meals when eating out

### When deciding what food to eat, which two of these are most important to you? Please select up to two choices.

THOSE WHO EAT SOME OR MORE VEGAN MEALS OUT	DON'T EAT ANY VEGETARIAN OR VEGAN MEALS	
56%	78%	Taste
31%	21%	My health and eating healthy foods
18%	24%	What my parents eat
18%	23%	The price/cost
15%	3%	The environment (all of the nature that is around us such as water, plants, animals, air, and soil)
14%	25%	Convenience (how easy it is to get or prepare)
10%	1%	Ethics (what you believe is the right way to act or behave even if no one else is watching you)
10%	3%	Animal welfare (how animals are treated)
6%	1%	Religious beliefs
2%	4%	None of these

Ethics, religious beliefs, the environment, and health seem to be more important to many more of those eating vegan meals out than those who don't eat vegetarian or vegan meals.

## **A VEGAN BURGER AT A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT (for example, Burger King, Subway, or Hardee's)**

21% Total  
27% Northeast  
22% Midwest  
18% South  
22% West  
29% Male 8- to 12-years-old  
19% Male 13- to 17-years-old  
17% Female 8- to 12-years-old  
21% Female 13- to 17-years-old  
30% Eat some or more vegan meals when eating out

## **A VEGETARIAN DISH CONTAINING LEAFY GREENS (for example broccoli, kale, or collards)**

22% Total  
29% Northeast  
20% Midwest  
20% South  
24% West  
26% Male, 8- to 12-years-old  
26% Male, 13- to 17-years-old  
19% Female, 8- to 12-years-old  
20% Female, 13- to 17-years-old  
29% Eat some or more vegan meals when eating out

## **A VEGETARIAN DISH CONTAINING WHOLE FOODS (for example, lentils, chickpeas, or rice)**

22% Total  
27% Northeast  
21% Midwest  
19% South  
24% West  
27% Male, 8- to 12-years-old  
26% Male, 13- to 17-years-old  
19% Female, 8- to 12-years-old  
19% Female, 13- to 17-years-old  
33% Eat some or more vegan meals when eating out

Those who eat vegan meals would select more dishes containing leafy greens and dishes with whole foods than those not choosing vegan meals. However, it

should not be assumed that a vegetarian, vegan, or someone eating vegetarian meals (or not eating vegetarian meals) is automatically meeting suggestions by the USDA/USDHHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans that a healthy eating pattern includes a variety of vegetables from all of the subgroups, which includes dark green vegetables. When evaluating a vegetarian (or non-vegetarian) client's diet, a dietitian or other medical professional would specifically have to ask what is being consumed to know if all the subgroups are being included. This would also apply to the USDA/USDHHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans that said a healthy eating pattern includes legumes (beans and peas like lentils and chickpeas).

Note that though many restaurants are adding plant-based meats to their menu, just as many young people would select a dish with whole foods or leafy greens. So restaurants should also think about those options. It was also interesting that 21% of total respondents said they would select a vegan burger at a fast food restaurant, while 15% picked their favorite veggie burger with the grill cleaned first.



**MY FAVORITE DESSERT CONTAINING SUGAR IF I DO NOT KNOW THE TYPE OF SUGAR USED OR HOW THE SUGAR WAS MADE**

27% Total  
31% Eat some or more vegan meals when eating out  
34% Always eats vegetarian (including vegan) when eating out

**MY FAVORITE DESSERT CONTAINING SUGAR WHITENED THROUGH A PRODUCT (FILTER) MADE FROM ANIMAL BONES, BUT THE BONES ARE NOT IN THE SUGAR**

10% Total  
13% Eat some or more vegan meals when eating out  
16% Always eats vegetarian (including vegan) when eating out

It's interesting that more than twice as many would choose a dessert containing sugar if they did not know how the sugar was made versus when you ask about the sugar whitened through an animal bone filter. Also more would choose a vegan burger than when you mention the "favorite" veggie burger that was cooked on the same grill where meat is cooked (allowing for the grill being cleaned first). These differences seem to indicate to us that to meet the needs of all consumers, companies should label the sources of their ingredients so customers can make their own decisions.

