

Pandemic Risk from Wet Markets & CAFOs?

Vol . 40, Issue 4 2021

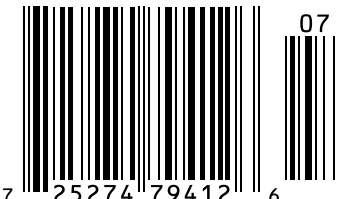
VEGETARIAN JOURNAL

Science, Caring, and Vegan Living since 1982



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Health • Environment • Ethics

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Nutrition Hotline

This month's nutrition hotline addresses the benefits of sourdough bread

Reed Mangels, PhD, RD



QUESTION: Like many others, I've been making sourdough bread since the start of the pandemic. My family is vegan and we wondered if there was any nutritional advantage to sourdough bread. S.F., via email

ANSWER: The main nutritional advantage associated with sourdough breads compared to quick breads (like biscuits and banana bread) and to yeast-raised breads is that some minerals are better absorbed from sourdough breads. To appreciate this advantage, it helps to be familiar with phytates.

Phytates are substances found in whole grains, legumes, seeds, nuts, and vegetables. They are a storage form of the phosphorus which a plant needs to grow. Humans are not able to digest phytates. Phytates in plants firmly attach to minerals. Our digestive system is not able to digest phytates and is not able to remove the minerals from the phytate-mineral complex. That means that those minerals can't be absorbed or that they are poorly absorbed.

Iron and zinc absorption are especially affected by dietary phytates, but phytates can also reduce the absorption of calcium,

magnesium, and copper. When wheat flour is refined, most of the phytates are removed but so are many of the minerals. Thus, using refined (white or all-purpose) flour is not a solution to the reduced mineral absorption from whole grain flour. Besides, many people feel breads made with whole wheat and rye flour taste better.

When sourdough bread is made, wild yeasts and bacteria work together to leaven the dough and to create an acidic environment that is hostile to other bacteria and yeast. The acidic environment appears to allow naturally occurring enzymes in the flour to break down the phytates in the flour.¹ When the phytates are broken down, the minerals, including iron and zinc, that were attached to the phytates are released. This means that we can absorb these minerals. The long fermentation time typical of sourdough production gives the enzymes time to break down the phytate-mineral complexes.

Sourdough fermentation has been shown to be more effective than yeast fermentation in reducing the effect of phytates. In one study, sourdough fermentation reduced the

phytate content of whole wheat bread by 62% compared to a 38% reduction with yeast fermentation.²

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¹ Reale A, Konietzny U, Coppola R, Sorrentino E, Greiner R. The importance of lactic acid bacteria for phytate degradation during cereal dough fermentation. *J Agric Food Chem.* 2007;55(8):2993-2997.

² Lopez HW, Krespine V, Guy C, Messenger A, Demigne C, Remesy C. Prolonged fermentation of whole wheat sourdough reduces phytate level and increases soluble magnesium. *J Agric Food Chem.* 2001;49(5):2657-2662.

VEGETARIAN JOURNAL

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vrg.org

Note from the Coordinators

Doing Your Part for a Better Vegan World



Nowadays, to be most “successful,” you have to present yourself as the biggest or that you are the one with the only truth or have the perfect answer or product. We can see this in social media and in the constant press releases and emails we receive. This is part of why there is so much division and anger in this country today. No one can ever know every answer or always be the best. But your actions are still important.

Rather than presenting yourself as all knowing, you can listen and compromise. Unfortunately, that doesn't always work if this only goes one way. And compromising doesn't mean giving up your own values. Also, what responsibility do you have? A long time ago we talked to a researcher who did studies on vegetarian children. The media reported her results as saying there was a big problem with raising young vegetarians. She told us that wasn't at all how to interpret her studies, but her role was just to do the studies, and not to correct how the studies were being used. Believing in science, we think you have to combine your science and ethics, understand real life implications, and see the picture in totality.

Thank you to all our volunteers, members, and supporters who do their best to work in different positive ways to create a better world. Whether with small or large actions, you have an impact. See how much our scholarship winners (pages 16-18) have done during trying times. Kudos to all the companies (such as the ones mentioned on pages 12-13) and restaurants (see vrg.org/restaurant) that continue to offer vegan food during difficult months. And it's great that people are living their values with vegan weddings (page 11) and other events.

This past year our virtual interns Lucia (CA), Amy (GA), Clarissa (MD), Julia (DE), Callie (WA), Julia (MS), Odette (Mexico), and others did a fabulous job. Thank you to dietitians Cathy and Reed who continued to advise on policy and submit testimony on veg-related issues. Thank you to Jason (VRG's IT specialist), *Vegetarian Journal* Senior Editor Rissa, and VRG Volunteer Coordinator Emilio, who did so much virtually to deal with different scenarios. Laura, who puts together our email newsletter (sign up at vrg.org), and Suzanne, who does the nutrition analysis for this magazine, mean so much to us. And Keryl and Carole are such dedicated, talented editors. Finally, all our readers and members who serve (and eat) a vegan option at a holiday party are also important and making a difference. We wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year.

Debra Wasserman & Charles Stahler

Coordinators for The Vegetarian Resource Group

VRG's MEMORIAL and HONORARY GIFT PROGRAM

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

Memorials & Honorary Gifts

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

My name and address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

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

A donation was made in memory of Lisa Shapiro by Donna Marino. "Love and miss you."

A donation was made in memory of Cliff Enz by Judy Karpen.

Thank you for donations from Carolyn Brad; Jane A. Scopelite, PhD; P. Swan; and Linda Tyler.

Thanks for Spanish Information

I am very happy to come across your website! My girlfriend lives in Havana, Cuba, and eats a very heavy meat diet, as seems to be the norm in that area. She also is concerned about cancer, and I've been wanting to try to get some information to her about the health effects of eating so much meat and oil. She has actually gotten food poisoning from bad meat five times in the past year! But what's for dinner? Meat, of course! I'd like to find any Spanish language materials on the subject of the health benefits of eating vegan or vegetarian; the link between meat and cancer and diabetes, etc. Thanks so much! I'm excited to explore the resources on your website, vrg.org

Jim P., via email

Editor's Note: Visit vrg.org/nutshell/information_in_Spanish.htm for information and recipes in Spanish.

Love the Cover Photo on Last Issue

I wanted to compliment the cover photo of "Fancy Toasts" (Issue 3 2021). As a food photographer,

I know how tough the shot was, and it's an inspiration. As a vegan cook, I'm ready to bite into that tasty BLT Toast!

Linda T., via email

Old Caledonian B&B and Natural Farm No Longer Vegan Establishment

My partner Michael and I purchased the Old Caledonian Bed and Breakfast (mentioned in Issue 3 2021 *Vegetarian Journal*) in April. We just received your *Vegetarian Journal* magazine with Jon's caponata recipe in it and wanted to let you know that we are no longer exclusively vegan.

We saw your April 28 blog entry, "Vegan Bed & Breakfast Establishments and Other B&Bs that Accommodate Vegans," and noticed that we are included as a vegan B&B.

Can you update that to "B&B with vegan options"? We have had some guests book with us and have been disappointed when they discover we are no longer exclusively vegan, even though we are willing to accommodate them!

Also, the full name of our inn is now "Old Caledonian B&B and Natural Farm."

Frank U., via email

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 or send a message to us on Facebook: facebook.com/thevegetarianresourcegroup

Coming in the next issue...

WARM UP WITH CHILI!

Plus: Cooking with Kids, Vegan Processed Foods: Embrace Them or Shun Them?, and more!

Beverage-Inspired Holiday Treats

by Hannah Kaminsky

Get cozy and settle into a sofa, letting the plush cushions envelop you like an endless hug. Imagine your favorite drink in your hands: a steaming mug of hot cocoa, fluffy vegan marshmallows melting slowly on top, or a sophisticated glass of dry, perfectly chilled wine. Sip slowly, savoring every moment, luxuriating in the experience as if you could drink in happiness itself.

Now, picture it as your new favorite dessert.

When only deep, dark chocolate will quell the cravings, sink your teeth into a fudgy Hot Cocoa Brownie (next page). Dutch-process cocoa, rather than melted chocolate, creates an impossibly decadent yet divinely bittersweet experience, allowing anyone to whip up a pan in minutes with pantry staples. Vegan marshmallows melting add a touch of nostalgia.

The whole family will rush to the kitchen for a Maple Brown Sugar-Oat Milk Pop (next page), rich and creamy with a subtle lick of autumnal flavors. Lightly toasted oats lend greater body and depth to these novelties, introducing an alluring nutty aroma alongside light notes of cinnamon.

Start the morning with Cold Brew Coffee Cake (page 8), infused with the smooth flavor of strong,

slow-extracted espresso for a truly eye-opening breakfast treat. Crowned by buttery brown sugar crumbs, the moist yet fluffy, pillow-soft cake will deliver greater satisfaction than a mere caffeine fix.

Need to unwind after a stressful day? Such a situation calls for a glass of wine, a slice of cake, or both. Poached Pear Upside-Down Cake (page 9) offers blushing crimson pears, infused with the warmth of dry red wine, fanning out languidly atop a bright, gingery base. Arranged from the bottom up, few things are more satisfying than turning the tables—or at least, flipping this grand finale out of the pan, unveiling those glistening pear slices perfectly intact.

Get fresh by putting the squeeze on orange juice to make Orange-Pepper Peanut Brittle (page 10). Here, zesty citrus meets cracked black peppercorns inside planks of buttery toffee, embedded with toasted peanuts. Shattering effortlessly into spicy, savory, salty little morsels, they would make for excellent in-person holiday gifts, if you can bring yourself to share.

Quench your thirst for adventure and satiate your sweet tooth at the same time. Don't just raise a glass to success, happiness, or well-being; bake those wishes come true.

Hot Cocoa Brownies

(Makes 16 brownies)

Spray or vegan margarine, to grease the pan

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

2/3 cup Dutch-process cocoa powder

1 teaspoon cornstarch

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup mini vegan marshmallows, divided

1 cup organic granulated sugar

1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce

1/2 cup canola oil

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line an 8- x 8-inch square baking pan with aluminum foil. Lightly grease and set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, cornstarch, baking powder, and salt. Add in 1/2 cup of the marshmallows. Toss to coat, which will help prevent the marshmallows from sinking as the brownies bake.

