

Vegvibe

SEPT/OCT 2010

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this World
Vegetarian Day!

Also in this issue

Composting 101
Slurping Flowers
Plentiful Paraguay
Mdm Wong's Shelter

PLUS *Our Survey
on Dietary Trends*

Girl-Next-Door
Olivia Choong

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The Chief Veggie Speaks!

Welcome to our inaugural print issue of **VegVibe** magazine. In our first online issue last August, we spoke about how we wanted to bring quality content to the community, and we are proud to share that we have been largely successful to that end.

Through our journey this past year, we have made a lot of good friends and met many, many interesting people. We feel blessed to have this opportunity and each day we learn something new or bear testament to the dedication and passion of someone, somewhere. For instance, in preparing this issue we spoke to the selfless people at *Madam Wong's Shelter* (page 10).

We were - and still are - encouraged by the overwhelming support and appreciation of those around us, often providing us leads and offering ideas on stories and initiatives for the community. One such story is Bhavani's 'how to' article on composting (page 02).

Your feedback too has been incorporated into the magazine and consequently, we have included more reviews (pages 06, 23, 30, 32 & 33) and invited recipe contributions from established chefs. In this edition, Chef Oh of *Wholesome Living* shares his secret on creating a selection of organic jams (page 26).

In future issues, we intend to forward your burning questions - be it on health and nutrition, pet care or conscious living - to experts in the field who can help answer them, so please forward your questions to us at **vision@vegville.com** or **vegville@gmail.com**. Similarly, if you would like to share story ideas or offer feedback, we always welcome the engagement.

We have also included more activities for you as well, such as a crossword puzzle based on the content of this issue (page 40) and a call for wacky photos that show you posing with a copy of the magazine (see inside back cover).

As a special treat, *Eight Treasures Vegetarian* restaurant is also inviting 20 of our readers to a special dinner reception to celebrate *World Vegetarian Day* (see inside back cover). The catch - just bring along a meat-eater. Free food trumps anti-vegetarian sentiment anytime so we expect the places to fill up very fast on this one.

Finally, thank you for making this humble dream of ours a reality...



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The Fine Art of COMPOSTING

By Bhavani Prakash, *founder of Eco Walk The Talk*, with photos

Of the various recycling practices that I personally follow, the most satisfying one is converting my kitchen waste into compost - a very valuable resource for my plants. My family is often amused when I exclaim with glee at the slimy, gooey, rotting vegetable and fruit waste that I collect every day and call it my precious 'gold'!

When the paradigm shift comes about, we will begin to see all 'waste' or 'garbage' as something tremendously useful for us and the environment, and realise the tragic futility of bagging it in wasteful plastic bags for landfills or incinerators.

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is the process by which microorganisms break down complex organic matter, such as your household kitchen waste, into simple and useful nutrients for the soil.

Composting helps to recycle kitchen and garden waste and reduce the volume of waste going

to landfills and incinerators; convert organic matter into a valuable resource for your plants or community garden; improve the health of the soil by breaking up clayey soil and improving their structure; and, also make some money if there is a market for compost in your area.

If you *Google* 'how to compost', the net will no doubt throw many different ways. Some websites recommend buying tumblers and special bins but I would like to share a very simple method which works well for me, using resources I already have at home.

Once you understand the broad concepts, you can choose your own containers and experiment with your own kitchen waste to suit the climate where you live and the kind and volume of waste you wish to recycle. Be bold and get started; you'll learn a lot along the way as I did and I'm sure you'll discover that it's a lot simpler than it sounds!

THINGS YOU WILL NEED:

- Used flower pot (any material such as ceramic, terracotta or plastic)
 - Soil (even degraded or old soil from your garden would do)
 - Lid to cover pot (I use old metal plates or lids)
- as they are waterproof, but used cardboard, old thick polyethene sheets or old rags of carpet would work as well)
 - Dish to keep below the pot for indoor composting
 - Kitchen waste (typically abundant)



Take any used flower pot (with holes at the bottom for drainage and aeration); put a layer of coconut husk (or other material like cork) that decomposes more slowly at the bottom to prevent too much moisture escaping; and, cover with a layer of soil about 5 cm thick



Put all your kitchen waste for the day over this soil



Cover the waste well with soil



You can start all over again with another layer of waste the next day



Repeat by completely covering with another layer of soil which will ensure there are minimal flies and smell; as you keep layering waste and soil alternately, you will have to stir the contents once or twice a week to ensure proper aeration



Always keep the pot covered with a metal lid, thick cardboard or old rags of carpet - I tend to use metal because it's waterproof whilst it's exposed to the sun and rain (the amount of moisture in the pot can be better controlled this way)

VALUABLE TIPS

You may want to keep a series of pots and label them *Pot 1, Pot 2, Pot 3* and *Pot 4*. As the first pot fills up, you can move on to the second, third and fourth. By the time the fourth is full, you'll find that it has been 6-8 weeks in a tropical climate and the first pot is properly composted.

Temperate climates may delay composting to about 3-6 months. Check the compost that is being made in the pots and remember to stir regularly once or twice a week.

Keep a dish under the pot to collect the excess moisture that will be released. This water is precious and can be used as fertiliser for plants. If you're keeping the pot outdoors directly on the grass, the water will directly go to the soil and fertilise it.

HOW TO USE COMPOST

You know your compost is good when it smells nice - like the smell of soil and rain. It will also be crumbly without any lumps, but if there are lumps, you can still sieve out the compost and use the fine residue while the lumps can be thrown into the new compost pot as a starter mixture. Finally, good compost won't be too moist or have any fungus or moss (it should not be too dry either).

Compost is best used as a top layer around plants. I use my compost once in 6-8 weeks when the pot is done, by applying a two-inch layer on the soil bed. The compost can be used directly on a garden bed or for container plants.

