

# Vegvibe

AUGUST 2009

*In this*  
**NATIONAL DAY**  
*issue...*

## Sampling Saigon

*Discover what bustling  
Ho Chi Minh City has to  
offer the vegetarian  
traveller*



## DELECTABLE DELIGHTS

*Whip up a storm with our  
National Day creations*



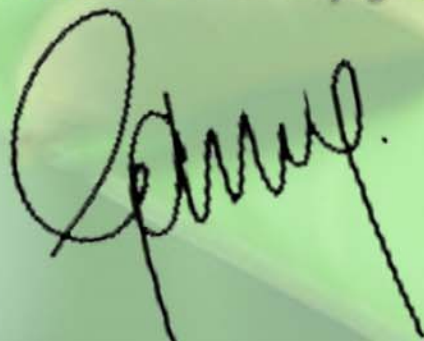
Meet this month's  
**VEGETARIAN HERO**  
Pauline Menezes

# The Chief Veggie Speaks!

Here we are at the end of our 'first trimester' – yes, our baby that is **VegVibe** has overcome the most difficult stage of development and the result is the beta online issue that you are reading now. Since conception about a year ago, we have been arduously working towards this and now this 'second trimester' will involve reaching critical mass in our readership - by providing plenty of thoughtful, insightful, interesting, and hard-hitting articles in the next few beta online issues - so that we can enter the 'third trimester' full of confidence and aggressively pursue the print edition of **VegVibe**.

All this can only come about with the strong support of the community we serve and we aim to earn that support by demonstrating our quality through these beta online issues. As with the development of any foetus, the formalisation of the various components should occur in this second trimester and thus we hope that you will be a part of this process and share with us your opinions – be they good or bad (preferably more of the bad because that's where we can really learn and improve), by dropping us an email at [vision@vegville.com](mailto:vision@vegville.com) soon.

*But before that, let us announce the arrival of **VegVibe** – the magazine, through this inaugural beta issue. Enjoy our investigative report (**Sampling Saigon**) on page 9 of veggie places in Vietnam's capital, join in the discussion on why we should be **Meatless in Singapore** on page 3, use a recipe or two of our **Delectable Delights** on page 12-14 to whip up a storm, and learn all about the humble tomato in **Tomato-Mania!** on page 2, enjoy!*



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The editor wishes to thank Ms Pauline Menezes for her gracious involvement in this project and all the well-wishers who continue to bless us with their friendship.

# TOMATO-MANIA

The humble tomato, native to South and Central America, traces its origin to the early Aztecs who lived around 700 A.D. The Italians were first to cultivate this vegetable for our palates outside of South America, and it only gained popularity in the late 19th century when a Naples restaurateur created the now-staple pizza with its ubiquitous tomato sauce, a delicacy enjoyed today the world over.

## Tomato, Tomato, Everywhere

Currently, the tomato is used extensively in many cuisines and even plays an important role in some cultures. In Spain, for example, La Tomatina (i.e. tomato fight) is an annual affair that is celebrated without fail. It even has Hollywood credits to boast of, having 'starred' in Attack of the Killer Tomatoes. Though most of us are readily aware of the red, globular version of this vegetable-fruit, there are actually thousands of varieties that come in a cascade of colours.

## Packs a Nutritious Punch

High in nutrition, tomatoes are particularly well known for producing lycopene, an antioxidant that reportedly fights the free radicals that can possibly cause cancer, heart disease and premature aging. Some studies also suggest that lycopene promotes colon and prostate health as well, with processed tomatoes containing the most lycopene due to the breakdown of the cell walls during the cooking process. Tomatoes are also high in vitamin C and contain beneficial amounts of potassium, iron, phosphorous, and vitamin A, B and K.

## Ripe for the Picking

When picking tomatoes (in the market, that is), do choose those with a deep, rich colour as it not only hints at the deliciousness but also indicates the greater amounts of lycopene. Also, ensure each tomato is smooth-skinned and taut with no wrinkles, cracks, bruises or blemishes.

As refrigeration works against tomatoes by reducing the flavour and causing mushiness, they are best stored in a cool, dark place, and should be used within a few days of purchase. Alternatively, they can be frozen in air-tight 'Ziploc' bags for up to eight months if necessary.