In a separate bowl, mix the sugar, applesauce, oil, and vanilla, stirring until smooth. Once homogeneous, pour into the bowl of dry ingredients, stirring with a wide spatula to combine. Be careful not to over mix.

Spread the batter into your prepared pan, smoothing it into an even layer. Bake for 20 minutes before sprinkling the remaining marshmallows evenly over the surface. Return the pan to the oven and bake for another 15-17 minutes, until the batter no longer appears wet, and it pulls away slightly from the sides of the pan.

Let cool completely before slicing. For the cleanest cuts, chill the whole pan for at least 15 minutes and use a very sharp knife, wiping it off with a clean kitchen towel between slices.

Cook's Note: Dandies marshmallows are vegan, and Trader Joe's carries vegan marshmallows.

Total calories per brownie: 170 Fat: 8 grams
Carbohydrates: 26 grams Protein: 2 grams
Sodium: 91 milligrams Fiber: 2 grams

Maple Brown Sugar-Oat Milk Pops

(Makes six 1/2-cup pops, depending on mold size)

1/2 cup quick oats

3 cups plain, unsweetened oat milk

1/2 cup organic light brown sugar, firmly packed

2 Tablespoons maple syrup

2 Tablespoons vegan margarine, melted

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Lightly toast the oats in a dry skillet. Place the skillet over medium heat and continuously, gently stir the oats, until faintly golden brown all over. Slowly whisk in half of the oat milk, beating out any lumps before proceeding. Continue to add in the remaining oat milk and whisk vigorously. Incorporate the brown sugar, maple syrup, margarine, cinnamon, and salt, stirring well. Cook about 12-15 minutes, stirring periodically, until bubbles break regularly on the surface and the liquid has thickened and reduced.

Turn off the heat, cool to room temperature, and then allow to rest in the fridge until thoroughly chilled. Stir in the vanilla before transferring the mixture to popsicle molds. Place in the freezer and allow to rest for about an hour before inserting sticks, to keep them more centered. Return the pops to the freezer and chill until solidly frozen, at least 3 hours.

(Photo opposite page)

Total calories per serving: 195 Fat: 5 grams
Carbohydrates: 35 grams Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 195 milligrams Fiber: 2 grams





Cold Brew Coffee Cake

(12 servings)

Crumb Topping:

½ cup organic dark brown sugar, firmly packed

⅔ cup all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon instant coffee powder

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ cup melted vegan margarine or coconut oil

Prepare the crumb topping by stirring together the brown sugar, flour, instant coffee, cinnamon, and salt in a small bowl. Drizzle in the melted vegan margarine while mixing with a fork, until the crumbs are moistened and sticking together in coarse clumps. Chill in the fridge.

Cold Brew Coffee Cake:

½ cup organic granulated sugar

½ cup unsweetened applesauce

¼ cup melted vegan margarine or coconut oil

1 cup cold brew coffee concentrate

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ teaspoon almond extract

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and lightly grease an 8- x 8-inch square baking pan. Set aside.

For the cake, in a medium bowl, mix the sugar, applesauce, melted vegan margarine, coffee, vanilla, and almond extract. Once smooth, sift in the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Fold the wet and dry ingredients together with a wide spatula, mixing just enough to fully incorporate. A few errant lumps are perfectly fine to keep in the mixture, rather than risk over mixing and creating a tough crumb.

Transfer the batter to prepared pan, smoothing it into the bottom in an even layer with your spatula. Use your fingers to break up the crumb topping and sprinkle it all over the top, leaving no raw batter exposed.

Bake for 23-26 minutes, until golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean, with no wet batter clinging to the sides. Allow to cool completely before enjoying.

Total calories per serving: 242

Carbohydrates: 40 grams

Sodium: 294 milligrams

Fat: 8 grams

Protein: 3 grams

Fiber: 1 gram

Want to make your own cold brew coffee concentrate? Check out our blog post here: vrg.org/blog/2021/08/07/how-to-make-cold-brew-coffee-concentrate-an-iced-coffee-latte-fizz/

Poached Pear Upside-Down Cake

(Makes 14 slices)

Poached Pears:

- 2 medium-sized, firm pears
- 2 cups dry red wine
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ¾ cup organic dark brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1-inch fresh ginger, peeled
- 5 whole cloves
- 3 whole star anise

Peel, halve, and remove the pits and stems from the pears before placing them in a medium saucepan. Add the red wine, lemon juice, brown sugar, ginger, cloves, and star anise. Set over medium heat, cover, and bring to a boil.

Once the sugar has dissolved, reduce the heat to low and keep the liquid at a gentle simmer. Make sure the pears stay fully submerged; add a splash of water if needed. Cook gently for about 30 minutes, until the pears have taken on a deep red color and are fork tender. Turn off the heat and allow to cool completely.

Red Wine Cake:

- Spray or vegan margarine, to grease pan
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup reserved poaching liquid
- ¾ cup organic granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup olive oil
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and lightly grease a 9-inch round baking pan; set aside.

When pears are cool enough to handle, transfer to a cutting board but reserve the excess liquid after removing cloves and star anise. Thinly slice the pears and arrange them in a slightly overlapping spiral, covering the bottom of the prepared pan. Nestle them in tightly to fill any open crevices.

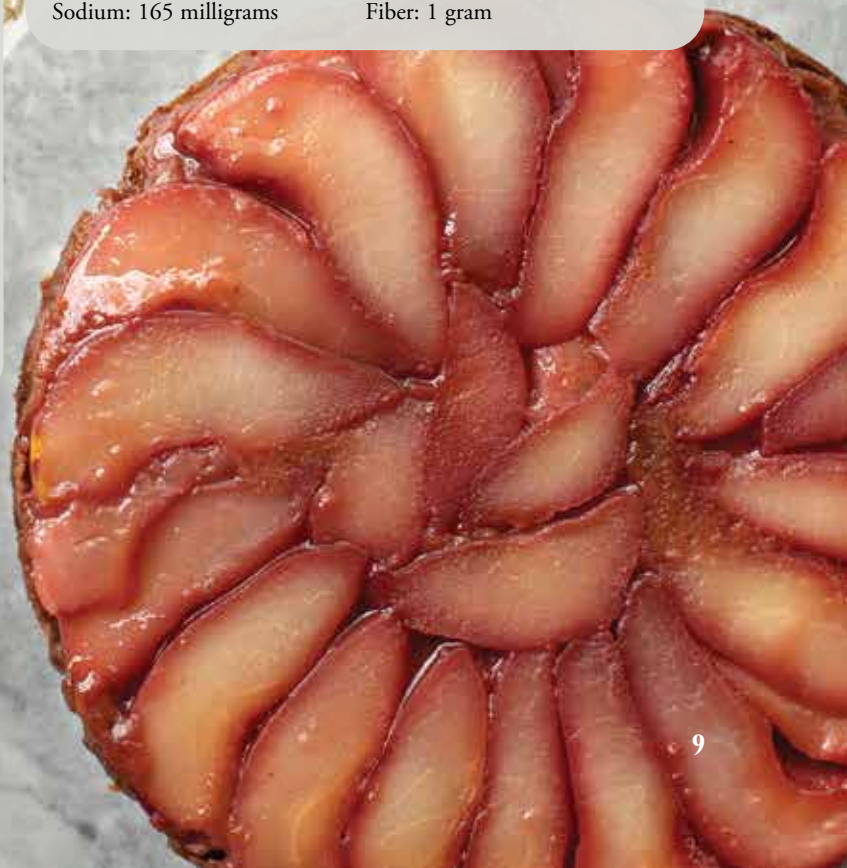
Prepare the cake by sifting together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, ginger, salt, and pepper. In a second bowl, mix 1 cup of the reserved poaching liquid with the sugar, oil, and vanilla extract before pouring them in together as well. Stir with a wide spatula until just combined.

Pour the batter over the pears, using your spatula to smooth out the surface and evenly cover all the fruit. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Meanwhile, return the last bit of leftover poaching liquid to the stove. Simmer gently over medium-low heat for about 15 minutes, until reduced by half and thickened to the consistency of a loose syrup. Let cool.

Allow the cake to cool in the pan for 20 minutes before running a thin butter knife or metal spatula around the edges of the pan, releasing any parts of the cake that might be sticking. Invert a cake stand or large serving plate over the top of the cake before quickly flipping it over. Remove the pan to unveil the poached pears on top. Slice and serve with a drizzle of the wine syrup on top, as desired.

Total calories per serving: 224 Fat: 5 grams
Carbohydrates: 37 grams Protein: 2 grams
Sodium: 165 milligrams Fiber: 1 gram



Orange-Pepper Peanut Brittle

(Makes about 1 pound; approx. 16 pieces)

- 1 cup organic granulated sugar
- ½ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 1 Tablespoon vegan margarine or coconut oil
- 1½ cups roasted, unsalted, shelled peanuts
- 1½ teaspoons orange zest
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt

In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, maple syrup, and orange juice. Cook over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil; add the vegan margarine or coconut oil. Swirl the pan occasionally, rather than stirring, to prevent the sugar from crystalizing prematurely.

Cook until the syrup hits 300-310 degrees (hard crack stage) according to a candy thermometer.

Meanwhile in a sheet pan, lay out a silicone baking mat or parchment paper. In a medium-sized bowl, combine the peanuts, orange zest, baking soda, pepper, and salt, and have at the ready.

Once the hot sugar syrup hits the proper temperature, immediately turn off the heat and very quickly stir in the dry ingredients. Without pausing, scrape the hot candy out of the pan and onto your prepared baking sheet, tilting the pan to help spread, if needed. Don't use your spatula to push or press it out, since that would destroy the delicate structure of fine bubbles created by the baking soda.

Cool completely before breaking into pieces and eat right away or store in an airtight container at room temperature.

Total calories per serving: 163	Fat: 8 grams
Carbohydrates: 23 grams	Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 125 milligrams	Fiber: 1 gram



Photos by Hannah Kaminsky

Hannah creates the award-winning vegan blog BitterSweetBlog.com and is the author of many books, including *Sweet Vegan Treats*, *Real Food, Real Fast*, and *The Student Vegan Cookbook*. Obsessed about plant-based food before it was cool, she cooks, bakes, and eats from morning to night in Austin, Texas.