WHAT TO COMPOST

Greens are generally the wet and live matter which decompose quickly and give the required moisture to the compost. They contain and provide the nitrogen - proteins required for the microbes to digest and thrive. Without greens, the decomposition will take much longer, and the compost will become too dry.

Browns provide the carbon required for the microbes to multiply. Less carbon would make the compost smelly (due to rapidly fermenting of nitrogen into ammonia), overly moist and fungus-prone.

Some *browns* though should be preferably sent for recycling. For example, the ink on newspapers and

Browns

- Dried leaves
- Chopped straw and small twigs
- Shredded Paper (non-glossy)
- Coffee Filter Paper
- Vacuum Cleaner Bag (contents should be sorted)
- Dryer Lint (provided most of the clothes are natural fabric)
- Corn Cobs (chopped into small pieces)
- Used Kitchen Paper
- Kitchen and Toilet Paper cardboard rolls
- Cotton Wool (non-contaminated)
- Sawdust (non-chemically treated)
- Hair (not as clumps, very slow to decompose)
- Shredded cotton or wool (in small quantities)

Greens

- Vegetable and fruit peels
- Rotting vegetable & fruit scraps (uncooked)
- Plant cuttings & Hedge clippings
- Grass Clippings (without the seed heads or roots)
- Tea Bags
- Coffee Grounds
- Crushed Egg Shells
- Flowers

cardboards with a lot of printing may be laden with heavy metals. So unless you are sure that the ink is non-toxic or soy-based, it is better not to add these to the compost, especially if you want it to be organic. As for cotton, silk and woollen clothing, the sheer volume of the items would be better utilised through recycling where these can be reused or recycled into other items.

The general rule of thumb when composting is to have equal amounts of greens and browns in the compost mixture. This will roughly enable a Carbon to Nitrogen ratio of 30:1 in the final compost which is recommended by most gardeners.

Good luck trying out your own DIY compost set, and do share your success stories with others. Here's wishing you success in the journey of turning kitchen garbage into riches for your garden!





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Veganomicon: The Ultimate Vegan Cookbook?

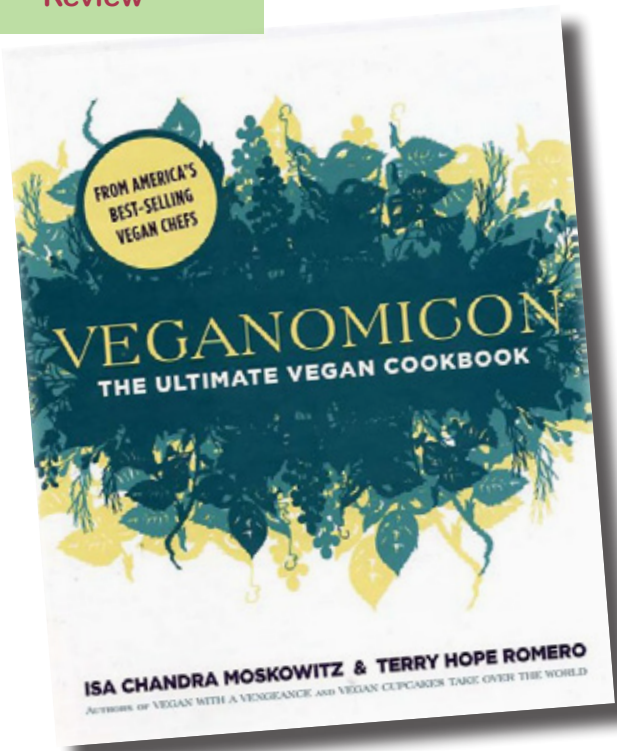
make it easy for chefs to select recipes.

The recipes we tried - not limited to chickpea noodle soup, cornmeal crusted tofu and chickpea cutlet - were simply amazing. And although some of the recipes take a little bit of preparation, they sure are worth the effort. *Veganomicon* also includes recipes on cakes and cookies which make for a delectable treat after meals.

However, we wouldn't be too quick to brand this as '*The Ultimate Cookbook*' though as the reference section - in spite of all the useful information for beginners - is a little scanty with the American measurement system (i.e. in cups) makes it a little harder for Asian cooks.

However, despite these insignificant kinks, this is one cookbook that we highly recommend, especially for those keen to expand their repertoire in cooking.

***Veganomicon* retails at
Kinokuniya for S\$48.33**



The authors of *Veganomicon* mince no meat (pun intended) when they boldly claim to be the creators of the '*The Ultimate Vegan Cookbook*'. With over 250 recipes, ranging from brunch to desserts - and everything else in between, this book is an all-purpose cookbook targeted at both novice and experienced cooks.

Written in an unpretentious yet witty style, the authors - *Isa Chandra Moskowitz* and *Terry Hope Romero* - quickly win over the reader by offering a short and delicious introduction for every recipe, which includes useful information on how to modify the recipe and food pairing to create a complete meal. They also include icons, such as soy free and gluten free, to

Chickpea Noodle Soup

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large yellow onion, sliced thinly
1 cup peeled, thinly sliced carrots
(or chopped baby carrots)
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups sliced cremini mushrooms
1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary,
crushed in your fingers
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons mirin (optional)
1/3 cup brown rice miso
6 cups water or vegetable stock
2 cups cooked dried chickpeas,
or 1 (15-ounce) can, drained and
rinsed
6 ounces soba noodles

1) Preheat a soup pot over medium-high heat. Sauté the onions and carrots in the oil for about 10 minutes. Add the garlic, mushrooms, and herbs, and sauté for another 5 minutes. Deglaze the pot with the mirin (or just a splash of water). Add the 6 cups of water and the chickpeas. Cover and bring to a boil.