*By Halimah*

## Refreshing Tomato Mint Salad

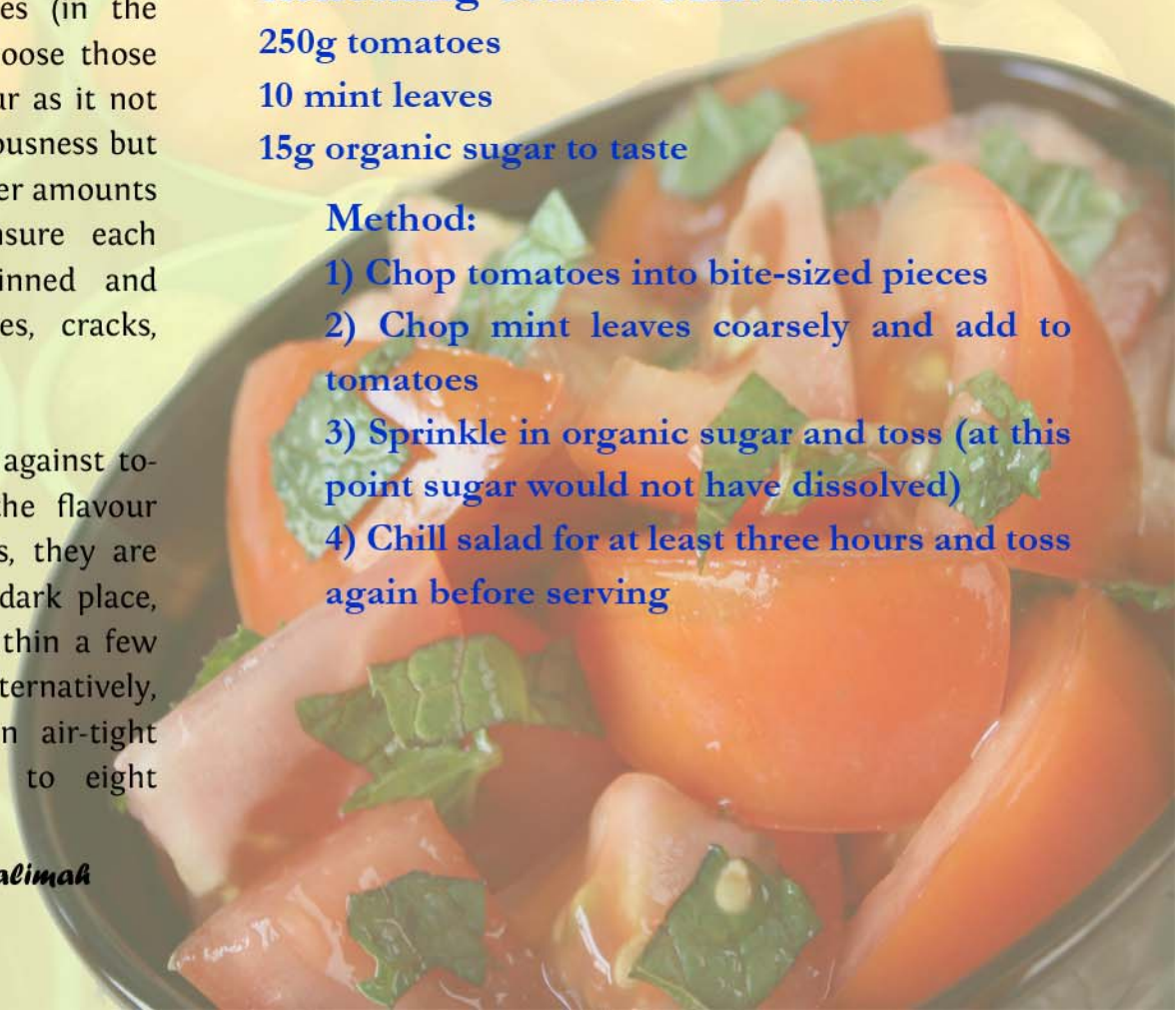
250g tomatoes

10 mint leaves

15g organic sugar to taste

### Method:

- 1) Chop tomatoes into bite-sized pieces
- 2) Chop mint leaves coarsely and add to tomatoes
- 3) Sprinkle in organic sugar and toss (at this point sugar would not have dissolved)
- 4) Chill salad for at least three hours and toss again before serving



“So you can eat fish?”, came the question followed by blank stares. I cringed and sighed. It was my first day at work and it was yet another futile attempt to explain what vegetarianism means to a team of meat-loving colleagues.

And I'm sure this is not only unique to me - many vegetarians and vegans around the world have to deal with the apathy and ignorance towards vegetarianism, so when Ghent in Belgium announced in May that the city would be going vegetarian one day a week, it was truly a moment of jubilation for all vegetarians and environmentalists around the world. While Ghent is not so much concerned about the ethics but about the environmental degradation and health issues related to meat consumption, it serves to be a model for other cities to emulate. However, on the local front, can Singapore go meatless one day a week?

### Is it Possible?

Being an Asian society, vegetarianism is not a foreign concept here. Religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, which generally advocate a vegetarian diet, are strongly entrenched in many Asian societies and due to this influence, the cuisine makes provisions for vegetarian options.

In fact, with the increasing awareness of vegetarianism as the positive choice, many vegetarian-friendly eateries are mushrooming (no pun intended) all over Singapore that provide everything between gourmet fare to simple morsels. Even in non-vegetarian eateries there has been a noticeable shift towards including vegetarian dishes to cater to consumer demand for healthier options.