Combining Vegan Values

by Rissa Miller

When planning their wedding weekend, Serena Rose and David Jonczak of Maryland knew every detail had to be exactly right.

“We wanted an intentional experience,” said Rose. “It was a complete vegan retreat.”

They had some non-vegan guests and family who were “initially hesitant, but came around, and even got seconds after multiple days enjoying the shift to vegan food,” she said.

The immersive 3-day weekend at Zigone Farm Retreat included a vegan pizza party, raw vegan breakfast cakes, lunch by Hippy Chick Hummus, dinner of crabless cakes and spring veggie risotto from Nourrie

Cuisine, and a vegan brunch with tofu scramble and pancakes. Harmony Bakery created vanilla-lavender cake and cupcakes. All are entirely vegan businesses.

Other aspects included vegan hair and make-up products, vegan attire and shoes for the wedding party, vegan favors/decor/flowers, and interaction with 60 rescue goats and sheep.

Rose said, “Everything that could possibly be questioned, we questioned, and ensured it was vegan. Which is part of the lifestyle, to ask the questions. Our wedding reflected our vegan values. The Earth is all connected, and we wanted to honor that and the lives of animals, as we joined our lives.”

Photos of couple, table, and cake by Alina Kogan; Photos of goat field, risotto, and pizza oven submitted by guests



Rissa is the Senior Editor of the *Vegetarian Journal* and adores a vegan wedding. Nothing says love like kindness, compassion, and respect for all beings!

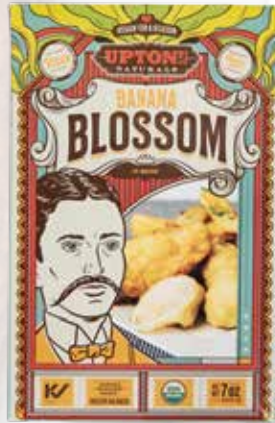
Veggie Bits

Bananas Reimagined

Upton's Banana Blossoms use the purple flowers of the banana tree, packed in a brine made of water, lime, and salt. Upton's markets Banana Blossoms as having a similar texture to fish, but to think of this product only as a fish substitute would be to limit its potential: this is a unique ingredient that could inspire novel recipes.

Upton's Banana Blossoms work as a fish substitute because of flaky texture, but it's far from dry. The blossoms are stacks of individually soft and silken layers (the petals of the banana flower), which hold together firmly yet without disagreeable toughness. It produced results that were both delicious and visually and texturally similar to real fish, even in shape. No one who ate my Banana Blossom fillets detected any hint of banana fruit. Indeed, the flavor was almost entirely neutral. Gluten-free, organic, and soy-free. uptonsnaturals.com

Simon Brown/VRG Volunteer



Cheers to Alcohol-Free Gin

Mindful drinkers with a sophisticated palate will rejoice with New London Light (NLL) alcohol-free spirits. Made to taste and blend like gin by master distillers, NLL is bold, with a full spectrum of complex flavor layers. NLL has no alcohol or sugar, is low in calories, and is vegan, which creates a refreshing cocktail experience for health-conscious drinkers. Try it in any beverage recipe that traditionally calls for a full-bodied gin, like a gimlet, martini, Tom Collins, or a Vesper. Available nationwide and online at us.salcombegin.com

Rissa Miller/Senior Editor



Safe-for-School Seedy Snack Bars

Blake's Seed-Based bar is an ideal snack, packing loads of flavor. You can travel with it to school or work. The bars are gluten-free, peanut-free, nut-free and vegan—making them a quintessential choice for individuals with these food allergies. Blake's boasts an impressive array of flavors, from pineapple, blueberry, chocolate mint, raspberry, to s'mores, each possesses a unique, distinct pop of tastiness—and they're hearty. You will be satisfied with this as a between-meal snack. The blueberry bar was like biting into a plump berry plucked off of the stem while the s'mores snack bar enveloped my taste buds with a creamy, roasted flavor. Every bar—comprised of pumpkin, sunflower, and brown flaxseeds—is assured to be free of milk, egg, wheat, soy, and sesame. blakesseedbased.com

David Han/VRG Intern



Love that Granola Crunch

A crispy framework melts into a sweet explosion with one bite of Nature's Path Love Crunch Salted Caramel Pretzel Granola. Compared to typical dry granola that saps the moisture from your mouth with each bite, Love Crunch's combination of dark chocolate, pretzels, and granola boasts complex texture—crunchy, creamy, and crispy. Topped with a sprinkle of Himalayan pink salt and smooth caramel, it completely transforms the granola experience. The first bite enveloped my taste buds with a roasted, nutty flavor, while the second bite yielded velvety chocolate. One could quite literally feel the "love" with each snackable "crunch." Made with organic and fair-trade ingredients, it's available nationwide. naturespath.com

David Han/VRG Intern



Veggie Bits

Elegantly Smooth Oat Butters

Creamy, silky, cultured oat butter from Miyoko's is another win for the vegan company. The flavor and texture are downright luxurious. Crafted with sunflower oil and whole-grain oats, this product is ideal for smearing on bagels or toast, as well as melting over hot pancakes and biscuits. In two varieties, Hint of Salt and Garlic Parm, it's remarkably similar to dairy butter. The Garlic Parm is a match for pasta dishes, grilled cheese sandwiches, and over roasted veggies or baked potatoes. Wonderful for eating as-is, both varieties also worked well for baking and frying. Miyoko's Oat Butters are cashew-free, gluten-free, Kosher, palm oil-free, soy-free and non-GMO. Available nationwide at Kroger, Sprouts, Target, Trader Joe's, Walmart, and Whole Foods. miyokos.com



Rissa Miller/Senior Editor

Pea Protein Crumbles

Add some variety to your recipes with Longeve's Plant-Based Protein! With 20 grams of pea protein per serving, Longeve Crumbles can serve as an allergen-free ground meatless substitute in anything from chili to bibimbap. Simply mix the Crumbles—Plain, Masala Curry, or Zesty Taco—in hot water, and they're ready in five minutes. The texture is chewy and meaty. The Crumbles are particularly impressive in the lettuce wraps recipe featured on Longeve's website. The crunch of the lettuce provides a delightful texture contrast to the meatiness of the protein crumbles. Another standout product from Longeve are Plant-Based Breadless Crumbs, which can be used like breadcrumbs or to add a crispy texture to vegan meals. Everything from Longeve is gluten-, nut-, and soy-free. Available online and from select retailers, longvebrands.com



Nina Lehr/VRG Intern

Bean Butchers

Butchering beans put Very Good Butchers on the block. VGB offers a variety of plant-based meats including bangers (sausages), BBQ, burgers, ground, hot dogs, pepperoni, ribz, and steaks. Testers loved the Very British Banger, packed with fresh apples, leeks, and herbs. The adzuki bean-based pepperoni was a winner on pizza and vegan cheese plates, and the jackfruit steak, seasoned with shiitake mushrooms, beets, and spices, makes an incredible centerpiece for any fancy meal. VGB boxes could easily get a family through the busy holiday season with entertaining and quick suppers. Products are available individually or as boxes for monthly subscription in the U.S. and Canada. us.verygoodbutchers.com



Rissa Miller/Senior Editor

Coconut Milk Lattes To Go

For most South Asian families like my own, our sip of evening chai is a significant part of the day to take a breather after work or school. Though it's so refreshing, it can take quite some time to prepare the tea. Feel the same?



Look no further! Quik Tea offers a blend of various exquisite South Asian spices united in perfect harmony with plant-based coconut milk to bring your sips to the next-level. Available in the vegan flavors Cardamom, Lemongrass, Madras Coffee, Masala, and Turmeric Ginger. This tiny pack of convenience is composed of non-GMO ingredients. We loved it paired with a bite of toast or crunchy biscuits. Also convenient for travel, dorms, and office use. Purchase online at quiktea.com or from Amazon.com

Ksheetisha Bhat/VRG Volunteer

A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

Lower Risk of Hip Fractures in Vegan Women Using Calcium and Vitamin D Supplements

A study from the United Kingdom reported that vegetarians had a 25% higher risk while vegans had more than twice the risk of hip fractures than did meat eaters.¹ This study did not take into consideration use of calcium supplements or assess vitamin D intake.

Another recent study of more than 34,000 non-Hispanic white Seventh-day Adventists in the United States and Canada provided more information on hip fractures in vegetarians and vegans.² Subjects were asked about their eating habits and their health and were observed for around eight years. Vegans were defined as those consuming animal products less than once a month; lacto-ovo vegetarians were defined as eating meat, fish, or poultry less than once a month. Subjects were at least 45 years old at the start of the study.

Vegan women had a markedly higher risk of fracturing a hip compared to nonvegetarian women. Lacto-ovo vegetarians, both women and men, and vegan men did not have a higher risk of hip fracture than did nonvegetarians. The researchers looked at use of calcium and vitamin D supplements. Vegan women who did not use calcium or vitamin D supplements had almost three times the risk of hip fracture compared to nonvegetarian women. Interestingly, vegan women who used calcium and vitamin D supplements did not have a higher risk of hip fractures.

Vegan women had an average dietary calcium intake of 774 milligrams per day, average supplemental calcium intake of 363 milligrams per day, and a total daily calcium intake averaging 1,137 milligrams of calcium. This appeared to be similar to or slightly less than the total calcium intake of vegan men and lacto-ovo vegetarian and nonvegetarian men and women. Calcium recommendations for adults age 45 and older are between 1,000 milligrams and 1,200 milligrams per day, depending on age and sex.

Vegan women had an average dietary vitamin D intake of 2.3 micrograms per day, an average intake

of vitamin D from supplements of 5.5 micrograms per day, and a total daily vitamin D intake of 7.8 micrograms per day. Vegans, both men and women, had somewhat lower total daily vitamin D intakes compared to lacto-ovo vegetarians and nonvegetarians. The total average vitamin D intakes of all groups were below the recommended intake of 15 to 20 micrograms per day.