**A MEAT ALTERNATIVE GROWN FROM CELLS (DNA) FROM AN ANIMAL, WHICH WAS COLLECTED YEARS AGO. THIS PROCESS DOES NOT CURRENTLY INVOLVE THE RAISING OF ANIMALS**

9% Total  
10% Male  
8% Female  
6% Age 13- to 17-years old  
12% Northeast  
8% Midwest  
6% South  
12% West  
15% Eat some or more vegan meals when eating out  
3% Don't eat any vegetarian or vegan meals

Will future consumers buy a meat alternative grown from animal cell DNA? As of now, those who don't eat vegetarian or vegan meals don't seem to be ready for this (3% would buy when looking for a vegetarian product). Over twice as many of the youth population would buy a vegan burger at a fast food restaurant (21%), or vegetarian dishes with whole foods (22%) or leafy greens (22%) over the cell/DNA alternative (9%).



## We also asked this question: Which of these foods do you usually eat during the week? Please choose as many answers as you'd like.

THOSE WHO EAT SOME OR MORE VEGAN MEALS OUT	TOTAL	
73%	81%	Fruit (for example, strawberries, bananas, apples, grapes, or oranges)
65%	74%	Vegetables (for example, carrots, sweet potatoes, green beans, or corn)
64%	76%	Sweets (for example, candy, cookies, cake, pie, or soft drinks)
57%	56%	Whole grains (for example, whole grain bread, brown rice, whole wheat bread, or corn tortillas)
49%	50%	Nuts (for example, peanuts or almonds) or nut butters (for example, peanut butter or almond butter)
47%	45%	Beans (for example, lentils, chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans, bean burritos, or bean tacos)
47%	49%	Leafy green vegetables (for example kale, collards, or broccoli)
30%	17%	Plant-based meat (for example, veggie burgers or plant-based deli slices)
30%	23%	Plant-based milk (for example, soy milk, coconut milk, almond milk, or rice milk)
25%	14%	Soy foods (for example, soy milk, soy hot dogs, or soy hamburgers)

Since 23% of youth during the week usually consume plant-based milk, USDA and schools may want to consider making it easier for students to obtain soymilk or plant-based nutrition equivalent milks in school lunches.

This survey was conducted by YouGov. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov PLC. Total sample size was 1,002 youth. Fieldwork was undertaken between February 9-17, 2021 in the United States. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all U.S. children (aged 8-17). All results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to statistical errors normally associated with sample-based information. For the first question only, with a sample size of 1,000, we can have a 95% confidence level that the number of vegetarians is 5% plus or minus 1%, and that the number of vegans is 2% plus or minus 1%. This poll was taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not know what influence, if any, that may have had on the survey answers. Though the polls can't be compared because they are done differently, in our 2000 VRG Youth Poll, about 2% of 6- to 17-years-olds were vegetarian and one half percent were vegan. See: [vrg.org/journal/vj2001jan/2001\\_jan\\_teen.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2001jan/2001_jan_teen.php)

Be careful when comparing poll numbers to other countries, as questions and definition of vegetarian and vegan are often different.

**\*Northeast** includes: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont.

**South** includes: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia.

**Midwest** includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

**West** includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

According to the U.S. Census [www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/tables/2010-2019/national/asrh/nc-est2019-syasexn.xlsx](http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/tables/2010-2019/national/asrh/nc-est2019-syasexn.xlsx) there are about 41 million 8- to 17-year-olds. Thus there are approximately 2 million 8- to 17-year-old vegetarians (including vegans) and about 820,000 vegans in that age group in the United States. Note that since we defined what respondents did not eat, and used the word "never," others may have higher figures. You may be interested in reading about some of those youth who have won our annual vegetarian college scholarships since 2003. See: [vrg.org/student/scholar.htm](http://vrg.org/student/scholar.htm)