# MEATLESS IN SINGAPORE

By Halimah

### The Right Thing to Do

But what does Singapore society stand to gain by going meatless once a week? Well, research indicates that there are significant health benefits associated with eating less meat. Not only does it reduce the blood cholesterol levels, it also keeps illnesses such as cancer at bay. And given Singapore's ageing population, it is imperative that the population as a whole remains as healthy as possible so as to reduce the increasing stress on the healthcare system.

Furthermore, meat consumption has been associated with a host of environmental problems. With 2 to 5 times more grain necessary to produce the same amount of calorie-intake via livestock (as compared to directly consuming grain itself), there is the inherent potential to feed the 800 million malnourished people around the world adequately by cutting out meat-consumption.

In addition, factory farming requires considerable land area which directly leads to deforestation of virgin forests; not to mention the pollution it causes when animal waste is dumped into the rivers. A UN study released in 2006 concluded that the meat and livestock industry contributes to about 9% of the global carbon dioxide emissions. And even though Singapore does not have an extensive farming industry, every effort still needs to be made as a member of the global citizenry.

# OUT & ABOUT

By Rachel Cheng & Ngo Kan Wee

There aren't that many 24-hour vegetarian eateries in the first place, and this stall also happens to be a gem in the heartlands. Located about 10-minutes' walk from Yio Chu Kang MRT station, it is a 24-hr vegetarian food stall in an air-conditioned food court. Its many years of existence is testament to its good business and great food and it is a common sight to see a small queue at the stall. The dry mee (noodles) dishes are popular among customers and these dishes come in a variety of types such as mee pok (flat noodles) and mee kia (thin noodles). The noodle texture and unique sauces & chilli coupled with affordable hawker pricing is certainly their winning formula. Other popular dishes include local delights such as laksa and kway chap, and when one is on the prowl for some noodles late at night, this stall at Express Coffee House never fails to satisfy.

Kan Wee



**Ang Mo Kio Avenue 4**  
**Blk 630 #01-976**  
**Express Coffee House**

Forest Dew, which is famous for its Petai dishes and brewed soups, is fully air-conditioned and conveniently located just 3-minutes' walk from Boon Keng MRT station. It has very good business and is usually fully occupied during weekends and especially on Sundays. Its prices are very reasonable and food quality is of a high standard. One of their most tasty petai dishes is the *Nonya Squid with Petai* which is slightly spicy - yet tolerable. The flavour of its brewed soups is rich and not salty and one of the better soups will be their *Brewed Pumpkin Soup* with its strong and rich pumpkin essence. The brewed soups are always out of stock by dinner time, so do take note! Other popular dishes include their *Eggless Fried Kuay Teow* and *Eggless Fried Handmade Noodles*.

Rachel

**Forest Dew Restaurant**  
**Bendemeer Road**  
**Blk 23 #01-523**



# SHATTERING

# BATTERING

By Halimah

Contrary to popular belief, some studies indicate that vegetarians actually have lesser risk of suffering from osteoporosis with medical evidence suggesting that non-vegetarian diets contain higher amounts of sulphur – found in animal protein – which leads to the acidification of the blood. According to these studies, calcium in the bones is eroded in the process to neutralise the acid in the blood which is then passed out through the urine.

It has been documented that excessive alcohol consumption, smoking and a diet low in calcium are all linked to osteoporosis. Also, a sedentary lifestyle that particularly lacks resistance exercises may lead to osteoporosis over the years. Women are more susceptible to osteoporosis than men and the risk of osteoporosis increases among postmenopausal women. While certain factors such as age and family history cannot be controlled, maintaining a healthy diet and an active lifestyle are, fortunately, within one's power.

## Prevention Better than Cure

The 'silent' disease can however be prevented through some simple lifestyle changes. The body's requirement of calcium (1000mg/day) can be met through the consumption of enough green leafy vegetables such as bok choy, spinach and broccoli. In addition, calcium-fortified soy milk is easily available for the vegetable-averse with the added benefit of plant estrogen, which is purported to support bone health. Also, nuts and seeds such as almonds and sesame offer a rich source of calcium as well. It is important to note though that limiting caffeine intake is equally as important as increasing calcium intake as caffeine causes bones to excrete calcium readily.

### List of common food ingredients and calcium content

Food	Amount	Calcium (mg)
Soy or Rice-Milk, (calcium-fortified or plain)	8 ounces	150-500
Blackstrap Molasses	2 Tablespoons	342
Tofu (processed with calcium sulfate)	4 ounces	200-330
Orange Juice (calcium-fortified)	8 ounces	300
Sesame Seeds	2 Tablespoons	160
Bok Choy (cooked)	1 cup	158
Figs (dried or fresh)	5 pieces (medium-sized)	135
Broccoli (cooked)	1 cup	94

Apart from altering the diet, engaging in resistance exercises (30-minute workouts, three times a week) is necessary to improve and maintain bone health.