2) Once the broth is boiling, break the soba noodles into thirds and throw them in. Lower the heat to medium so that the soup is at a low boil. Cover and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

3) Add the miso and stir until it's incorporated. Taste and adjust the salt, and add a little extra miso if you would like a stronger, saltier flavor.

Know Your Blueberries

Photo: Michelle Meiklejohn / FreeDigitalPhotos.net



Blueberries were originally grown in North America.



Native American tribes revered blueberries and much folklore developed around them. The blossom end of each berry, the calyx, forms the shape of a perfect five-pointed star; the elders of the tribe would tell of how the Great Spirit sent "star berries" to relieve the children's hunger during a famine.

A tea made from the leaves of the plant was thought to be good for blood purification.

Blueberries can slow down the ageing process and the anthocyanins in them can prevent and fight (especially) ovarian cancer and colon cancer.



Wild bears will eat nothing except the succulent, juicy blueberries when they are in season. It has been documented that they will travel, with an empty stomach, for 10 to 15 miles per day to sniff out a blueberry patch!

Blueberries have a special pigment which makes them one of few human foods that are naturally coloured blue.

Choose blueberries that are firm and have a uniform colour with a whitish bloom; they should move freely when the container is shaken (if they do not, this may indicate that they are soft and damaged, or mouldy); and remember to consume them within a week of purchase.

Blueberries contain more antioxidants than most other fruits or vegetables.

Blueberries may help improve brain function and protect the brain from oxidative damage and age-related loss of function.

Blueberry juice was used to treat coughs.

Legend has it that during World War II, British fighter pilots consumed bilberry (the European cousin of Blueberry) for its night vision benefits. Research shows that blueberries improve night vision activities and promote quicker adjustment to darkness.



Photo: Arvind Balaraman / FreeDigitalPhotos.net



Image: Salvatore Vuono / FreeDigitalPhotos.net



Lemon Blueberry Sauce

1.5 tablespoons cornstarch
3 tablespoons water
50g brown sugar
150ml water
pinch of salt
200g fresh blueberries
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons lemon zest

1. In bowl, mix cornstarch and 3 tablespoons of water
2. In pot, mix brown sugar, water and salt before bringing to boil
3. Add blueberries, lemon juice, lemon zest and cornstarch mixture
4. Bring to boil and simmer for a few minutes until blueberries have softened and mixture thickens
5. Chill and serve over ice cream, pancakes or cakes

Vegling Corner



Koh Jiaying, three in November, is a bubbly and energetic girl who is fascinated by all animals small such as dogs, cats, hamsters and fish. Her parents, Koh Chak Heng and Fu Ruihui, enjoy bringing her to the beach, swimming and eating dinner together as a family. Currently enrolled in Tots United Schoolhouse, Jiaying is partial to fruits, especially apples and bananas. She enjoys watching educational programmes, drawing, playing with her older cousins and iphone games. Jiaying is especially talented at imitating and her current muse is to imitate a little doggy.

Koh Wen Bin, four in September, is a cheerful and curious boy who loves to flash his mischievous smile even at strangers. Currently homeschooled, parents, Koh Tiong Wee and Wong Siow Wai, enjoy bringing him to the beach, playground and the library. He likes watching cartoons, story-telling about animals and cycling. Apart from his daily oatmilk, Wen Bin's favourite vegetables include broccoli, long beans, sweet potato, corn and spinach. His mum hopes that he will be a surgeon when he grows up.



Thejaswhinii, who turns four in October, is a bright and personable girl who wants to be a teacher when she grows up. No surprise then, that her parents, Kavitha and Siva, role play teacher-student situations almost everyday and read to her whenever they are free. They also bond together by going out for family meals at least twice a week. Thejaswhinii enjoys singing, dancing and playing with blocks and puzzles. Her favourite food includes pasta, noodles, apples, ice-cream and chocolates. Thejaswhinii is currently enrolled in PAP Zhenghua Nursery.

Madam Wong's Shelter

testament of one woman's compassion



*Photos courtesy of
Madam Wong's Shelter*

Mdm Chaya Koi Kim (above) - now better known affectionately as *Madam Wong*, has been feeding strays for over 40 years.

As a young child in Malaysia, she grew up loving animals and after moving to Singapore, she could not bear to witness the numerous homeless dogs

and cats straying on the streets and industrial parks.

It was then that she decided to start looking for a place to house these poor helpless animals and, in 1996, started *Madam Wong's Shelter* (MWS) using some rented kennel space at *Noah's Ark Natural Animal Sanctuary* (NANAS).

Stiff Challenges

However, the lease for NANAS in Singapore ended in March 2000 and Mdm Chaya and her four-legged dependents were left with nowhere to go. Fortunately though, she managed to secure a plot of land allocated for pet farms at that time and decided to move the shelter's operations there.

But the hefty monthly rental of S\$6,000 proved a stumbling block and she decided the way to go was to sell her house to raise the funds.

Through the early 2000s, Mdm Chaya - renowned for her strong will and determination - operated with minimal assistance from the public and managed with just the help of a few dedicated volunteers and some friends, preferring to help the homeless animals in her own silent way.

In 2008, all that changed when word of her kindness started to spread across the internet. Kind souls helped Mdm Chaya reach out to the public by asking for food donations as well as monetary contributions to upkeep the high medical costs of maintaining the 50 dogs and 200 cats at her shelter.

As the story spread, more volunteers came forward to help raise funds through road shows, and posting the information on *Facebook* and online pet forums.

However, the amount raised has not been sufficient to support the existing animals - on average, MWS receives five phone calls a day enquiring on pet abandonment whilst only five to eight dogs get adopted each month.