Sunlight exposure could have promoted vitamin D production, but this was not reported.

The reduction in hip fracture rates in those women taking calcium and vitamin D supplements supports the importance of getting adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D to reduce the risk of having a hip fracture.

¹ Tong TYN, Appleby PN, Armstrong MEG, et al. Vegetarian and vegan diets and risks of total and site-specific fractures: results from the prospective EPIC-Oxford study. *BMC Med.* 2020;18(1):353.

² Thorpe DL, Beeson WL, Knutsen R, Fraser GE, Knutsen SF. Dietary patterns and hip fracture in the Adventist Health Study 2: combined vitamin D and calcium supplementation mitigate increased hip fracture risk among vegans. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2021;114(2):488-495.

Nutritional Content of Plant Milks Varies

Does your plant milk supply calcium, vitamin B12, and vitamin D? Not everyone relies on plant milk to supply these nutrients; however, plant milks are often identified as an easy way to get significant amounts of these essentials.

A recently published study examined 148 different plant milks from stores in Europe, Australia, and the United States. The plant milks from the U.S., as opposed to those in other countries, were more likely to be fortified with calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12. An 8-ounce serving contained at least 20% of the Daily Value for these nutrients. A food that contains at

least 20% of the Daily Value per serving for a nutrient is considered to be high in that nutrient. Of the plant milks examined in the U.S., 87% were fortified with calcium, and 82% contained vitamin D. Surprisingly, less than half (47%) supplied vitamin B12. If we look at the number of products that were examined in the U.S. that would be considered to be high in a nutrient, 73% were high in calcium, 47% were high in vitamin D, and 40% were high in vitamin B12. These results suggest that consumers cannot assume that the plant milk they purchase is a good source of key nutrients unless they have confirmed this by checking the Nutrition Facts label.

All the plant milks that were examined, except for those based on coconut, had very little saturated fat; more than 60% of the plant milks were low in sodium (less than 115 milligrams of sodium in an 8-ounce serving). More than half of the plant milks had low to moderate amounts of added sugar. The Nutrition Facts label lists added sugar, making it easy to select a milk with little or no added sugar.

If you are relying on a plant milk to supply calcium, vitamin D, and/or vitamin B12, be sure to check the Nutrition Facts label to see if the product you plan to purchase supplies these nutrients.

Craig WJ, Fresán U. International analysis of the nutritional content and a review of health benefits of non-dairy plant-based beverages. *Nutrients*. 2021;13(3):842.

Lower Risk of Type 2 Diabetes with Reduced Red Meat Consumption

Close to one in 10 American adults have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, formerly called adult-onset diabetes. In addition to health problems associated with type 2 diabetes, this condition can also lead to a higher risk of heart disease, eye problems, and kidney disease. A recent analysis assessed the effect of reducing red meat consumption and replacing the meat with other protein sources on the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. This study had more than 150,000 adult participants. From 1990 to 2013, they reported what they ate every four years and let researchers know if they had been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Eating one fewer serving per day of red meat over a 4-year period and eating an additional serving of legumes was associated with an 11% lower risk of type 2 diabetes. Replacing a serving of red meat with

a serving of nuts was associated with a 17% lower risk. Replacing processed red meat (bacon, hot dogs, etc.) with other foods had a stronger association with reduced risk of type 2 diabetes compared to replacing unprocessed red meat (beef, pork, lamb).

This study did not look at vegetarians; other studies have found a lower risk of type 2 diabetes in vegetarians.

According to the American Diabetes Association, on average, medical expenditures of people with diagnosed diabetes are approximately 2.3 times higher than they would be if people didn't have diabetes. Dietary changes that reduce the risk of diabetes could improve quality of life and potentially could reduce the cost of health care.

Würtz AML, Jakobsen MU, Bertoia ML, et al. Replacing the consumption of red meat with other major dietary protein sources and risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus: a prospective cohort study. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2021;113(3):612-621.

Dietary Choices Affect Air Quality

About 15,900 deaths in the United States each year are attributed to air pollution related to food production; 80% of these deaths are estimated to be related to animal-based food production. There are numerous ways that food production contributes to air pollution.

Livestock waste (urine and feces) and fertilizer applications result in ammonia production. Ammonia is estimated to be associated with 69% of deaths related to air quality from food production. Particulate matter from dust from tillage, dust kicked up by livestock hooves, field burning, and emissions from agricultural equipment is estimated to be associated with 27% of food production air quality-related deaths.

Red meat production has the greatest impact on health damage related to air quality. The health effect of red meat production on air quality is estimated to be 10 times higher than that of nut and seed production and 15 times more than that of the production of other plant foods. Production of eggs, poultry, and dairy products all have a greater impact on deaths attributed to food production air quality than does production of plant foods.

Domingo NGG, Balasubramanian S, Thakrar SK, et al. Air quality-related health damages of food. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U.S.A.* 2021;118(20):e2013637118.

2021 Scholarship Winners

Arpi Keshishian—California

Knowing that millions of animals are suffering and being killed in factory farms each year, just to be served as school lunches that would usually be left uneaten, completely broke my heart. I knew that something had to change. I decided to create a plant-based survey and send it out to students across my school district. In this survey, I questioned if the student would want to have more plant-based options, what plant-based meals they are interested in, and what their reasoning was behind their answer. I then used ArcGIS (an online mapping application) to create a dashboard displaying the survey results. I included bar graphs, pie charts, and maps to demonstrate the percentage of students who wanted veg options, and I displayed where the data was gathered from with the use of a pie chart and a map. I then set up a Zoom meeting with my school's nutritional services director where I pitched my idea and used my survey and dashboard results as evidence that our school district had a clear demand for more plant-based options.

According to one of Arpi's references, she got the whole district food services administration to join Zoom and led the meeting, presenting fact-based data to support incorporating vegan options on a regular basis for school meals. The district food services director was so impressed with the work she had done researching affordable vegan options for the school menu that she thanked Arpi for doing the survey, saying that data does make a difference, and asked her to send her the data collected from her survey. Through her efforts, the food service director committed to including falafel, soymilk, fruit parfaits, and other vegan items to the menu.

To further encourage vegetarianism in her community, Arpi partnered with the Factory Farming Awareness Coalition to represent them at her high school's AP environmental science courses. As a guest speaker, she lectured two classes regarding the ethical and environmental issues linked with factory farming. She also created a quick-and-easy vegan recipe tutorial on her school's TV show, *Quarter Past Clark*.

For her senior thesis, Arpi did a paper on food subsidies. She plans to focus her career on advocating for



Arpi Keshishian
\$10,000

and creating new food-based policies in the U.S.

“Major topics that I am interested in are transitioning governmental food subsidies away from animal agriculture towards fruit and vegetable farms. I believe that to further spread the vegan and vegetarian movements, it is essential to stay compassionate in all aspects of life, by treating everyone with kindness, both humans and nonhuman animals alike,” she said. Arpi will attend UC San Diego as a political science and public policy major, with a minor in climate change studies.

The Vegetarian Resource Group Awarded \$20,000 in 2021 College Scholarships

Jasmine El Mrabti—Florida

Jasmine said, "After I began to work, on the bus ride to my client's home, I read the fact that promoted my conversion to veganism: Animal Agriculture produces more greenhouse gas emissions than the entire transportation sector.

I made the connection between human lives and animal lives clear to my family and forged my own path to cruelty-free, noble living. Following my ninth-grade conversion to veganism, I was compelled to tell the stories of those lives because they had become an extension of my own."

In high school, Jasmine was one of seven Americans selected for an international scholarship to study microbiology, robotics, and Arabic in Cairo, Egypt, for four weeks.

She chose to do a plant-based project, posing diet change as a viable method for reducing suffering. At the same time, she interacted with Egyptian families and registered 23 members to a vegan coaching program, as well as distributed vegan pamphlets.

Back in Miami, Jasmine set up tables on the Florida International University campus and discussed plant-based diets with students and faculty.

She also worked long distance with a British vegan group to help them apply for grants, and supervised eight adults in this process. In addition, she worked to bring the group's school lunch information to her campus.

Her high school science teacher stated, "Jasmine effectively communicates the intersectionality of sustainable consumption. Her discussion consists of science, but also of ethics, poverty, racism, and fiscal policy; this makes her outreach intellectually stimulating for all participants, myself included. I, along with a majority of faculty and the student body, have started to transition to plant-forward diets as a result of her advocacy. It is due to her passion that I have been vegan since March of last year."

Jasmine will pursue a college degree in Biological Physics with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies or



Jasmine El Mrabti
\$5,000

Environmental Studies. She hopes to create a nonprofit that will provide environmental, STEM-gearred, plant-forward education to inner-city youth.

"I want to help people find their kindness," Jasmine said, summing up her message.

Naina Misra—Arizona

In my ninth grade year, I noticed that students at my school were unable to engage in science due to the minimal educational opportunities present in my rural town in northwestern Arizona. Also, many students had not yet established a connection with the intricacies of the natural world outside of hunting and fishing. I knew that I needed to find a way to interest students in the ecological sciences and then develop an appreciation of the beauty and peace of nature outside of these destructive practices, Naina said.

I first applied for and won a \$500 grant from the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation, which I used to buy plants, supplies, and tools. I assembled a team of high school students and began breaking ground in a deserted area at the edge of my school's campus. At first, the rocky terrain, insecure water connection, and oven-like climate threatened to stall the garden's progress. However, I planned a winding canal system to store and supply water for the trees, bushes, and crops growing in the garden, and installed a greenhouse and raised beds for various varieties of plants.

We have grown peaches, plums, apples, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, tomatoes, cilantro, spinach, broccoli, onions, corn, and okra to name a few. Any students who have worked in the garden and helped during our planting season can take home and give away the produce they have grown.

When I go to college at the end of this year, I plan to entrust the garden to my school for its upkeep. I have established a garden club which, under the supervision of my science teacher, will look after it.

In eleventh grade, I also pioneered a salad bar in my school district cafeteria.