Dancing, walking, weight-lifting, stair-climbing and volleyball are all examples of exercises that can help to increase bone-mass creating denser, stronger bones.

Now, where're those running shoes...



## Pauline Menezes, 40

Ever wondered how some people juggle full time work with active volunteerism? Meet Pauline Menezes – at the young age of forty, Pauline is not only a secretary by day, she is also the Main Secretary and Membership Secretary of the Vegetarian Society (Singapore) – VSS, by night. A volunteer with VSS since 2008, she coordinates meetings, handles membership matters and keeps records for this esteemed organisation.

Pauline's youthful and gregarious personality belies her passion for the vegetarian cause. She initially faced disapproval from her family, who thought that a vegetarian diet was deficient in nutrition, but through perseverance (or stubbornness, as she puts it) and reading extensively, she has managed to win over her family since. Fourteen years on, after learning about the cruelty and dishonesty involved in the diary industry, she has recently turned vegan.

Pauline believes that the vegetarian diet has aided in improving her immunity and alleviated the mild elbow psoriasis that she used to suffer from. Most importantly, she feels happier and lighter in more ways than one.

Pauline advises new vegetarians to get hold of literature on vegetarian nutrition and reasons why a vegetarian diet is better. Also, she encourages new vegetarians to mingle with like-minded individuals who can share their knowledge and unique experiences; and advises them to get in touch with local vegetarian communities such as the VSS where free leaflets and VCDs can be obtained that provide a good starting point.

Pauline believes that knowledge and conviction are essential to weather the initial problems and readily advocates others to make the change.

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# Pauline Menezes, 40

# V E G E T A R I A N

What is one veg food that describes you best and why?

Tofu. Simple yet useful and versatile. That's how I'd like my life and everything else to be.

If you were given one wish for the world, what would it be?

To wish for more compassion and sensitivity in everyone, towards animals.

What misconception about vegetarianism gets your goat?

That veg\*ns are skinny, fat, unhealthy, weak, anemic, malnourished and fanatical.

What is your favorite book/show on vegetarianism?

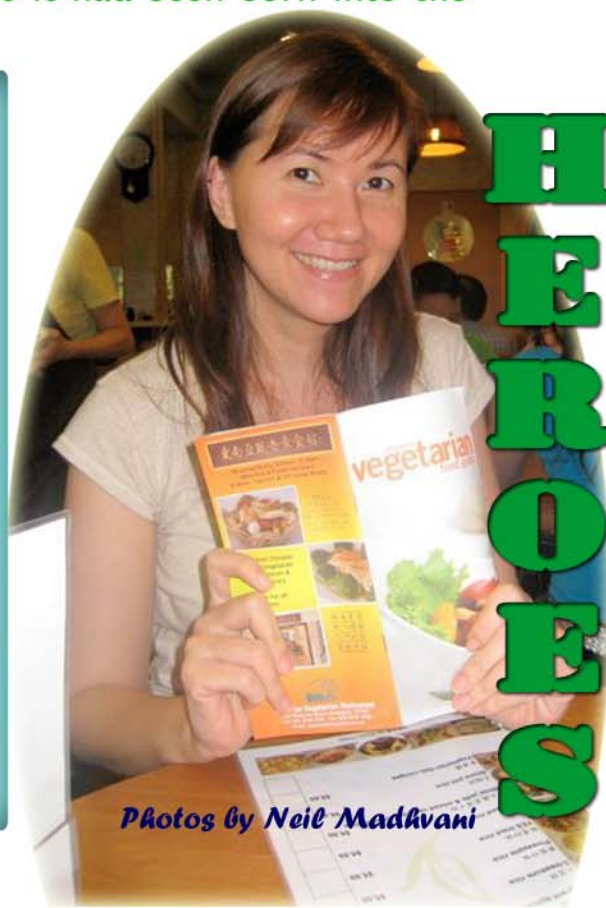
*Being Vegetarian For Dummies* by Suzanne Havala. The title alone made me want to hide the book, but although it was first written many years ago, the comprehensive information remains valid today. I also like the sensible advice that is delivered in an engaging and light-hearted tone, peppered with humour that kept me smiling throughout the book. It is useful for the newbie and serves as reference for the initiated.

What would be a 'Quotable Quote' to you?

"But for the sake of some little mouthful of meat, we deprive a soul of the sun and light, and of that proportion of life and time it had been born into the world to enjoy." SENECA (C.5 - C.E.65)

Why did you become a vegetarian?

I've always loved animals and my dad had a mini-farm in our backyard when I was 10. It was then when I first questioned what is the difference between humans and animals, pets and farm animals. It was only many years later that the awareness of issues such as the environment, famine, health and animal welfare that made me think again. A chance came to attend a talk on the many benefits of vegetarianism and how it can improve one's life in many ways. The speaker made so much sense and gave out free nutritional information booklet which gave me the knowledge and confidence to make the switch. I have never looked back since.