To compound matters, there are those who take strays off the streets and deposit them at the shelter's gates, and also recalcitrant dog breeders who dump 'expired' breeding dogs - those that are too old to breed or have genetic issues - at the shelter. Thus, with the increasing abandonment and stray rescues, food, medical, and rental expenses have seen an exponential increase in recent years.

Nevertheless, MWS believes that every successful adoption is a ray of hope and its policy of a one week trial with the adoptive family has ensured zero returns of adopted dogs. In fact, Mdm Chaya often enjoys visits from the adopted dogs and their families.

The Story of Pin Pin

A heartwarming success story is the case of a *mini pinscher* champion show-dog (left) which was abandoned by its owner at a pet boarding hotel. Saved in the nick of time from an inevitable death, the mini pinscher named *Pin Pin*, was quite wary of humans due to the abuse and neglect it suffered.

Slowly over time, with constant human interaction and unconditional love, Pin Pin has begun to trust humans again and is now the mascot for MWS!

MWS urges the government to enforce stringent regulations to reduce the abandonment and abuse of dogs and cats, and also at the same time hopes that by emphasising animal welfare and their rights through public education, people will make informed choices based on the commitment and effort needed to look after a pet.

With the current monthly rental of S\$6,000, as well as medical fees that typically run into the thousands, MWS needs an average of S\$8,000 to S\$10,000 a month to ensure that the animals in their care have a shelter over their heads and sufficient food in their stomachs.



Dietary Trends in Singapore

By Gangasudhan

Earlier this year, the VegVibe team wanted to report on the extent of vegetarianism in Singapore and went around asking for figures. Whilst the email mailing list of the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)* counts 6,000 or so and its active membership counts over 300, there was little other information to go by.

This seemed strange as anecdotal evidence clearly suggests that there has been a noticeable focus on adopting a vegetarian diet as a means to stay healthy and save the planet (from global warming and overuse of natural resources). In fact, meat consumption has begun to reduce among the populace and even the *Health Promotion Board* has since toned down its emphasis on meat as the only viable protein source.

People we spoke to were also interested to know how many vegetarians there are in Singapore and similarly acknowledged that there seems to be a growing trend towards eating less meat.

The VegVibe team thus decided to embark on a nation-wide poll to collate data that would shed some light on the number of vegetarians in Singapore and the dietary trends of Singaporeans in general.

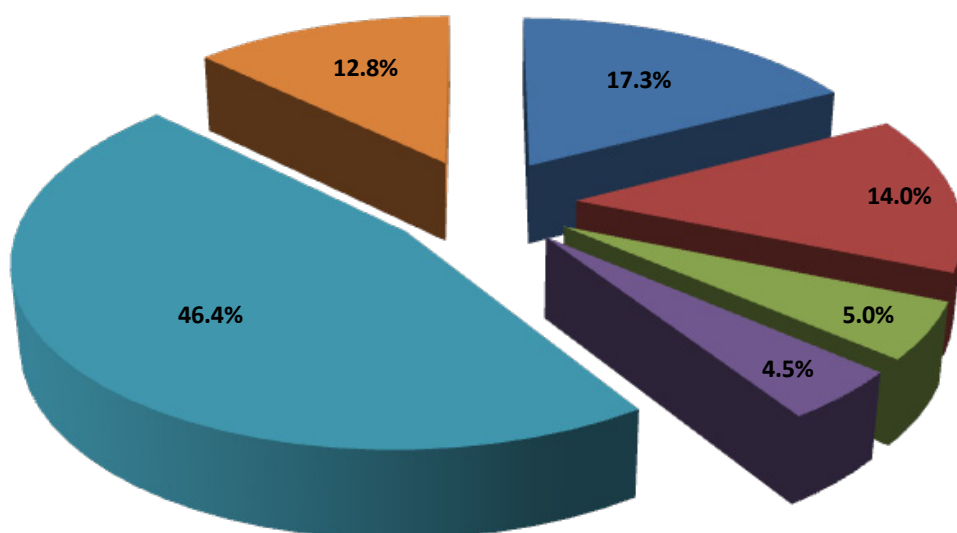
Methodology

Over a three month period, respondents were sought through the VegVibe subscriber list, VSS' mailing list, facebook and email. Notices were also placed in the monthly online issue of the magazine.

To make it a simple exercise, a single matrix (right) was

used to collect responses and respondents only had to select their definition of their dietary pattern (i.e. vegetarian, vegan, pescatarian etc.) and then indicate whether they consumed milk and eggs among others.

In all 179 persons filled out the survey with 46.4% defining themselves as vegetarians and a further 12.8% defining themselves as vegan. Credibly,



- Non-Vegetarian
- Flexitarian
- Pescetarian
- Religious Vegetarian
- Vegetarian
- Vegan

17.3% of the respondents also defined themselves as non-vegetarians.

Admittedly though, as the response pool was largely from the vegetarian and vegan community, the survey results cannot be used to conclusively determine the number of vegetarians in Singapore.

1. What is your dietary preference?

	I would describe myself as a...	I consume eggs	I consume dairy (i.e. milk, yoghurt, cheese, butter, etc.)
Non-Vegetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pescetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious Vegetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vegetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vegan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DEFINITIONS

Non-Vegetarian - someone who has no particular dietary preference

Flexitarian - someone who tries to be a vegetarian but allows him/herself the flexibility to eat meat

Pescatarian - someone who does not eat meat at all but is comfortable eating seafood

Religious Vegetarian - someone who observes a vegetarian diet on certain days due to religious beliefs but otherwise eats meat

Vegetarian - someone who consumes only plant-based food and may also additionally consume dairy (*Lacto Vegetarian*) and/or eggs (*Ovo Vegetarian*)

Fruitarian - someone who eats only fruits, nuts and juices

Vegan - someone who consumes only plant-based and plant-derived food (e.g. avoids eggs, milk, butter, cheese, yoghurt, sour cream, whey, casein, honey etc.)

non-vegetarians reported no change in their diets over the preceding 12 months, only 35.5% responded that they would follow this choice strictly. This can be contrasted against the self-declared vegetarians of which 68.7% similarly reported no change in their diet but a strong 67.5% responded that they follow this diet strictly.