For information on Vegan Nutrition for Teenagers, see: [vrg.org/nutrition/VeganNutritionForTeenagers.pdf](http://vrg.org/nutrition/VeganNutritionForTeenagers.pdf)

For information on other polls, see: [vrg.org/nutshell/faq.htm#poll](http://vrg.org/nutshell/faq.htm#poll)

Photos: page 25, from *Stem*; page 26, from *SweetSide Café*, both in Baltimore, MD; by Rissa Miller

# NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

## Vegan Education

VRG Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, did a webinar on a *Plant-Based Diet for 31 Days*. Dr. Mangels also spoke at eight virtual seminars for California's San Jose Public Library. There were separate sessions for teens and parents. VRG teen interns assisted. Dr. Mangels supervised a graduate student intern from Wageningen University in the Netherlands who completed an extensive project on high-calcium vegan Latin American foods. VRG volunteer health coach Marcia Schweibinz conducted a webinar for Louisiana's Lafayette Public Library.

VRG Research Director Jeanne Yacoubou did a podcast with one of our interns discussing the environmental impacts of diets. Based on his questions, Jeanne will also be doing some updated research on chocolate, bone char, and gelatin. We'll report on this in the future. Jeanne also compiled a list of several recent (2015-present) scientific reports that reveal the relationships between dietary choices and our climate crisis. See page 29 and [vrg.org/blog/2021/02/24/vegan-and-vegetarian-diets-and-our-climate-emergency-scientific-updates-2015-2021/](http://vrg.org/blog/2021/02/24/vegan-and-vegetarian-diets-and-our-climate-emergency-scientific-updates-2015-2021/)

In this issue, see our newest 2021 youth survey of the number of vegans, vegetarians, and those eating vegan meals out. You may also be interested in Reed Mangels' article on cholesterol in plants that appears on page 15 in this issue, and on the blog at [vrg.org/blog/2021/02/19/cholesterol-in-plants/](http://vrg.org/blog/2021/02/19/cholesterol-in-plants/) and a posting by a VRG volunteer who discusses cholesterol in pharmaceuticals sourced from plant sources. See [vrg.org/blog/2021/02/16/cholesterol-in-pfizer-and-moderna-vaccine/](http://vrg.org/blog/2021/02/16/cholesterol-in-pfizer-and-moderna-vaccine/)

The Vegetarian Resource Group was accepted to have a 22- x 28-inch poster displayed at the Baltimore-Washington International Airport for six months. It was designed by previous intern, Amy Dell. If traveling through this airport, let us know if you see the poster on a column in Concourse D.

## The Vegetarian Resource Group Testimony

The Vegetarian Resource Group submitted comments to the Food and Drug Administration on Labeling of Foods Comprised of or Containing Cultured Seafood Cells. See: [vrg.org/blog/2021/03/10/the-vegetarian-resource-group-submitted-this-testimony-to-the-fda-concerning-labeling-of-seafood-produced-from-cultured-seafood-cells/](http://vrg.org/blog/2021/03/10/the-vegetarian-resource-group-submitted-this-testimony-to-the-fda-concerning-labeling-of-seafood-produced-from-cultured-seafood-cells/)

## 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 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.

# Recent Scientific Reports on Carbon Emissions and Animal Agriculture in Relation to Plant-Based Diets, Excerpted from *Vegan and Vegetarian Diets and Our Climate Emergency: Scientific Updates [2014-2021]*

by Jeanne Yacoubu, MS

The Vegetarian Resource Group looked closely at the environmental consequences of animal agriculture with its 2009 article on the United Nations' report titled *Livestock's Long Shadow*. In that piece, the focus was on water pollution caused by livestock. Since that time, many researchers have analyzed the carbon emissions associated with raising animals intensively for food. Here are brief summaries of some of their reports.