I conducted a survey of all students and faculty at my high school to determine the impact a new salad bar would have on our school cafeteria. I sent a memo to the school district administration to introduce my plan. I then assembled a salad bar needs assessment committee that included my culinary teacher, faculty members, and student representatives. We brainstormed ideas for the salad bar's offerings, determined the new lunch line procedures, and set the school days the salad bar would be in operation. I scheduled a meeting with my district's principal and superintendent where I presented the survey results, and addressed my plan to move forward with the salad bar. I also proposed the equipment necessary to store and serve the salads. After hearing my ideas, the



Naina Misra
\$5,000

administration quickly approved the project and allocated funds to purchase a two-door, self-serve salad station for the cafeteria.

Monday, March 16 was the Salad Bar's Grand Opening Day. Flyers were sent to students across the school district, and a school newspaper article detailing the unveiling of this new cafeteria addition was already in circulation. Then, the Covid-19 pandemic ground all school operations to a halt. Classroom learning migrated to the Cloud, and months passed without a single student stepping foot on campus. My vision to implement a salad bar at my school had been paused.

(Then) I was elated to hear that I could begin the salad bar in a new school year, but knew that I would

have to recalculate its setup. Once the school year began, I met with the salad bar needs assessment committee and decided to send an online order form every morning to faculty and students, enabling them to select the options they would like on the salad bar, and then coordinate with the culinary department to pre-assemble the individualized salads. As I worked with other culinary students in the morning, reading orders and portioning salads while wearing gloves, masks, and keeping a safe distance, I gained hope in the fact I could make my goals a reality.

My school was a tough place to implement a salad bar project as most of the students and staff come from ranching and farming backgrounds, and meat is always a part of their diet. The salad bar was open to students from September to December last year. Then the salad bar was only for faculty due to the Covid-19 restrictions. After its success, it was implemented for everyone.

This week I began the salad bar in person and participants can now order and pick up their salads in my school's cafeteria. Earlier approximately 200-300 students ordered from the salad bar, and the most popular toppings were the roasted nuts and cranberries, and crunchy spiced lentils. Previously, all of the salads were distributed in pickup boxes to prevent Covid-19 contamination. Now, my school district has allowed the salad bar to operate in-person. I am working with other students at my school to take orders and create the salads in-person in my school cafeteria.

Naina told The Vegetarian Resource Group that she hopes to become a neurosurgeon and recommend vegetarian diets to her patients.

Do you know an amazing vegan or vegetarian high school student?



Please tell them about our annual scholarship contest!



The deadline for the next VRG scholarship contest for high school seniors graduating in 2022 is February 20, 2022.



To see scholarship rules and past winners, visit vrg.org/student/scholar.htm



To send support for additional scholarships and internships, donate at vrg.org/donate, call (410) 366-8343, or send a donation to VRG, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203.

Bequests

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

- Your will and life insurance policies enable you to protect your family and also to provide a way to give long-lasting support to causes in which you believe. Naming The Vegetarian Resource Group in your will or life insurance policy will enable us to increase our work for veganism.
- One suggested form of bequest is: *I give and bequeath to The Vegetarian Resource Group, Baltimore, Maryland, the sum of _____ dollars (or if stock, property, or insurance policy, please describe).*
- To be sure your wishes are carried out, please speak with your attorney specifically about writing the correct information in your will.

Get Stuffed!

by Chef John Beck

Fill up from the inside out with these stuffed veggies and fruit: strong enough to hold their shape during cooking and tasty enough to be a sturdy vessel for loads of delectable flavor.

Start any meal or event with classic Deviled Potatoes (below). For a salad course, scoop into White

Bean-Stuffed Tomato Cups (opposite page). Mac and Cheez-Stuffed Peppers are a gooey main course superstar for the entire family (page 22), and Stuffed Eggplant Rolls will wow guests at any dinner party (page 23). For brunch or dessert, try sweet and hearty Apples with Cinnamon-Roasted Nuts (page 24).

Deviled Potatoes

(Makes 28 appetizers)

14 baby yellow potatoes

One 15-ounce can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed

2 Tablespoons yellow mustard

2 Tablespoons vegan mayonnaise

1 Tablespoon dried parsley

½ teaspoon turmeric

½ teaspoon black salt (optional, see note below)

¼ teaspoon cayenne (or less, to taste)

¼ teaspoon smoked paprika

Fresh parsley and more paprika, for garnish

Boil potatoes for 35 minutes or until soft (poke with paring knife to check softness). Drain and set aside until cool enough to handle.

In a bowl, use a potato masher or fork to smash chickpeas for five minutes until well smashed. Set aside.

Use a fine serrated knife to cut the potatoes in half vertically. Scoop a hole in the potato half with a spoon, and add potato to the mashed chickpeas. Repeat with all potatoes. Add mustard, vegan mayonnaise, and all spices to the potatoes and chickpeas, and mash everything together until it reaches a smooth consistency.

Spoon the mixture into each hollowed potato. Dash paprika and fresh parsley on top of the finished potatoes. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

Chef's Notes: Black salt, otherwise known as *kala namak*, isn't actually black in color. It's named for the black volcanic ash which gives it a distinctively sulfuric flavor, similar to scrambled eggs. Black salt is readily found online and in Indian specialty markets, but regular table salt can be used instead.

Total calories per appetizer: 77 Fat: 1 gram
Carbohydrates: 16 grams Protein: 2 grams
Sodium: 46 milligrams Fiber: 3 grams



White Bean-Stuffed Tomato Cups

(Makes 12 appetizers)

6 large tomatoes (heirlooms if possible)
One 15-ounce can white beans, drained and rinsed
One 14.5-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes,
fire-roasted or your favorite flavor, drained
½ cup deseeded and minced green bell pepper
¼ cup minced red onion
⅛ cup rice wine vinegar
1 Tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon dried oregano
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 sprigs cilantro or parsley, chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste (optional)
12 basil leaves, to garnish
Olive oil, to garnish (optional)

Cut the tops off tomatoes and scoop out the insides of the tomatoes; discard tomato innards and seeds. In a large bowl, gently combine all other ingredients except garnishes together. Use a spoon to fill tomatoes with veggie-bean mixture. Cut in half and garnish with a basil leaf. Prior to serving, drizzle with olive oil, to taste.

Total calories per appetizer: 76	Fat: 1 gram
Carbohydrates: 13 grams	Protein: 4 grams
Sodium: 8 milligrams	Fiber: 3 grams





Mac and Cheez- Stuffed Peppers

(Makes six peppers, serves 12 as entrée)

- 6 large bell peppers
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- One 16-ounce package macaroni
- 1 cup plain, unsweetened vegan rice or almond milk
- 4 cups vegan cheddar shreds (Daiya or Violife preferred)
- 2 Tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 Tablespoons Italian seasoning blend
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (or to taste)
- ⅓ cup vegan breadcrumbs, to garnish
- Paprika, to garnish

Preheat oven 350 degrees. Cut the tops off of 6 bell peppers and remove seeds. Coat the peppers in olive oil and place in a casserole dish. Bake for 10 minutes, to soften, while prepping Mac and Cheez. Take peppers out, and allow them cool for at least 5 minutes, until comfortable to handle.

Prepare macaroni according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

In a large pot, bring vegan milk to a boil and add vegan cheese. Whisk constantly until there are no shreds. Set heat to simmer and allow sauce to thicken, whisking, for about 5 more minutes. Add cooked macaroni, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, black pepper, and red pepper flakes. Stir to combine.

Spoon Mac and Cheez into the pre-baked peppers. Sprinkle tops with breadcrumbs and paprika. Bake at 350 degrees for another 30-35 minutes until peppers are lightly browned and fully tender. Cut each pepper in half, top to bottom, and serve warm.

Chef's Notes: To make this recipe gluten-free, use gluten-free pasta and breadcrumbs.

Total calories per serving: 308	Fat: 10 grams
Carbohydrates: 45 grams	Protein: 7 grams
Sodium: 366 milligrams	Fiber: 4 grams



Stuffed Eggplant Rolls

(Serves 4 as entrée)

Stuffing:

- 1 Tablespoon canola oil
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste, (optional)

Warm oil in a large skillet. Toss onions, tomatoes, and garlic in pan and sauté over low heat for about 7-10 minutes until wilted. Set aside.

Tofu Ricotta:

- One 16-ounce block soft tofu
- 1 cup fresh spinach, shredded
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste, (optional)
- One 8-ounce can no-added-salt tomato sauce
- 2 medium-sized eggplants, skin left on
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon nutritional yeast
- Fresh basil leaves, to serve

To make *Tofu Ricotta*, crumble tofu into a mixing bowl. By hand, mix in spinach, nutritional yeast, oregano, salt, and pepper. Combine with prepared *Stuffing* and set aside.

To assemble, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spoon half of tomato sauce on the bottom of a 9- x 13-inch casserole dish.

Thinly slice eggplant by hand or by mandolin longways into ¼-inch thick slabs. The size of the eggplants will vary, but there will be about 12-15 slabs. Add a spoonful of Stuffing-Ricotta to each slab of eggplant and roll up or fold neatly. Place in casserole dish. Repeat until all eggplant is used and all Stuffing-Ricotta is inside eggplant rolls.

Drizzle olive oil over filled casserole dish and spoon remaining tomato sauce on top. Sprinkle with nutritional yeast. Cover and bake 35-40 minutes until tender and cooked through. Serve warm, sprinkled with slivered fresh basil leaves.

Pictured on the cover.

Total calories per serving: 272	Fat: 13 grams
Carbohydrates: 29 grams	Protein: 18 grams
Sodium: 32 milligrams	Fiber: 13 grams

Apples with Cinnamon-Roasted Nuts

(Serves 6)

- 6 Granny Smith or other tart apples
- 1½ cups assorted/mixed nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds, peanuts)
- 1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup organic sugar
- 2-3 Tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Put all nuts in a zip-top bag. Crush them with a rolling pin until they are in small, uniformly sized pieces. Pour the crushed nuts into a mixing bowl, add cinnamon and sugar, and stir. Add maple syrup and coat thoroughly until everything sticks together.

Cut the tops off the apples and scoop out the cores with a spoon or apple corer. Lightly brush the insides with oil and pack the cavities with maple-nut mixture.

Place apples on prepared baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes. Allow to cool slightly before serving. If desired, serve with a small scoop of vegan vanilla ice cream or vegan whipped topping.