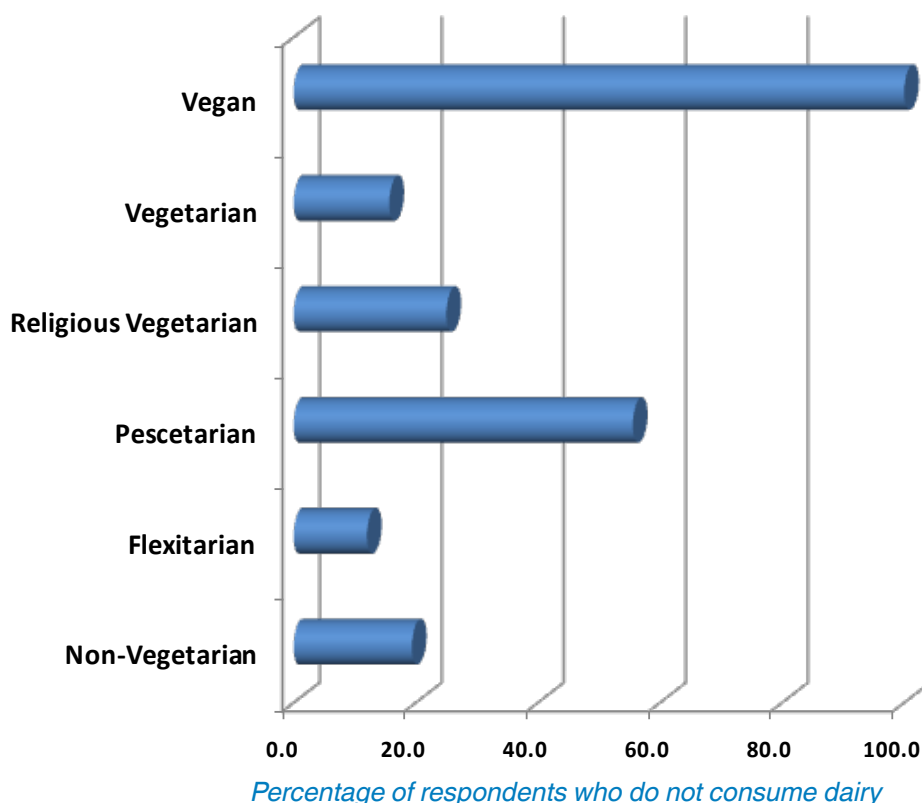
It is therefore possible that those who consider themselves non-vegetarians are open to a change in their diet and are not as die-hard as we sometimes tend to assume.

However, the results are still illuminating on the issue of dairy consumption. Among all respondents, 29.1% reported that they do not consume dairy and even for those who defined themselves as 'non-vegetarian', 19.4% indicated that they do not consume dairy.

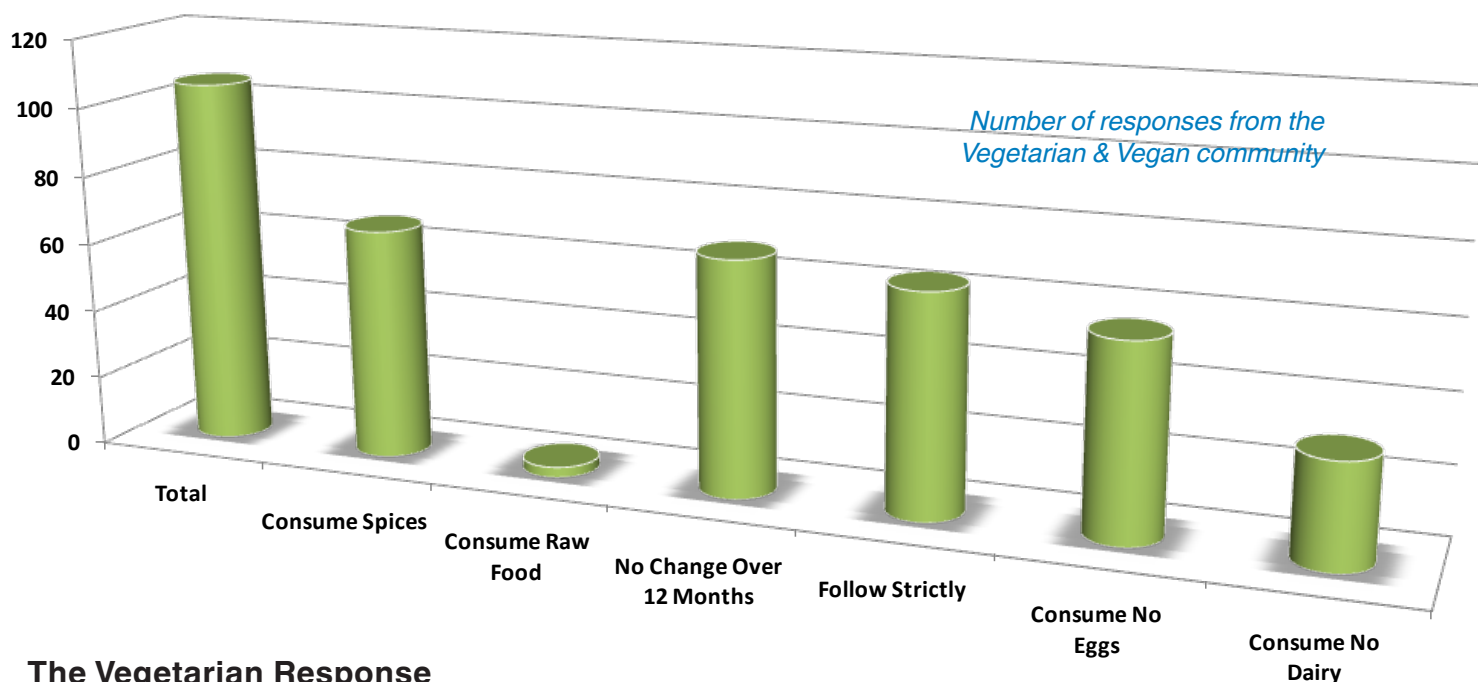
This might be symptomatic of the increased sensitivity among Singaporeans to animal-suffering - it is extremely hard to deny that factory farming for dairy inflicts prolonged and unimaginable cruelty to the cows involved.