## *“The climate mitigation gap: education and government recommendations miss the most effective individual actions”*

1. In 2017, Seth Wynes and Kimberly A. Nicholas published an article that quantified the effects of lifestyle choices in terms of tons of carbon dioxide equivalents, tCO<sub>2</sub>e (taking into account methane, nitrous oxide, and other chemicals that have substantial global warming potential) produced when people engage in certain activities. They concluded that individuals would contribute the greatest reduction by:

- Having fewer children (58.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e saved every year per child)\*
- Going car-less (2.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>e saved per year)\*
- Avoiding flying (1.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e saved per round transatlantic trip)\*
- Buying green energy (1.5 tCO<sub>2</sub>e saved per year)
- Buying a more efficient gasoline-powered car (1.19 tCO<sub>2</sub>e saved per year)
- Buying an electric car (1.15 tCO<sub>2</sub>e saved per year)
- Choosing a plant-based diet (0.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year)\*

According to the authors, all of the above actions are considered “high-impact (i.e., low-emissions).” The four which are asterisked are recommended as the most important you can take to lower your personal fossil fuel footprint. Although they do not use the word “vegan” to describe the “plant-based diet,” it appears from the writing that a vegan diet is implied. The Vegetarian Resource Group has reached out to the authors on this point, but have not yet received a response.

## *“Calculation of external climate costs for food highlights inadequate pricing of animal products”*

2. A report published in December 2020 conducted life cycle assessments of various agricultural products in Germany. The most significant finding was that there is practically no difference between the carbon emissions resulting from organic versus conventional beef production. Organic chicken fared worse than conventionally

raised chicken in terms of its contribution to greenhouse gases. Organic and non-organic cow's milk had similar carbon emission profiles.

By contrast, organic plant foods are responsible for 50% less emissions than plant foods treated with chemical fertilizers and pesticides. All plant production resulted in significantly less carbon emissions than animal foods.

## *“Substituting beans for beef as a contribution toward U.S. climate change targets”*

3. A study published in 2017 compared the environmental costs of beef versus beans. It concluded: “Our results demonstrate that substituting one food for another, beans for beef, could achieve approximately 46 to 74% of the reductions needed to meet the 2020 GHG target for the U.S. In turn, this shift would free up 42% of U.S. cropland (692,918 km<sup>2</sup>).”

## *“The environmental cost of protein food choices”*

4. An earlier look at this topic from some of the same researchers in 2015 concluded: “To produce 1 kg of protein from kidney beans required approximately 18 times less land, 10 times less water, nine times less fuel, 12 times less fertilizer, and 10 times less pesticide in comparison to producing 1 kg of protein from beef. Compared with producing 1 kg of protein from chicken and eggs, beef generated five to six times more waste (manure) to produce 1 kg of protein.”

## *“Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems”*

5. The EAT-Lancet Commission (2019) published an extensive review of the environmental consequences of food choices. Its major conclusions echoed many of the findings noted here from other researchers.

Additionally, this report showed changes in food production practices (such as using feed additives, manure management, better feed conversion ratios) could decrease total greenhouse gas emissions by only 10%. However, dietary changes that increase plant foods could decrease emissions by 80%.

EAT-Lancet also divided up agriculture's greenhouse gas share in this manner (top three listed here):

- Enteric fermentation by ruminants: 25%
- Manure (direct/indirect): 31%
- Deforestation/desertification 35%

For references and the complete article, see: [vrg.org/blog/2021/02/24/vegan-and-vegetarian-diets-and-our-climate-emergency-scientific-updates-2015-2021](http://vrg.org/blog/2021/02/24/vegan-and-vegetarian-diets-and-our-climate-emergency-scientific-updates-2015-2021)

# Veggie Bits

## Get Saucy

ZUBI'S is a fiesta in your mouth! The sauce line includes Crema, Queso, and Salsa, which the founder created to substitute sour cream and queso with something dairy-free and more sustainable. Many of the ingredients (such as onions, jalapeños, and mini sweet peppers) that are used to make the dips are grown on ZUBI's land. The Salsa is fresh and slightly sweet, and the Queso is creamy, gooey, and thick, like a cheesy sauce. The Crema is spicy, and not for the faint-of-heart. All three sauces are perfect on tacos, tortilla chips, and enchiladas, and are a delight to snack on. Crema and Queso can be served hot or cold. Gluten-free and shelf-stable. ZUBI's is available online, [eatzubi.com](http://eatzubi.com) *Katelynn Budzich/VRG Intern*