# H E R O E S

Photos by Neil Madhvani



# KEEPING THE PIGS ALIVE

By Loretta  
M Perera

Pressed entirely against the filthy bodies of your friends, their squeals echo around the enclosed room as you feel your legs - full of sores - start to give way. The pungent stench of excrement that has collected from as far as you can remember is overpowering; you collapse onto the corpse lying next to you - it's gone unnoticed for weeks.

**Factory farming:** the practice of rearing farm animals in very controlled, dense conditions for fast, cheap mass production. This often includes poor sanitary conditions and has been criticised for the poor health, treatment and unhappiness of animals.

The recent outbreak of Swine Flu, or H1N1, has exploded into a global pandemic - the closing of schools, home quarantines, over 77,000 reported cases and 332 deaths (as of 1st July 2009). Although the virus is not transmitted through the consumption of pork, evidence indicates that the original swine flu - ancestor of the current strain - first developed and circulated among pigs years before finally being transmitted to humans.

While pigs are very clean creatures by nature, the conditions they are bred in are not so - often breeding ground for germs and disease which leaves many pigs dying or dead even before they are slaughtered. Singled out as the likely site of origin for H1N1, Smithfield Food, the largest pork producer in the world, is but one of many in the industry that contribute to this sad state.

Besides pigs, cows, chickens, and every kind of livestock are also subjected to factory farming. Adding some consolation, the increasing awareness among consumers, suppliers and the general public has led to options such as free-range farming - where animals are allowed to roam freely, are fed the right food and are kept in the right conditions - gaining popularity. Thus, while the meat industry isn't likely to disappear anytime soon, the conditions animals live in can surely be improved - if not for the animals themselves then at least for the greater good of all.

So for the pigs and all creatures in this world, vegetarians like us should continue to do our little bit to keep them alive, failing which, try to keep them happy while they are.

## What we can do...

**Boycott** - refrain from buying products that are directly or indirectly related to factory farming as this just adds to the demand

**Buy Responsibly** - purchase only free-range dairy and ethically-produced products to reduce the demand for livestock bred in cruel conditions

**Make Things Better** - spread the word on factory farming with non-veg family and friends and on how they can contribute to the cause

**Support Movements** - sign a petition (or more) that endeavours to raise global awareness and eradicate factory farming (such as <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/4/stop-factory-farming-now>)



# Sampling Saigon

By Halimah

Stepping out of Vietnam's biggest international airport, Ho Chi Minh City (or Saigon, as it was formerly known) greeted us with her tropical warmth and a cacophony of sounds. The squawking of taxi drivers coupled with the tooting of the motorcycles – a fixture of Ho Chi Minh City – intrigued me. I knew we were in for an adventure the moment we decided impulsively to visit this 'Paris of Asia'. Having done my homework through visiting the multitude of online forums, we decided to head for the local bus to Pham Ngu Lao, otherwise known as the backpackers' district.

## Genial Hospitality

On arrival at Pham Ngu Lao, we were overwhelmed by the chaotic and bustling street. Never had we seen such a shoal of motorcycles zipping by through which pedestrians had to inch their way. Fortunately, we were able to navigate our way through the labyrinth of narrow alleys to our hotel through the help offered by many of the locals. Indeed, our experience in Ho Chi Minh City was filled with pleasant encounters with the people there. For example, the hotel staff readily dished out advice on the best places to enjoy vegetarian food and also on tourist traps to avoid. We were readily greeted with warm smiles wherever we went and despite the language barrier, many people were willing to take the effort to guide us on the way to places of interest.

## Lots to do

Unlike the usual run-of-the-mill tourist attractions, Ho Chi Minh City offers a unique and rich historical experience. Having just been out of a series of invasions and wars, Vietnam has only been experiencing peace for the last two decades. Hence, much of the tourist attractions revolve around their experience in these turbulent periods, especially during the Vietnam War. This is marked by the daily tours to the Cu Chi (pronounced as 'Gucci') tunnels and establishments such as the Vietnam War Remnants Museum and the Reunification Palace (below). However, Ho Chi Minh City also offers light-hearted attractions such as the Water Puppet Theatre and awe-inspiring architectural monuments such as the Norte Dame Cathedral (left).



For those wanting to enjoy the rustic side of Ho Chi Minh City should consider making a trip to the Mekong Delta (right). Teeming with natural resources, the Mekong Delta supports many agriculture and craft industries. Due to the great width of the delta, there are many small islands in the river, each with its own uniqueness - a day-trip to Mekong Delta is insufficient to explore and enjoy this enchanting region.