Alternatively, the results could be indicative of higher instances of lactose intolerance - raising the question of whether dairy is suitable for human consumption in the first place.

Also, while 71% of the self-declared



	Total	Consume No Eggs	Consume No Dairy
Non-Vegetarian	31	4	6
Flexitarian	25	1	3
Pescetarian	9	3	5
Religious Vegetarian	8	5	2
Vegetarian	83	39	13
Vegan	23	23	23
Total	179	75	52



The Vegetarian Response

Looking at the vegetarian and vegan group of respondents which comprised 59.2% (or 106 persons) of the total, the survey showed that 58.5% of this group do not consume eggs and 34% do not consume dairy.

In addition, perhaps reflecting the fact that there is a high proportion of Buddhists in Singapore, 36.8% of respondents reported that they do not consume the five pungent spices (i.e. onion, garlic, leek, chives and scallion).

As can be expected, 64.2% reported that they have not changed their preference over the last 12 months and a reasonable 60.4% indicated that they observe this diet strictly.

However, the proportion of 'raw foodists' was a minute 2.8% - representative of the fact that this diet is rather new and even harder to implement in city living.

Looking Ahead

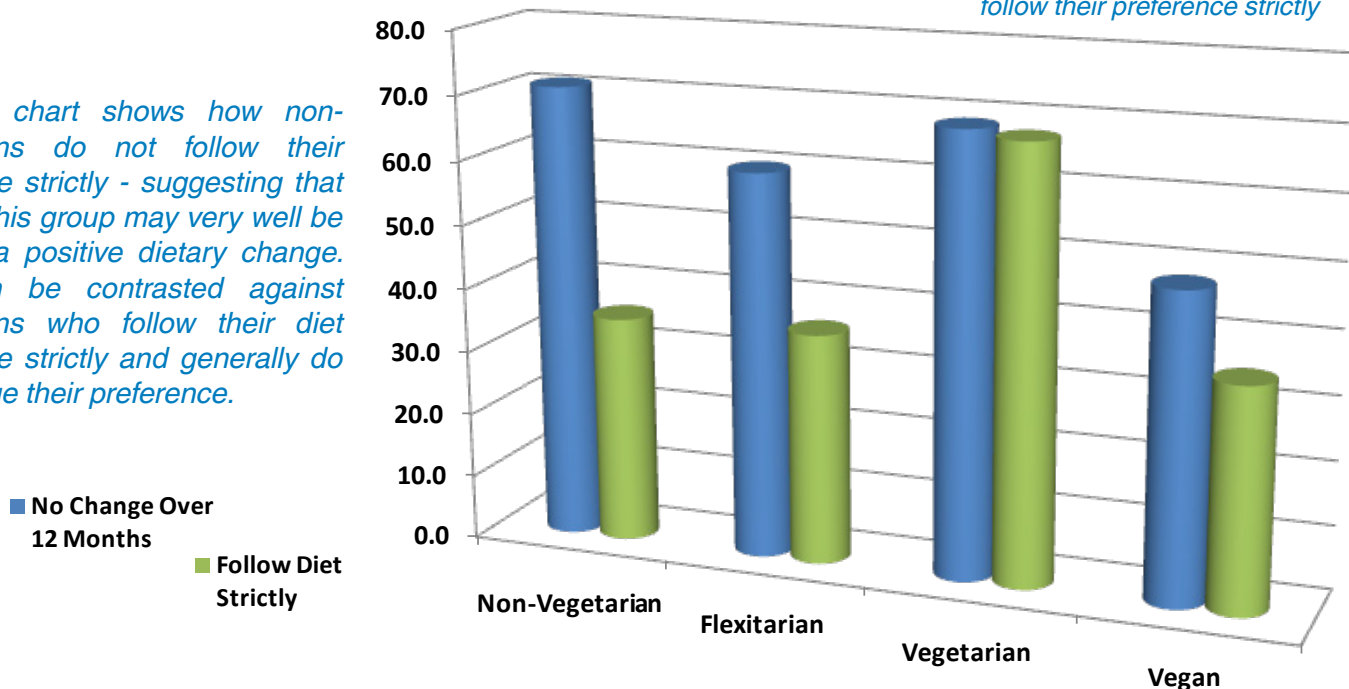
The findings suggest that there may be a change in perception towards dairy consumption which could be due to more sensitivity towards animal-suffering or a larger awareness of health and nutrition.

We feel the survey conducted by VegVibe warrants a larger study to be initiated that can cover a wider cross-section of the populace and provide a more accurate analysis.

In any case, the survey results support the changes observed in Singapore society insofar as dietary choices are concerned. It may even be prudent to first embark on a programme aimed at reducing dairy consumption instead of meat.