## Feeding a Vegan Dog

Wild Earth makes vegan dog food, treats, and supplements. They say their plant-based protein formula provides the 10 essential amino acids dogs need and includes ingredients like chickpeas, oats, peas, and potatoes. We reached out to canine taste-testers to see what they thought of this vegan brand. Pit bull Charlotte, German Shepherd Ivy, and mixed breed Howard found the food to be incredibly scrumptious. Not one dog left a morsel behind. There was even a report that a household cat showed interest in the food! Mixed breed Maisie, pit bull Harley, and cattle dog Gus all scarfed down the treats with huge enthusiasm. From our observations, it seemed like the Peanut Butter treats were favored, but Banana-Cinnamon and Strawberry-Beet treat flavors were not ignored, either. Wild Earth kibble comes in large and small bags, and all food, treats, and other items are available for home delivery from [heropetsupply.com](http://heropetsupply.com) and [wildearth.com](http://wildearth.com) *Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



## U.S. Grown Tea

Yaupon is a naturally caffeinated plant species that grows in North America. It looks like tea, but it's actually a variety of holly tree native to the southeastern USA and has a long history with indigenous people. Yaupon is rich in the antioxidants known as polyphenols and has similar caffeine levels to black tea. However, yaupon contains no tannins, so it never gets bitter and cannot be oversteeped. Catspring Yaupon offers three distinct roasts. Pedernales Green is refreshing and summery. It works well as iced tea, and the light taste needs little to no sweetener. Lost Maples is a medium roast, and the flavor is similar to black tea, with smooth, mild caramel notes. It was good hot and iced, and very thirst-quenching. The Marfa Dark Roast has a deeper, more complex flavor, like a very fine black tea. Tasters preferred it hot, as its flavor balanced perfectly when warm. Available online in tea bags or loose leaf, [catspringtea.com](http://catspringtea.com) *Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



## Peanut Butter Puffs

Salty, sweet, and very addicting! Puffworks snacks come in Dark Chocolate, Original Peanut Butter, and Strawberry PB&J flavors. Made with organic peanut butter and whole-wheat cornmeal, they are quite crunchy. The original peanut butter puff was completely coated in peanut butter flavor, but not too salty to eat in abundance. The strawberry PB&J peanut butter puffs captured the complete essence of a PB&J. The dark chocolate contained the perfect amount of sweetness and would melt in your mouth in every bite. These snacks are perfect for children, or anyone who enjoys a good ole munchy snack puff. [puffworks.com](http://puffworks.com) *Audrey Hunt/VRG Intern*



# Veggie Bits

## Fish-Free Tuna Pouches

Upon opening the pouches of Good Catch Fish-Free Tuna, I noticed a fishy scent, thanks to seaweed powder. The main ingredient, though, is a six-plant blend of chickpea, fava bean, lentil, navy bean, pea, and soy. Good Catch's Fish-Free Tuna is conveniently packaged in shelf-stable, single-serving pouches and comes in three gluten-free flavors: Mediterranean, Naked in Water, and Oil & Herbs. Naked in Water has a mild flavor. I found it stood up well in a tuna salad sandwich, and it works brilliantly in pasta or other savory dishes. The Mediterranean variety, on the other hand, was pleasant as-is, with flavors of red bell pepper, tomato, and a hint of spice. It could be eaten on crackers, in a salad, or straight from the pouch. The Oil & Herb was citrusy and complex, and would work well with pasta or in a casserole. A heavier dish would compliment the oil in this third flavor. Shop online at [goodcatchfoods.com](http://goodcatchfoods.com), Whole Foods, or use their online map to find a store near you.