## Shopping Paradise

Being a shopping fiend, I was happy to relieve my wallet of its Vietnamese Dong at the Ben Thanh market, which is the largest old-style market in the central district and home to several hundred mini-stalls, all cramped next to each other. The market not only touts tourist knickknacks such as bags, T-shirts and lacquer-ware but also serves the local residents through a typical wet market. A valuable lesson I learnt though, was that one must bargain very hard in this market as prices are easily inflated by 100% - or more!



## Food, Glorious Vegetarian Food

Ho Chi Minh City has ample vegetarian restaurants offering both local and Western food, with vegan options and dishes without the five pungent vegetables fairly easy to obtain. However, we found that most of the vegetarian restaurants are located in District One - which is popular with tourists - with only a smattering of restaurants in the rest of the City. Also, during our tours out of Ho Chi Minh City to destinations like the Cu Chi Tunnels and Mekong Delta, we found vegetarian food almost non-existent and thus suggest bringing along some fruits or snacks to keep the hunger at bay.



Vegetarian food within Ho Chi Minh City is relatively inexpensive by Singapore standards - a hearty meal for two including drinks can cost anything from about S\$5 to S\$12. Usually, local fare is much cheaper than Western cuisine, which typically appears to be Mexican or Italian food. Also, while in Ho Chi Minh City, make it a point to enjoy the thick local drip coffee with its natural mocha-like flavour - served black with sugar and ice (below), it certainly makes a refreshing treat in the tropical heat.



## A Trip to Remember

We stayed close to a week in Ho Chi Minh City and everyday was an adventure. We not only learnt more about this beautiful Southeast Asian city, we also had the opportunity to interact with its sincere folks. While Vietnam is playing catch-up to its more prosperous neighbours, it is clearly an up-and-coming economic powerhouse with the people reflecting a steely determination through their hunger to learn and conscientious work ethic.

An eclectic mix of modernity and tradition; of colonial architecture juxtaposed against modern skyscrapers; of nature and industrial growth, we could not have asked for a better destination to enjoy a meaningful holiday.

### Before travelling to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)...

#### List of vegetarian food places:

[http://www.happycow.net/asia/vietnam/ho\\_chi\\_minh\\_city/](http://www.happycow.net/asia/vietnam/ho_chi_minh_city/)

[http://www.footprintsvietnam.com/Travel\\_News/November07/Vegetarian-Cuisine-HoChiMinh.htm](http://www.footprintsvietnam.com/Travel_News/November07/Vegetarian-Cuisine-HoChiMinh.htm)

<http://www.vnnavi.com/en/hcmc/vegetarianfood.html>

#### Useful travel websites and online forums:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/vietnam/ho-chi-minh-city>

[http://wikitravel.org/en/Ho\\_Chi\\_Minh\\_City](http://wikitravel.org/en/Ho_Chi_Minh_City)

[http://www.travelfish.org/location/vietnam/saigon\\_and\\_surrounds/ho\\_chi\\_minh\\_city/ho\\_chi\\_minh\\_city](http://www.travelfish.org/location/vietnam/saigon_and_surrounds/ho_chi_minh_city/ho_chi_minh_city)



# Delectable Delights

By Chef Halimah

**With the National Day fever amidst us, what better way than to mark this occasion with these mouth-watering red-and-white themed dishes and desserts...**

## Rose Dreams

*A familiar taste with a twist!*

### Ingredients:

12g red agar-agar powder  
900ml water  
150g sugar  
3 cardamom seeds, powdered (optional)  
2tbsp rose water (optional)  
900ml unsweetened commercial soymilk  
255ml rose syrup  
powdered cardamom seeds (extra)

### Method:

- (1) Dissolve the agar agar powder and sugar in water, then add the cardamom seeds
- (2) Bring to boil and add in rose water before pouring into a square mold chill to solidify
- (3) Mix unsweetened soymilk with the rose syrup

### To Assemble:

- (1) Coarsely grate the agar-agar into strips
- (2) In a tall glass, add about 2 tbsp of grated agar-agar strips and pour in the pre-mixed soymilk-rose concoction (top with additional powdered cardamom seeds if desired)
- (3) Serve chilled or iced (6-8 pax)

### Tip:

*Prepare the agar-agar a day ahead as the flavours develop overnight. Leftover agar-agar will make a refreshing dessert on its own as well.*



# Delectable Delights

By Chef Halimah



*Decadent layers of papaya layered  
with lightly whipped coconut*

## **Spiced Tropics**

270g ripe papaya flesh  
200ml chilled coconut cream  
2tsp organic sugar (or to taste)  
1tsp cinnamon powder

### **Method:**

- (1) Puree the ripe papaya with 1tsp of sugar (or to taste) in a blender before chilling
- (2) When about to serve, whip the chilled coconut cream with the remaining sugar (*initially, large bubbles will appear but continue whipping to achieve a smooth and thick consistency*)
- (3) To serve, place a tablespoon of papaya puree in a cocktail glass and layer with a tablespoon of coconut cream, then sprinkle some cinnamon powder generously
- (4) Repeat step 3 until the glass is full and finish off by sprinkling some cinnamon powder on the top
- (5) Serve immediately as *whipped coconut cream has a tendency to become watery soon after*