The bar chart shows how non-vegetarians do not follow their preference strictly - suggesting that many in this group may very well be open to a positive dietary change. This can be contrasted against vegetarians who follow their diet preference strictly and generally do not change their preference.

Percentage of respondents who have not changed their preference over the past 12 months and follow their preference strictly



Vegetarian Society (Singapore), VSS, is a non-profit, non-religious organisation formed in 1999 which strives to build a more humane and harmonious world for everyone on the planet - for our children, as well as for our fellow creatures. This year, as we enter into our second decade, we aspire to become a thousand-strong society that can move mountains, and to achieve this, we need the support of each and every vegetarian who believes in our noble cause.

**Do you want to build a wiser,
kinder and healthier world?**

**Are you worried about
environmental degradation
and global warming?**

**Are you interested in
reducing meat consumption?**

**Are you curious about what
a plant-based diet is all about?**



If you're any of the above, then you should definitely join us!

VSS' efforts are directed at the prudence of prevention through awareness, and your contribution will help us to produce high quality educational materials for free distribution, give talks and food demonstrations to schools and the public, and conduct outreach programmes such as public exhibitions. In addition, you will be facilitating the support to more people in making changes to their diet through educational tours, social gatherings, networking across individuals and organisations that believe in eating less or no meat, and by improving the quality, demand and availability of plant-based foods.

So if you have not yet become a member of VSS, please act now to put your thoughts into action by committing to a **monthly contribution of just S\$5** and enjoy our **VSS Premium Membership** which comes accompanied by an unbeatable annual package of **food vouchers worth \$100**, discounts on all VSS organised events, invitations to special '*Members Only*' events, and a complimentary copy of the *Singapore Vegetarian Food Guide*.



**FREE STUDENT
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**Becoming a member is easy - just download the
GIRO form directly from the VSS website at
<http://www.vss.sg> and mail it to:**

**Seeds of Hope, Vegetarian Society (Singapore)
3 Pemimpin Drive #07-02
Lip Hing Building, Singapore 576147**

If you are a full-time student aged 23 and below, we are pleased to offer a student membership absolutely free - becoming a student member is now just a short online form away!

Plentiful Paraguay

By Ana Rivarola



Pictures by Ana Rivarola & Martin Lange of photographyarte.com

‘Isolated’, ‘distant’, ‘unknown’, ‘forgotten’ and ‘remote’ are some of the adjectives that have been used to describe my country, Paraguay. A few years back, the writer Pico Yyer in his book *Falling off the Map: Some Lonely Places of the World*, wrote that Paraguay “simply slams the door and puts up a Do Not Disturb sign”, and that if Asunción, the capital, is a ‘sleepy city’, then the rest of the country seems to be in a “state of coma”.

Indeed, one just has to take a quick look at Paraguayan history to understand these claims. After independence from Spain in 1811, Paraguay saw a succession of dictators who sealed its borders and ruled by fear. From the mid-1800’s, Paraguay endured a decade of disorder before a brief civil war brought the *Colorado* party to power in 1949. Then a 1954 coup installed General Alfredo Stroessner and his brutal 35-year military-dominated rule was

characterised by repression and terror.

By the time Stroessner was overthrown, 75% of Paraguayans had known no other leader and thus it is not surprising that the residual effect of dictatorship, war and corruption has been the overall sense that, for many years, much of Paraguayan life has taken place behind closed doors.

Picturesque & Abundant

But Paraguay is a country of fascinating contrasts - it is rustic and sophisticated; extremely poor yet obscenely wealthy. It boasts exotic natural reserves and massive man-made dams, and because of its central land locked location within South America, it is sometimes referred to as *The Heart of the Americas*. One of the attractions of Paraguay is its large unspoilt areas of natural habitat and, in particular, the huge variety of birds found there.

Paraguay, with its 6.3 million people, has one of the smallest population densities in the world with just 13 people per square kilometre (Singapore's population density is 7,022 per square kilometre in comparison). It is the only country in Latin America that is officially bilingual - the two official languages being Spanish and *Guaraní*. *Guaraní* is the native indigenous language which is spoken almost exclusively by 70% of the population.

The vast majority of the population is *mestizo* (mixed indigenous and Spanish descent) and almost 97% of the population is Christian (mainly Roman Catholic) with the largest economic activity based on cattle ranching and agriculture.

Capital City Awakened

Asunción itself lies along the Paraguay River at the point dividing eastern and western Paraguay. It is one of the oldest cities in South America and the longest continually-inhabited area in the *River Plate Basin*. There are several small hills and slightly elevated areas throughout, and the climate can be described as hot and humid for most of the year. In winter



time (June to August), however, temperatures can sometimes go below zero - at the time of writing, it is 2 degrees Celsius here!

Calle Palma (Palm Street) is the main street of downtown Asunción where several historical buildings, plazas, shops, restaurants and cafes are located. The good news for us is that a vegetarian eatery, run by Taiwanese immigrants, has recently opened there! Meanwhile, the beautiful railway station still houses some of the first and oldest steam trains to run in the Americas and are a major tourist attraction, still plying to some small cities and towns close by.

Also, the global human resources company *Mercer*, has just rated Asunción as the 'cheapest place on earth' for the fifth year running in its 'cost of living' survey.

For the Vegetarian Traveller

Vegetarian and vegan food is limited and not easily found in Paraguay since meat, especially *asado* (barbecued meat), is the staple diet with almost every single dish made with beef and dairy.

Breathtaking natural landscapes





Calle Palma, the main street of downtown Asunción
Lido Bar is one of the oldest and most traditional eateries

However, the country is blessed with an abundance of fresh vegetables - corn and manioc are hugely popular and are the main ingredients of most traditional meals such as *locro* (a white corn stew), *sopa paraguaya* (a rich sweet corn flour and cheese bread), and *chipa guazú* (a cross between *sopa paraguaya* and a corn soufflé). Manioc root is commonly served boiled, and its starch is the main ingredient of several traditional foods such as *chipa* (a dense, baked bread of manioc starch and cheese) and *mbejú* (an unleavened fried bread).