*Amy Burger/VRG Intern*



## Nooch Sauce

Imagine nutritional yeast... as a spread. The Natural Gourmet's Vitam-R is a deeply savory, distinctive spread made from yeast enzymes formed on molasses. It's got a similar hearty flavor to Marmite or Vegemite, but it's milder, nuttier, and much less salty. Vitam-R is thick and sticky, with an umami flavor that adds depth and sophistication to sandwiches, sauces and gravies, homemade vegan cheeses, and soups. To amp up a vegan grilled cheese, spread a little on the bread before frying with your vegan cheese. Vitam-R contains 17 amino acids and vitamin B12 and is gluten-free. Shop at [store.veganessentials.com](http://store.veganessentials.com)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



## Pickle de Gallo

If you love dill pickles and salsa, then Grillo's Pickle de Gallo will be your new favorite condiment. Available in Hot, Medium, and Mild heat, this pickle-based salsa is crisp, crunchy, and fresh. The ingredient lists are incredibly simple with only real cucumbers, onions, and peppers. Pickle de Gallo can take on the role of dip, spread, or topping. Testers loved it on chips, crackers, nachos, veggie burgers, and wraps, and it's the perfect relish for your next grilled veggies. Fat-free, gluten-free, and kosher. Find Grillo's Pickle de Gallo in the refrigerated sections at BJ's, Target, and Whole Foods, or get more info online at [grillospickles.com](http://grillospickles.com)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



## Vegan Candles

Finding vegan candles isn't always easy; however, Vellabox offers monthly subscription boxes with one or two plant-based, small-batch candles, always made in the U.S. Each month features different small business makers, and no candles include animal products, artificial dyes, parabens, or phthalates. All candles are made from coconut, soy, or vegetable wax with cotton braided wicks. They burned smoothly and cleanly, scenting the room without being overbearing. Facing West and Nordic Cabin by Sunday Candle Co were both earthy, robust, and woody. Caylan Wax Co's candles were Evergreen + Eucalyptus, which was crisp, and Home + Holiday, which smells just like cookies baking! There are three options: a 4 oz. candle box (25 hours burn time); 8 oz. candle (50 hours burn time); or a box with both candles (75 hours burn time). All boxes include a surprise vegan-friendly gift, such as a candle coaster, cookie cutter, lip balm, or lotion. Candles are also available on their site for individual purchase. [vellabox.com](http://vellabox.com)

*Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



## Support VRG Outreach

# Laura McGuinness VRG Experience

## Creating a Vegan World

by Amy Burger



**L**aura McGuinness calls her involvement with The VRG “a seminal moment” in her life. She began volunteering with the organization at age 19, and has written several articles for its blog, website, and

*Vegetarian Journal* magazine about topics like baking with aquafaba, making seitan-based dishes, and starting a school or community garden.

McGuinness worked as an intern for The VRG, which gave her the opportunity to travel to the Animal Rights National Conference in 2013. In a VRG blog post she wrote about the experience, saying, “there was nothing more exciting than spending my weekend with hundreds of fellow animal rights advocates who share my same vision... I found it intriguing that different people flew, drove, or rode to this one spot just to meet others and learn about animal rights.”

While at the conference, McGuinness staffed The VRG booth that showcased the group’s work, including its many books, and gave her an opportunity to talk to other conference goers.

McGuinness’s internship also allowed her to improve her writing abilities.

“I learned how to write press releases, how to fact check, [and] how to write for a particular audience,” she said.

She also did HTML coding for VRG, which she continues to help with today. The coding, specifically creating tables, was a challenge. She said, “I learned on the job for the most part... I would sit at my desk trying to figure it out for hours, but now I’m actually quite good.”

McGuinness knew that she wanted to become a librarian eventually, so for one project, she worked to digitize issues of a historic publication, *The American Vegetarian and Health Journal*, which dates to the mid-1800s. This proved to be an instructive challenge, as it required her to select a scanner, find the appropriate software, and ensure that the documents would be searchable for use.

She earned her bachelor’s degree in English and her master’s degree in library and information science. She says she “really loved VRG as an organization because they were (and still are) very concerned with providing truly factual information,” something that’s important to her, “from an information professional standpoint.” Today, McGuinness works in an archive at Los Alamos National Laboratory and dreams about “one day doing a large digitization/metadata project for VRG.”