# Roasted Bell-Pepper Angel Hair Pasta

*Nothing screams National Day as much as this pasta studded with ruby-red bell-peppers*



## Ingredients:

250g of red bell-peppers  
60g diced onions  
20g finely-chopped garlic  
1tbsp olive oil  
1/2tsp basil  
1/4tsp oregano  
1tsp vegetable stock granules (optional)  
1/2tsp sea-salt (or to taste)  
1/4cup water  
250g angel hair pasta

## Method:

- (1) Roast bell-peppers over a stove or in an oven until it blisters and chars, then keep them in an airtight container for 15 mins before removing (peel off) the charred skin
- (2) Dice the bell-peppers and reserve any liquid from them
- (3) Heat the oil in a pan and add onions till browned before adding the garlic - continue to sauté until brown and fragrant
- (4) Add the basil, oregano, vegetable stock granules, water, salt and the diced bell-peppers - continue to sauté for another 2 mins
- (5) In another pot, prepare the pasta according to instructions on the packaging, then add the cooked pasta into the pot with the bell-peppers
- (6) Over low heat, coat the pasta well with the sauce and continue to cook until the moisture is absorbed
- (7) Serve with a sprinkling of parsley



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By Chef Halimah

# THE DIRT ON CLEANING CHEMICALS

By Halimah

Gone are the days when a single cleaning product was enough for all household cleaning purposes. Today, a trip to the supermarket will yield a multitude of cleaning products specifically targeting the various nooks of the home. Other than the big bright words asserting the effectiveness of the product, how many of us have actually read the ingredient labels of these cleaning products?

These seemingly innocuous cleaning products that we rely heavily on are not only hazardous to us but also to the environment. For one, bleach, which is used liberally in homes for various purposes, can prove deadly if it is mixed in poorly ventilated areas with ammonia or acid based cleaners. Even liquid dish soaps, which can contain formaldehyde and ammonia, leave residues, which can be picked up by hot food items.

## Environmental Impact

Health issues aside, chemical cleaning products have also been known to contribute to environmental degradation. For example, phosphates found in laundry detergent and some cleaning products have been known to cause algae blooms which suffocate marine life and aquatic plants in rivers and oceans. Also, chemicals in cleaning products have been known to contribute to air pollution as well. Some such as ethylene-based glycol ethers, found in a variety of cleaning products and latex paints, have been classified as hazardous air pollutants. Furthermore, research suggests that a class of chemicals called terpenes, found in pine, lemon and orange oils and regularly used for its fragrance, reacts with the ozone to produce toxic compounds.

While in Singapore it is not compulsory to list the chemicals used in cleaning agents, all cleaning products sold here do undergo various tests, including for toxicology. However, currently no regulation exists to ensure that cleaning products are environmentally friendly and the Singapore Environment Council only encourages voluntary assessment of green labelling. And even then, these green-labelled products do not cause zero damage to the environment but rather, they cause significantly less damage.

## Going Truly Green

The way forward then, is to go beyond green-labelled products and to use natural ingredients for cleaning purposes instead. For example, baking soda is well known for its ability to clean, deodorise and soften fabrics; lemon juice not only removes grease but also acts as a natural bleaching agent that removes stains on clothing; and, essential oils act as a natural deodoriser and air freshener.

With the solution to environmental degradation right in our pantry, let's do our part to clean up our homes - and the environment too!

### ALL PURPOSE CLEANER

4 tablespoons baking soda  
in 1 liter of warm water

### GLASS CLEANER

Equal parts vinegar and water  
in a spray bottle

### MOULD REMOVER

Spray undiluted vinegar on the  
mouldy area and lave for a few  
hours



# Talk Shop

<http://www.bonsoy.com>



Created with a traditional yet unique Japanese recipe, Bonsoy evokes a mellow aroma and subtle sweetness on the palate. Unlike other soy drinks, Bonsoy is clear of beany and grassy flavour, providing every sip with a full-bodied milk-like taste. Fortified with pearl barley and kombu (seaweed), this drink is not only suitable for the lactose intolerant but just about anyone who wants to enjoy a fine smooth drink and good health.

**Bonsoy Organic Soy Drink** retails at **\$7.50 per litre** and is available at major supermarkets and health food stores.

Ever felt guilty about using plastic disposable cutlery? Fret no more with Corn Ware. Made primarily of corn, this eco-friendly range of disposable partyware not only feels as sturdy as plastic but it is water, oil and leakage proof making it an excellent substitute for parties and picnics. Corn Ware not only has the added convenience of being microwaveable, it also biodegrades after 90 days upon discarding. Of course, Corn Ware's reasonable pricing is the biggest attraction.