Total calories per serving: 335 Fat: 21 grams
Carbohydrates: 37 grams Protein: 5 grams
Sodium: 6 milligrams Fiber: 6 grams

Food Photos by Rissa Miller



Chef John Beck has been vegan for 15 years. Despite cooking in multiple Pennsylvania restaurants, John credits his grandmother's recipes for his main inspiration. He's made a name for himself with comfort foods, like mac and cheese. And even his grandma was impressed with his creations!



Risk of Viral Pandemics from Wet Markets and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations

Researched by Jacqueline Tang

The Covid-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2, presents many unique challenges to public health. People may be wondering how a massive pandemic allegedly arose from one wet market—and how to prevent the next crisis. Unfortunately, the answer is complicated. It involves our relationships with animals (both wild and domestic) and with the environment. Climate change further influences all of these interactions.

Recently wet markets (which sell live animals for food) have come under scrutiny for the dangerous mixing of wild animals and humans. The criticism of these markets is filled with ethnocentrism and Western ideals. Although wet markets are undoubtedly perfect places for viral multiplication and transmission, people fail to recognize two other major factors:

1. The role of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in spreading infectious disease to people.
2. Humans' relationships with the Earth's ecosystems, both near and distant.

THE ORIGINS OF ZONOTIC DISEASES

Viruses that come from animals, also called zoonotic viruses, are a major threat to society and public health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a division of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, “scientists estimate that more than six out of every 10 known infectious diseases in people can be spread from animals, and three out of every four new or emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals.”¹ Since humans come in contact with animals in many ways, it's important to consider different situations where zoonotic diseases can be easily transmitted across species.

WET MARKETS

Recently, wet markets have come under scrutiny for the dangerous commingling of wild animals and humans. Also, they bring an exotic combination of animals, which normally are not found close to each other in the

wild, together in one place. At a wet market:

1. Wild animals can infect domesticated animals.
2. Viruses can spread among different species.

Birds and bats especially carry many viruses. When they come in contact with an animal of a different species, a virus can mutate and adapt, eventually gaining the ability to infect a new host. In this manner, viruses spread widely.²

Some viruses are unable to directly infect a human, including avian (from birds) forms of influenza and some types of coronaviruses. These viruses require an intermediate host that serves as the go-between such that the virus can enter a new species. In the intermediate host, a virus changes sufficiently through mutations that enable it to adapt to a new host. Later, when given the chance to infect a human at close proximity, it may be able to do so by binding to specific cell receptors.^{3,4}

The risk of wet markets stems from being places that allow for many different types of species to come in contact for the first time. This gives viruses numerous potential hosts and greater possibility of genetic recombination through mutation. Without certain mutations, a particular virus may not be able to exploit a new species.

The cramped conditions in wet markets lead to animals being under severe stress. As a result, wild animals, already carrying many viruses that they are immune to, will shed more viral particles in the market.⁵ This means that there is a greater chance of viral infection for humans and other animals that are in the wet market. Unfortunately, stressful conditions for animals are not unique to wet markets. Conventional animal agriculture also places extreme stress on animals some humans eat as food.

CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS (CAFOs)

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), CAFOs “congregate animals, feed, manure and urine, dead animals, and production operations on a small land area.”⁶

CAFOs present many challenges for public health. The risk lies in their scale and sanitation. Many individuals of the same species, known as monocultures, are housed together in small cages, rooms, or buildings. If a virus is able to infiltrate (either from wild animal, human, or another method), it will easily spread among animals.

The lack of genetic diversity within livestock also facilitates viral transmission between animals.⁷ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO of the UN) stated that “livestock health is the weakest link in our global health chain, and disease drivers in livestock as well as wildlife are having increasing impacts on humans.”⁸

THE WET MARKET-CAFO CONNECTION

Besides the contributions to pandemic risk that wet markets and CAFOs present when considered individually, their connection is also problematic. For example, consider the case of influenza, a common virus in poultry and swine. Influenza is more common within CAFOs compared to wet markets. In a systematic

review over a six-year period, researchers noted that, of 364 avian influenza outbreaks, 56.1% originated in poultry CAFOs while only 0.8% started in wet markets.⁹

Scientists also report that many viruses undergo genetic recombination that occurs among individuals of the same species and between species. In other words, if a wild animal comes in contact with livestock, either directly or indirectly, it can easily spread certain viruses to the domestic food animals.¹⁰

Typically, viruses are not very pathogenic in the wild host. Once infected by a wild virus, domestic animals serve as “amplifier hosts” in which that virus often becomes more pathogenic than it was in the native species. Through genetic recombination and/or mutation, the wild virus becomes adapted to the new host.¹¹

The transport of both domesticated and wild animals can also magnify zoonotic viruses. The animals being transported might be exposed to viruses that their immune systems have never encountered. During this exposure, foreign viruses have the potential to recombine and create completely novel viruses.¹²

WHAT IS A WET MARKET?

According to researchers, “a typical wet market is a partially open commercial complex with vending stalls organized in rows; they often have slippery floors and narrow aisles along which independent vendors primarily sell ‘wet’ items such as meat, poultry, seafood, vegetables, and fruits.” See: link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-019-09987-2

In this sense of the term, wet markets exist all over the world, including the United States, where they are called “farmer’s markets.”

In this paper, “wet market” refers to open markets selling live animals, including wild, domestic, and/or domesticated wild animals, as well as animal products (eggs, meat, bones, organs, etc.).

WHAT IS A CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATION (CAFO)?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) as “agricultural enterprises where animals are kept and raised in confined situations. AFOs congregate animals, feed, manure and urine, dead animals, and production operations on a small land area. Feed is brought to the animals rather than the animals grazing or otherwise seeking feed in pastures, in fields, or on rangeland. There are approximately 450,000 AFOs in the United States.”¹⁹

“A CAFO is another EPA term for a large concentrated AFO. A CAFO is an AFO with more than 1,000 animal units (an animal unit is defined as an animal equivalent of 1,000 pounds live weight and equates to 1,000 head of beef cattle, 700 dairy cows, 2,500 swine weighing more than 55 lbs, 125,000 broiler chickens, or 82,000 laying hens or pullets) confined on site for more than 45 days during the year. Any size AFO that discharges manure or wastewater into a natural or man-made ditch, stream, or other waterway is defined as a CAFO, regardless of size.”¹⁹

J.F. Chan and colleagues, in a 2013 *Trends in Microbiology* article, state that in the wild, bats and birds are favorable reservoirs for most emerging viruses because of several “unique ecological, biological, immunological, and genetic features.” The loss of biodiversity and habitats for bats and birds leads to an increased interaction with humans and other species, including domesticated animals. The researchers report that the increased crowding of different wildlife species at wet markets has made it easier for viruses to jump among species.¹³

In some countries, animal agriculture also occurs in mixed species settings. For example, in China, it’s common to raise pigs along with ducks and other avian species.¹⁴ The high probability of viral transmission caused by interspecies mixing cannot be overstated.

THE ROLE OF INTERMEDIATE HOSTS IN VIRAL TRANSMISSION

In a 2020 editorial by A. Rodriguez-Morales and fellow researchers published in *Le Infezioni in Medicina*, many viruses use intermediate hosts like civets or camels because they cannot spread directly from the original infected animal (bat or bird) directly to humans.¹⁵

M. Konda and fellow investigators, in a 2020 review article in *Cureus* summarize the viral process in intermediate hosts:¹⁶

1. Mutates and recombines in intermediate hosts, thus adapting to humans.
2. Binds to the correct cell receptor in humans.
3. Enters the human cell.
4. Integrates its own genetic material into the human cells.
5. Commands the human cell to reproduce virus.
6. Human cell continues to reproduce more virus.

Some scientists hypothesize that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, used an intermediate host between bat and humans just like its viral cousins responsible for other recent coronavirus outbreaks.¹⁷

CONCLUSIONS: PANDEMICS, WET MARKETS, AND CAFOs

Both wet markets and CAFOs present unique challenges for the future of public health. CAFOs, with thousands of genetically similar animals in close proximity, provide the perfect environment for a virus to spread.

Wet markets bring hundreds of wild species together in one place. They allow for interspecies viral transmission and the potential of recombination to form novel pathogens. Wet markets also allow virus-infected animals, like wild bats and birds, to come into contact with humans and domestic animals.

Both wet markets and CAFOs may have very poor sanitation and living conditions for animals, creating stressed animals that shed more virus. This situation facilitates rapid viral spread.

Wet markets and CAFOs jeopardize public health and food security. Research should focus on prevention of pandemics in both types of food systems. Ultimately, humans need to reevaluate their role in the Earth’s ecosystems if we hope to prevent the next global pandemic of a zoonotic virus like SARS-CoV-2. Researchers report that the increased crowding of different wildlife species at wet markets has made it easier for viruses to jump between species.¹³

References for this article can be found here: vrg.org/blog/2021/01/22/risk-of-viral-pandemics-from-concentrated-animal-feeding-operations-and-wet-markets

Note from the Editor: As of the time of this writing, there are questions on whether the Covid-19 pandemic was a “natural” crossover event or started from a lab. There are some strong opinions on this, which each side may accuse the other of political or economic influences. For a starting place for readers who want to explore further, look at:

- npr.org/2021/03/31/983156340/theory-that-covid-came-from-a-chinese-lab-takes-on-new-life-in-wake-of-who-repor
- science.sciencemag.org/content/372/6543/694.1
- nytimes.com/2021/05/13/science/virus-origins-lab-leak-scientists.html

Jacqueline Tang did an internship with The Vegetarian Resource Group while a pre-med and public health major at Johns Hopkins University.





Boxed Up

Vegan Meal Kits & Delivery Services



Frustrated with meal planning, shopping, and wilted, wasted veggies in the crisper drawer of your fridge? A vegan meal subscription may be the solution.

Meal delivery services simplify the process of shopping and cooking. Just decide what you want to eat in a given week, or even how much you feel like cooking. Meals are either fully ready to eat, only require heating, or come with a little prep and cooking involved, depending on the service you choose.