“Not only did I have the opportunity to learn a lot about writing and HTML, I learned a lot of practical skills,” McGuinness said, adding that she found the organization supportive of her goals, and saying her experience inspired her to “continue to pay it forward.” You can check out her work at [vrg.org](http://vrg.org).

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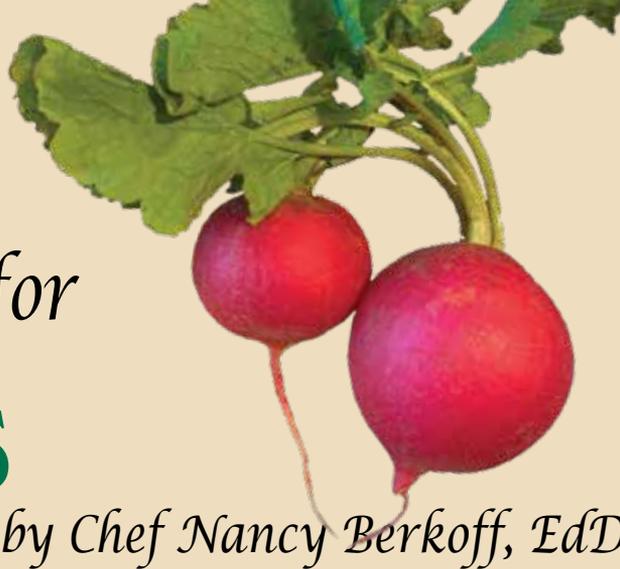
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## Vegan Cooking Tips

# Quick and Easy Ideas for Radishes

by Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD



**R**ed, black, white, pink, striped, watermelon, daikon—radishes are root vegetables with a distinctive flavor ranging from the juicy crispness of the familiar red globe radish to the sharp bite of the turnip-shaped black radish. Radishes can be icicle-shaped or round.

In the United States, radishes are usually eaten raw. Fresh radishes can be added to cooked dishes such as soups, or heated and served as a whole vegetable. Their green tops are edible and lend a peppery taste to salads.

If you buy radishes with their leaves attached, remove the tops unless you'll be serving them the same day. Radishes will not keep as well with their tops left on. The leaves, if fresh and green, can be cooked like other greens or used in soups.

Daikon radishes, found at Asian markets and many supermarkets, should be evenly shaped and firm, with a glossy, almost translucent light green sheen. Store radishes in bags if they are not already packaged. Both red radishes and daikons will keep for up to two weeks in the refrigerator if sealed in a bag. Black radishes can be stored for months if they remain dry; store them in perforated bags in the refrigerator.

To prepare your radishes, scrub them and trim off the stem end and tip. Radish peel contains most of the mustard oils responsible for radish “heat;” you may want to peel the radishes. However, red globe and white icicle radishes are rarely hot enough to warrant peeling (and it's a shame to remove the cherry red skin). Daikons have a very thin skin that can be removed with a vegetable peeler, if you wish. Black radishes should be scrubbed; whether you peel them depends on the thickness of the skin. If the peel is thin, leave it on; the dark color provides a striking contrast to the white flesh.

If you are feeling “continental,” serve whole, small radishes with cold, vegan margarine and salt, in the

French tradition. This makes a wonderful warm weather appetizer. If you have some left-over cooked risotto, quinoa, or fried rice, re-heat and serve topped with shredded fresh radishes. Shredded radishes add some additional crunch as a taco topping and some “juiciness” to vegan quesadillas.