**Corn Ware** products range from **\$1.00 for 20 pieces of 7-inch forks/spoons** to **\$4.50 for 20 pieces of 9-inch plates**, and are available at major supermarkets islandwide.

<http://www.olivegreen.com.sg>



Made with organic ingredients, this certified-vegan shampoo is not only gentle on the scalp but provides all hair types with greater manageability and volume. Infused with the nourishing goodness of Aloe and Lavender floral water, this shampoo moisturises the tresses and leaves it smelling great.

**Nature's Gate** shampoos retail at **\$16.70** and are available at major supermarkets.

<http://www.iluvorganic.com>



*If you would like to 'Talk Shop' about a product or provide further information on the products featured here, please drop us an email at [vision@vegvibe.com](mailto:vision@vegvibe.com)*

# EARTHLINGS

NARRATED BY  
JOAQUIN PHOENIX

NATURE

ANIMALS

HUMANKIND



MAKE THE CONNECTION



"THIS IS THE SINGLE MOST POWERFUL AND INFORMATIVE MOVIE ABOUT SOCIETY'S TREATMENT OF ANIMALS. A MUST SEE FILM FOR ANYONE WHO CARES ENOUGH TO KNOW."  
-WOODY HARRELSON

## Print & Film

By Sandeep Jaganath

It is seldom that the adjective "life-changing" is used in association with a film-viewing experience. Earthlings, however, might be just one such film. Earthlings chronicles humankind's dependence on other animals over 95 profound minutes and five comprehensive sections, each dealing with the operations of an industry that depends on animals for profit – Pets, Food, Clothing, Entertainment and Medical Research.

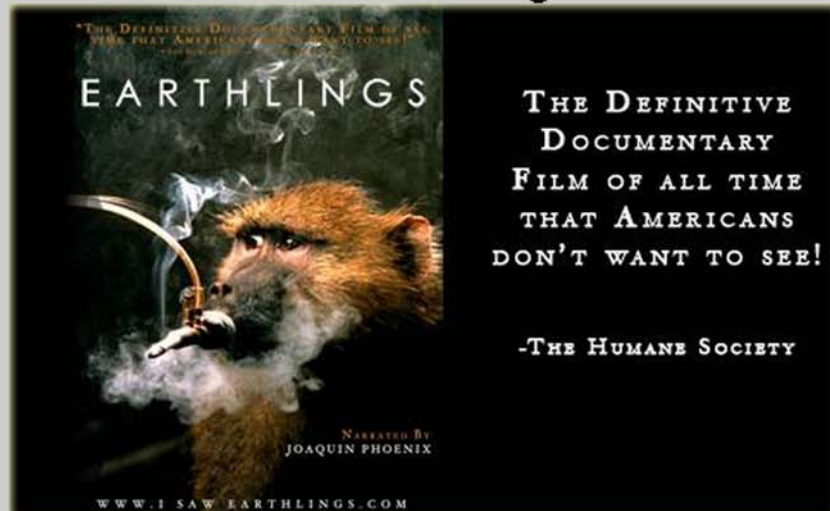
The core elements of the film comprise of brief, real-life, uncensored documentary-style videos, some shot under-cover, and Joaquin Phoenix's objective, detached narration in parallel.

Its ability to provoke powerful, fundamental questions about our use of other animals sets Earthlings apart from other documentaries. The lack of any perceptible religious or moral agenda frees it from the air of demagoguery that plagues and limits the impact of many other well-intentioned documentaries. Indeed, the style of narration and presentation of content are designed to provoke thought rather than response.

In line with this approach, the film does not put forth any direct suggestions on what the viewer could do to address the issues raised, except for a fifty-second section in the supplementary material titled 'Solution'.

[www.earthlings.com](http://www.earthlings.com)

Following a brief discussion of the environmental degradation caused by animal agriculture, the closing section links beautifully the three elements of the world – Nature, Animals, Humankind. The final words of the film, delivered in a solemn tone emblematic of the entire film, condense its entire message, urging the viewer to "Make the Connection".



# Have Your Say

*You've read us, now tell us what you think!*

Progress and feedback are both intertwined entities, and we for one certainly want to progress. So tell us what we have done right; tell us what we've done wrong; tell us what else we can do. We aim to be as interactive as possible and strive to be reactive too - what our readers say should translate into action, issue after issue.

Please visit the **VegVibe** website at <http://vegvibe.com> where we will have more content, pictures and interactive material in the months to come. But for now, please vote on your feel for this endeavour (i.e. whether you think this will succeed or fail) and also for the page of this issue you like best.

Thank you for taking an interest in our cause and we invite anyone who wants to be a part of this project to drop us an email anytime at [vision@vegvibe.com](mailto:vision@vegvibe.com). We also welcome advertising and product-placement enquiries which can be forwarded to the above email as well.

Finally, we sincerely hope that you have enjoyed reading **VegVibe** as much as we have enjoyed preparing it for you...

# VegVibe

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