When you subscribe to a meal service, it cuts back on grocery trips, and meal planning becomes very easy since your food arrives pre-portioned and ready to go. The basic way it works is to scroll a menu online. Most services have varied options, even gluten-free and nut-free, and offer new items each week. You decide what you/your family might enjoy any given night. Choose from veggie burgers, soups, stews, pilafs, salads, tacos, smoothies, and more. There are options for every vegan taste and dietary need among these companies.

Generally, food delivery services offer more healthful options than resorting to carry-out on busy nights. Your freshly prepared and convenient meal was delivered to your doorstep. Since you ordered in advance, dinner plans are already taken care of. Also these make great gifts, or as a care package for ill friends or family members.

For those wanting to learn cooking skills, meal services are a good way to start. By choosing a service that requires some cooking, you can practice knife skills, sautéing, and other kitchen basics with pre-measured, fresh ingredients. Directions usually come with step-by-step photos of the process, assuring your culinary success!

Worried about all that packaging? Most companies make it a significant part of their mission to be as sustainable as possible, offering compostable, recyclable, and reusable packaging.

	All-vegan company?	Subscription required?	À la carte available?	Average cost per meal?
Boyce Mode boycemode.com	Yes	5 meals min/ per week	No	\$13
Cook Unity cookunity.com	No (Omni)	4 meals min/ per week	No	\$10.49- \$13.49
Food Flo foodflo.com	Yes	No	Yes	\$20
Food Nerd foodnerdinc.com	Yes	No	Yes	\$2.50-\$5
Mosaic mosaicfoods.com	No (Vegetarian)	Yes	Yes	\$4.99- \$10.99
Plant Perfection plantperfectionfoods.com	Yes	No; \$250 min order	Yes	\$7-\$12
Plantable plantable.com	Yes	No	Yes	\$12.90
Purple Carrot purplecarrot.com	Yes	6 meals min/ per week	No	\$10-\$12
Sakara Life sakara.com	No (Vegetarian)	No	Yes	\$30
Splendid Spoon splendidspoon.com	Yes	5 meals min/ per week	No	\$13-\$15
Sprinly sprinly.com	Yes	6 meals min/ per week	No	\$18
Veestro veestro.com	Yes	10 meals min /per week	Yes	\$9.90



I reached out to the following companies for this article, but did not receive a reply as of this writing. For your information, these meal services also offer vegan options: Daily Harvest, Factor 75, Fresh N' Lean, Green Chef, Hungry Root, Mama Sezz, Marley Spoons, PlantPure Nation, Territory Foods, and Trifecta Nutrition. Photos from the top corner, going clockwise: Boyce Mode, Plant Perfection, Mosaic, Food Flo, Boyce Mode, Splendid Spoon; lower row, Food Nerd, Veestro, Plantable, Sakara Life, and Cook Unity.



by Rissa Miller

Prep required or Heat & eat?	Where available in USA?	Eco-friendly packaging?	Gluten-free options?	Does the menu change?	Fresh, frozen, or dried?	Delivery schedule?	Nutritional data given?
Heat & eat	20 states	100% compostable	Yes	Yes, weekly	Fresh	Weekly	Yes, on package
Heat & eat	Northeast states & CA	Compostable & recyclable	Yes	Yes, weekly	Fresh	Weekly	Yes, online
Heat & eat	AZ, CA, NV only	Compostable & recyclable	Yes	Yes, weekly	Fresh, frozen, or raw	Weekly	Yes, online
Ready to eat & Prep required	Entire USA	Fully recyclable	Yes	No	Dried, raw, & shelf-stable	Weekly	Yes, online
Heat & eat	Entire USA but AK, HI	Fully recyclable	Wheat-free available	No	Frozen	Weekly or monthly	Yes, online
Heat & eat	Entire USA but AK, HI	Mostly recyclable	Yes	No	Frozen	Every other week	Yes, online
Heat & eat	Entire USA but AK, HI	Fully recyclable	Yes	Yes, every other week	Frozen	Weekly	Yes, online
Prep required	Entire USA but AK, HI	Mostly recyclable	Yes	Yes, weekly	Fresh or raw	Weekly	Yes, online
Ready to eat	Entire USA but AK, HI	Fully recyclable	Yes	Yes, weekly	Fresh or raw	Weekly	No
Heat & eat or Ready to eat	Entire USA but AK, HI	Fully recyclable	Yes	Yes, weekly	Fresh or frozen	Weekly	Yes, online
Ready to eat	15 states	Mostly recyclable	Yes	Yes, weekly	Fresh or raw	Weekly	Yes, online
Heat & eat	Entire USA but AK, HI	Compostable & recyclable	Yes	Yes	Frozen	Weekly or monthly	Yes, on package



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NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

VEGAN Education and Activism

VRG Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, was part of a panel, called Plant-Powered Women, organized by the North Carolina State University Sustainability Stewards. They discussed a variety of topics including sustainability, how to influence people to move towards a vegan diet, common misconceptions, places to buy vegan foods, and their own favorite vegan dishes. Dr. Mangels gave presentations at the New York WIC (Women Infants Children) Conference and the Illinois Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Virtual Spring Assembly. She presented eight sessions on vegetarianism for families, adults, and teens for the San Jose (CA) Public Library System, assisted by Wendy Gabbe-Day from Santa Cruz VegFest and VRG interns and volunteers Rachel Eldering, Clarissa Hauber, Nina Lehr, and Lucia Rivera.

Dr. Mangels participated in an inter-disciplinary study on the future of plant-based alternatives to cow's milk in chocolate products. This was conducted by a global independent research organization, and should be of use to various food companies and others.

VRG had a virtual in-service for ten dietetic students from the University of Maryland. The students already have their undergrad nutrition degree and are doing one year internships (in hospitals, food services, etc.) towards earning registered dietitian certification. Two of those students chose to do a three-day rotation with VRG to learn more about vegan diets.

VRG 2020 intern Adhirai (Adhi) Muthukumar led a virtual class on legumes at Christopher's Place, a residential program for formerly homeless and incarcerated men. Adhi talked about health benefits and some easy recipes to incorporate more legumes. These vegan presentations are organized by VRG volunteer Marcy Schweibinz.

Vegetarian Resource Group Catalog

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

Bravo Express (\$21.95) by *Ramses Bravo*. Chef Ramses works at TrueNorth Health Center in Santa Rosa, CA, and uses herbs, spices, and creativity to produce vegan dishes that contain no added oil, salt, or sugar. The recipes are easy to prepare. You will find sample menus for two weeks, as well as photos in this 154-page book.

Some of the soup recipes include Butternut Squash, Cream of Corn, and Kale. Add a salad such as grilled plums with baby arugula, curried apples and watercress, or spicy jicama, and you have a terrific midday meal. You can also try out one of his dressings.

Artisan Vegan Cheese (\$19.95) by *Miyoko Schinner*. Please note that many recipes in this book take time to prepare and are not quick-and-easy. Cheese preparation, after all, is an art. That said, be sure to try the Meltable Muenster, Macadamia Ricotta, Soft Gruyère, Air-Dried Gouda, and Smoked Provolone. Also find recipes for cheese sauces such as Alfredo Sauce and Fondue. First courses and small plates include Caprese Salad and Artichokes Stuffed with Almonds and Cheese. You will love the Classic Baked Macaroni and Cheese, Stuffed Shells, Cheese Gnocchi, Potatoes Gratin, Spanakopita, and more. (150 pages)

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

Plant-Powered Families (\$19.95) by *Dreena Burton*. This cookbook features over 100 family-friendly, whole food vegan recipes as well as helpful tips and photos. You can start your morning off with Creamy Breakfast Rice Pudding or Cinnamon French Toast. Lunch includes Red Lentil Hummus, Chickpea Nibbles, or Artichoke Spinach Dip, and for dinner try Creamy Fettuccine, Smoky Bean Chili, and Ultimate Teriyaki Stir-Fry. Desserts include Vanilla Bean Almond Butter Fudge or “Nicer” Krispie Squares. (308 pages)

The Indian Vegan Kitchen (\$18.95) by *Madhu Gadia, MS, RD*. Enjoy over 150 recipes such as Spicy Tomato Soup, Mango Soup, Madras Potatoes, Eggplant Fritters, Plantain Stew, Stuffed Okra, Dal-Vegetable Stew, Tamarind Rice Pilaf, Curried Spinach Couscous, Flaxseed Flatbread, Sesame Seed Naan, Kale-Tofu Pilaf, Spiced Chai Latte, Cilantro Chutney, Cabbage-Peanut Salad, Indian Funnel Cakes, Cardamom Cookies, and more. Helpful tips and menus included. (227 pages)

Kick Diabetes Cookbook (\$19.95) by *Brenda Davis, RD, and Vesanto Melina, MS, RD*. If you or someone you know has diabetes and wants to follow a vegan diet, this book is for you. The first section features information on foods that help regulate blood glucose levels, along with several helpful charts indicating which nutrients decrease diabetes risk and which increase the risk.
(continued on next page)



Reviews

Vegan on a Budget

By Nava Atlas

Nava Atlas is a New York-based artist, illustrator, and cookbook creator. Her latest book, *Vegan on a Budget*, contains 125 low-cost, generally simple recipes.

The book begins with tips for becoming a wallet-friendly vegan, like how to shop smartly in the supermarket, finding coupons online, handling expensive natural foods stores, and more. For those beginning their vegan journey, she provides an in-depth list of essential ingredients, as well as an entire chapter dedicated to basic recipes.

The first chapter focuses on soups and stews, such as Sweet Potato & Black Bean, Ramen Noodle, and some vegan renditions of American favorites, including Broccoli Cheddar and Two-Potato Soup. I opted for trying the Quick Lentil & Kidney Bean Curry Soup. I am glad I did—my nonvegan family loved this one. It was fast and filling, and provided leftovers.

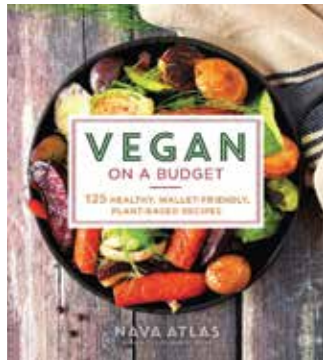
Chapter two presents skillet and stir-fries. In the mood for something light? Try the Stir-Fried Collard Greens with Cabbage & Carrots or the Quinoa & Cauliflower Pilaf. Barbecue-Flavored Tofu & Chickpea Bowl is a heartier option and having made it, I can say that this sweet and savory dish is a new favorite.