### *Here are some radish cooking tips:*

- *Microwaving:* Place ½ pound (about ¾ cup) sliced radishes in a microwavable dish with 1 Tablespoon of water or broth. Cover and cook until tender. Cooking time: four minutes on HIGH.
- *Steaming:* People who find raw radishes too spicy may enjoy the milder taste of steamed radishes. Cooked radishes will keep in the refrigerator for 4-5 days, so prepare extra. Steamed red radishes will turn pink. Place whole radishes in a vegetable steamer and cook over boiling water until barely tender. Shredded daikon can also be steamed, cooled, and added to salads. Cooking times: for whole radishes in a steamer, 8-12 minutes; for shredded daikon, five minutes.
- *Stir-frying:* Sliced radishes or thin strips of daikon combine well with other vegetables, tofu, or vegan “meat” alternative in stir-fries. Be careful not to overcook the radishes so that they retain most of their crispness. Cooking time: 3-5 minutes.
- *Roasting:* Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Scrub radishes and remove greens. Place on an oiled baking sheet and allow to roast until just soft. This helps to sweeten radish “heat” and makes a wonderful side vegetable. If your barbecue or grill is already hot, make a foil packet of radishes and allow to roast over the coals.
- *Quick Pickle:* When all the pickles are gone from your store-bought pickle jars, cut cleaned and de-greened fresh radishes in quarters, and place in the remaining pickle brine. Refrigerate and enjoy your radish pickles!

Elsa Spencer, PhD

# Advocate & Educator

by Lucia Rivera



**D**espite the inherent difficulty that comes with activism, educator, and 28 year-long vegan Elsa Spencer, who has a PhD in nutrition and health sciences, has continually immersed herself in vegan advocacy.

“There was no promotion of vegetarianism, certainly not veganism,” Spencer said of her PhD coursework, but the research in specialties from epidemiology to toxicology suggested that “plant-based diets were the healthiest diets.”

Spencer said that studies ranging from small to long-term reinforced this finding. “It didn’t matter if you’re talking about chronic disease, or acute nutrition or pregnancy or children; just across the board,” plant-based diets were associated with better health outcomes.

With her background in nutrition and education, Spencer recognizes the way her career and her activism interconnect, but are not one and the same.

“You don’t have to be in a career that’s promoting causes that you’re attached to in order to be doing anything important,” she said.

One way in which her multiple passions intersect is through the legacy she hopes to leave behind, which is to help people understand whatever it is they seek to understand. Spencer teaches and tutors science, math, and biology.

She said her students often “didn’t know they enjoy science, or that they were good at math, or that they could eat vegan [...] like they didn’t know it was possible, and that they could do it and that it was fun, or enjoyable, or easy. But whether it’s doing math, or taking on this idea that you don’t have to eat animals,” or that a vegan diet can be enjoyable, her role in helping her students seek understanding is “pretty powerful. If I have that legacy that would be great.”

Spencer’s vegan advocacy has also taken the form of working with different organizations like Camp4Real and The Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG). As a summer camp consultant and food coordinator, Spencer has helped provide kids with nutritious vegan meals. As a volunteer, she has done outreach at events and fairs for The VRG. Spencer has been able to use her Spanish- and French-speaking skills while doing so, allowing her to communicate with a wider range of people.

For others seeking to become vegan activists, Spencer advises honing in on a couple of meaningful causes and finding a supportive community to work with.

To avoid burnout, Spencer suggests deeper investment in fewer groups, ones that work for causes that are meaningful to you.

“If you care about factory farming, focus on that. If you care about animal experimentation, find a group and focus on that. Or if you just want to work in your local community, find whatever group [that] is doing something in your local communities [that] you want to focus on,” she explained.

Lucia is a high school student and long-distance VRG intern in southern California. She has been vegetarian for almost 10 years and spends her spare time volunteering, baking, and reading.





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# Summer 2021



## Land of Kush Vegan Food Give Away Sponsored by The Vegetarian Resource Group

Thanks to support from The Vegetarian Resource Group, Land of Kush (a vegan soul food restaurant in Baltimore City) was able to prepare 50 meals consisting of their signature vegan KUSH BBQ Ribs, Live Kale, and Jollof Rice to be given away to individuals in need.



Most of the meals were distributed out of a shop in the city, and Nick, a community person from the Seton Hill neighborhood, distributed the remaining 14 platters to service and homeless people in the area. Gift bags containing green tea beverages and snacks were also distributed with each meal. Thank you very much to VRG members who supported this important project.

Photos by Meredith Brown, The Dog Chef Café

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