The next chapter is all about cozy casseroles and baked dishes—perfect for colder seasons—with Vegetable & Chickpea Potpie, Roasted Root Vegetables with Brussels Sprouts, and Not-Just-for-Holidays Green Bean Casserole.

Are you tired of eating the same lunch every day? Try one of the various lunch options, including Portobello & Seitan Cheesesteak Sandwiches, Barbecue Flavored Lentil Sloppy Joes, or Mini Tortilla Pizza.

For breakfast, try healthier Whole Grain Bowl, Chickpea Omelets, and Southwestern Tofu Scramble—or consider treating yourself with the French Toast Casserole. Don't overlook the dessert chapter, with various cookies, cobblers, and cakes, perfect for topping off any meal.

Vegan on a Budget (ISBN 978-1-4549-3697-8) is a 213-page book. It is published by Sterling Epicure and retails for \$24.95. Order this book online or from your local bookstore. Clarissa Hauber, VRG Intern



The Friendly Vegan

By Toni Okamoto & Michelle Cehn

Toni Okamoto is the founder of the popular website and cookbook, *Plant-Based on a Budget*, and is co-host of *The Plant-Powered People Podcast*. Michelle

Cehn, a photographer and filmmaker, has produced videos for leading vegan organizations and is the founder of the website World of Vegan.

The Friendly Vegan provides simple, recognizable vegan dishes that both vegans and nonvegans will enjoy! The first chapter is dedicated to breakfast and brunch. Savory options include Tofu Scramble, Breakfast Burritos, and Avocado Toast. The chapter focuses more on sweet dishes—with recipes from Toaster Pastries to Challah French Toast to simple Overnight Oats.

Several popular meals are in chapter two: Dinner and Entrées. Lighter dishes include Sushi, a BLT Sandwich, and Pesto Pasta. Heartier options include Cornbread Chili Casserole and Yellow Tofu Curry. The Fettucine Alfredo, a dish I personally tried, was quite enjoyable—I liked that it called for almonds over cashews, preventing it from tasting too rich.

The Warm and Cozy Soups chapter is ideal for colder months and has plenty of classics to please any eater, such as Split Pea Soup, and Spicy Udon Noodle Soup.

Don't forget to check out the Apps, Snacks, and Sides chapter with fun recipes for Jenn's Fried Tofu Wontons, Pesto Crostini, and Stephanie's Deviled Potatoes.

The Desserts chapter is unmissable with delicious treats such as Ice Cream Cake, Pumpkin Chocolate Pie, Peanut Butter Cups, and many more. Plus check out the Drinks section with holiday favorites such as Eggnog and Pumpkin Spice Latte.

The Friendly Vegan (ISBN 978-1-9506-6536-5) is a 304-page book. It is published by BenBella Books, Inc. and retails for \$22.95. Clarissa Hauber, VRG Intern



Quick and Easy Ideas for

EGGPLANT

by Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD



Glossy and beautiful, eggplants belong to the nightshade family. In addition to Italian dark purple, eggplant is also available in a cornucopia of colors, including lavender, jade green, orange, and yellow-white, as well as in various sizes and shapes that range from that of a golf ball to a football.

Choose eggplants that are firm and heavy for their size. Their skin should be smooth and shiny, and their color should be vivid. They should be free of discoloration, scars, and bruises, which usually indicate that the flesh beneath has become damaged and possibly decayed. The stem and cap, on either end of the eggplant, should be bright green in color. To test for the ripeness of an eggplant, gently press the skin with the pad of your thumb. If it springs back, the eggplant is ripe. If an indentation remains, it is not ripe yet.

Although they look hardy, eggplants are actually very perishable and care should be taken in their storage. Eggplants are sensitive to both heat and cold and should ideally be stored at around 50 degrees. Do not cut eggplants before storing, as they perish quickly once punctured or their flesh exposed.

Place uncut, unwashed eggplant in a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator crisper where it will keep for a few days. If it is too large for the crisper, don't force it. This will damage the skin and cause the eggplant to spoil. Instead, place it on a refrigerator shelf.

Wash the eggplant and cut off the ends. When cutting an eggplant, use a stainless steel knife as carbon steel will react with its pigments and cause it to blacken.

Eggplant can be baked, roasted in the oven, grilled, stir-fried, or steamed. If baking it whole, pierce the eggplant several times with a fork so steam can escape.

To tenderize the flesh's texture and reduce some of its naturally occurring bitter taste, you can salt it. After cutting the eggplant into the desired size and shape, sprinkle it with salt and allow it to sit for 30 minutes.

This process will reduce some of the eggplant's water content and if frying it, make it less likely to soak up oil. It's your choice whether to rinse off the salt.

Here are some eggplant ideas...

- Roast an eggplant whole, in the oven or on the grill, until soft enough to mash with a fork. Scoop out pulp and add oil and vinegar, garlic, and black pepper to use as a dip or salad dressing. This dish is sometimes called "eggplant caviar."
- For homemade *baba ganoush*, purée roasted eggplant and mix with garlic, tahini (sesame paste), lemon juice, chopped parsley, and olive oil. Use it as a dip for vegetables or as a sandwich filling.
- Mix diced, grilled eggplant with grilled peppers, lentils, onions, and garlic. Serve cold, topped with balsamic vinaigrette, or hot, atop grains, pasta, or pizza.
- *Skip-the-Frying Baked Eggplant*: Peel eggplant and cut into ½-inch slices. Create a breading with your favorite crumbs (bread, cornmeal, etc.) and dried Italian herbs (garlic powder, oregano, parsley, red pepper flakes, etc.). Spray eggplant slices with vegetable oil, coat with breading, place on non-stick pan, and bake until soft. Layer baked eggplant into a deep baking dish, alternating layers with thick tomato sauce; drained, diced, canned tomatoes; sliced mushrooms (if desired); and either shredded vegan cheese or thinly sliced extra-firm tofu. Cover and bake until bubbly.
- *Mini Japanese or Thai eggplant* stuffed with a mixture of diced smoked tofu, tempeh, or veggie crumbles; pine nuts; and roasted peppers. Wrap in foil and bake.
- *Make Eggplant Frisbees*: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place slices of unpeeled eggplant (about ½-inch thick) individually on a non-stick baking sheet. Sprinkle with grated vegan cheese, minced onions, sunflower seeds, and nutritional yeast. Bake until bubbly and the eggplant is slightly soft. The Frisbees may also be used as eggplant burgers served on a hearty roll with fixins.

Scott Williams

Plant-Based Camp for Kids

by Lucía Rivera



For Scott Williams vegan advocacy is about peace, love, and compassion. As the founder/owner of the Virginia-based physical education camp, Camp4Real, Williams engages kids with not only healthy exercise but also healthy, plant-based diets.

“I wanted to feed the kids healthy foods and obviously I wouldn’t feed the kids anything that I wouldn’t eat. As a vegan of 11 years, vegetarian for 12, I was not going to serve them animal products,” Williams said.

When working with his campers and students, Williams blends excitement into education, like acting out nutritional concepts. When it comes to vegan meals, he makes it all based on choice, emphasizing options and variety as part of his gentle vegan advocacy.

“I try to throw in little things here and there that aren’t too extreme for anybody or judgmental, because the way the kids internalize things [is] very unpredictable sometimes. I try to be as gentle as I can,” he said.

Williams is an athlete himself and has experienced the benefits of healthful plant-based eating firsthand.

“I don’t have my own kids, but I love these kids like they are my own. So I want them to know all the things that have helped me throughout my life,” Williams stated. “[I] still try to find creative ways to bring up being an animal lover and adopting a vegan diet. That’s a little bit tougher, but I find ways to kind of get them thinking about it on their own.”

For example, he has explained to campers why they don’t engage in fishing activities but rather “leave the fish alone” and “co-exist with the fish.”

Despite an estimated 99% of the families attending Williams’ camp are nonvegan, he focuses on encouraging others.

“I frame it to where they are. No families or no parents are going to disagree with ‘Eat more plants,’” Williams said. “They may get a little defensive, or not be as willing to be open if I’m telling everyone to be vegan, ‘You got to go 100% in.’ Framing it to where they are, it’s not as intimidating. I’ve been there before so I totally understand it. However long that journey is, however small the steps are, anything that you’re taking in that direction is positive, and I’m there to support them however I can.”

In the future Williams hopes to expand Camp4Real both nationally and internationally, reaching more kids with his fun physical education program and message of peace, love, and compassion for all.

To learn more about Williams or Camp4Real, visit camp4real.com

Lucía is a college student and long-distance VRG intern from southern California. She has been vegetarian for 11 years, vegan for one year, and spends her spare time volunteering, reading, and baking.





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Cauliflower Sandwich, Silver Diner

From The VRG Blog

Silver Diner with locations in Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia offers many vegan options. See: vrg.org/blog/2021/06/23/silver-diner-with-locations-in-maryland-new-jersey-and-virginia-offers-many-vegan-options/

Are you looking for comfortable shoes that are vegan-friendly? Merrell offers a wide selection for men and women. See: vrg.org/blog/2021/06/30/merrell-offers-vegan-options/

Bone char-free vegan sugar update 2021: Domino Sugar, Florida Crystals, and C&H Sugar. See: vrg.org/blog/2021/06/10/bone-char-free-vegan-sugar-update-2021-domino-sugar-florida-crystals-and-ch-sugar/

APPLY FOR THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP 2022 SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, The Vegetarian Resource Group will award \$20,000 in college scholarship money each year to graduating U.S. high school students who have promoted vegetarianism/veganism in their schools and/or communities. Vegetarians do not eat meat, fish, or fowl. Vegans are vegetarians who do not use other animal products such as dairy or eggs.

One award of \$10,000 and two awards of \$5,000 will be given. Entries may be sent only by students in the USA graduating from high school in **SPRING 2022**.

Deadline is FEBRUARY 20, 2022

For details see:
vrg.org/student/scholar

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