Mburukuja (Passion Fruit), the national flower of Paraguay

A wide variety of tropical and semi-tropical fruits are also eaten with pineapples originating from Paraguay, as is the famous *Yerba Mate* tea - which is offered as a hot tea (*mate*) or cold tea (*tereré*). Meanwhile, the much sought after *Stevia* - the leaf with the lowest caloric content and highest medicinal properties - used world-wide as an alternative to sugar and artificial sweeteners, is also originally from Paraguay.

Although almost unheard of just a few years ago, we have also seen a small but significant number

of vegetarian restaurants opening their doors in the country; mainly run by Asian immigrants, they offer a wide variety of Asian and western dishes. Slowly but surely, vegetarian food is becoming more common, and the *Vegetarian Union of Paraguay* has recently celebrated its second birthday!

A Place Like No Other

Paraguay isn't a place to visit for big name attractions; it's a place for enjoying the simple pleasures and the warmth and hospitality of its people, the slow pace of life and immersing oneself into a different culture.

That said, you will nevertheless find *UNESCO World Heritage Sites*, Jesuit ruins and museums, unspoilt countryside, colonial beauty, a huge variety of colourful bird life, adventurous river trips and plenty of national parks for walks and wildlife-spotting. Its folkloric music with harps and guitars, such as the traditional *Polca* and *Guaranía*, has been acclaimed worldwide as well.

Some tourists recently wrote: "There's no guidebook to Paraguay and we hadn't met anyone who'd been there. No one seemed to know much about this mysterious country in the centre of South America. This is why we wanted to visit - it seemed the ideal opportunity to get off the gringo trail and have that elusive 'off the beaten track' experience. We didn't regret our choice: we found a pretty, tranquil country with a crazy history, friendly people and no other tourists (well, we met three in three weeks). Our Spanish also benefited as no one spoke English, and locals were curious about us so we had plenty of opportunities to practice."

So when are YOU coming to visit us in Paraguay?



Sunset at the Port of Asunción, overlooking the Paraguay River

Unión Vegetariana del Paraguay

(Vegetarian Union of Paraguay)



<http://www.uvpy.org>

Initially just an informal group of veggie friends who gathered in *Asunción* (the capital of Paraguay) since March 2008, the Paraguayan Vegetarian Union (UVPy) was instituted officially on 5th July 2008 and its first Annual General Meeting for its 130 members was held in October 2009.

As the first vegetarian organisation in Paraguay, the UVPy admits that it can be difficult to be taken seriously as the country not only has a strong tradition of consuming animal products but also an economy based primarily on raising non-human animals for human use.

Additionally, Paraguay is a landlocked country with a culturally homogeneous population and a political reality that for decades has kept its people isolated from the rest of the world and prevented them from having exchange with other ways of thinking and living.

However, in spite of these obstacles, the UVPy accepts this as part of the process of growing as an organisation and continuously works towards creating awareness through positive exchanges with the mass media.

One of its main goals is also to show Paraguayan society how good a vegetarian lifestyle can be for one's health as well as the environment, rather than only point out the problems of meat consumption. In addition, issues such as ethics and compassion for fellow animals are discussed wherever possible.

The UVPy thus believes that this approach is the most suitable for the cultural situation and hopes it will open up more minds to the concept of vegetarianism. One of its biggest strengths as an organisation is the fact that it remains independent but at the same time inclusive of the various trends and approaches to vegetarianism.

To that end, it has organised a number of different activities and established itself as a reference group that is growing very quickly. This year, the UVPy is organising cooking classes, family lunches, vegetarian movie sessions, veggie fairs and a sub-regional seminar on "*Vegetarianism and Health*".

It also conducted a Vegetarian Camp earlier in February which was open to non-vegetarians and comprised cooking veggie meals and enjoying outdoor activities next to a lake over one weekend.

The UVPy also publishes a quarterly newsletter that shares general information about health, the environment, and ethics, and includes simple recipes as well.

It also monitors a growing database of vegetarian-friendly restaurants and shops, and several of them work with the organisation to offer discounts to members.

Overall, the UVPy believes that the best way to promote vegetarianism is by being in good health themselves and well-informed regarding the key facts about nutrition, health and vegetarianism.



The National Pantheon of the Heroes building

Olivia Choong

The Green Girl-Next-Door



Photography by Halimah Ilavarasi

Olivia Clare Choong Way Sun, 31, is a gregarious girl-next-door with a green mission. A publicist with *Sustainable PR* - a public relations company focused on helping green-conscious small and medium enterprises, her interest in environmentalism was piqued during her seven-year stay in Western Australia where she picked up the habit of recycling.

Upon her return to Singapore, she was irked to see the limited recycling facilities and felt that Singapore needed to focus more on environmental efforts.

However it was only in 2007, when she watched

Live Earth, that she felt compelled to no longer sit idle and decided to start *Green Drinks Singapore*.

As its founder, Olivia organises documentary screenings, workshops, networking sessions and free talks on the topic of sustainability. She hopes to fill the void in information by engaging people in a greater conversation about the environment and also provide a platform for people in the industry to collaborate.

Olivia's free-spirited personality belies her success with *Green Drinks Singapore* which has now over 800 members on *Facebook* and been featured in the media by *Channel NewsAsia*

Her World Magazine and *Shanghai Expo*.

Evolution of Ideology

It was this foray into the world of environmentalism that made Olivia question factory-farming and its negative impact on the environment. She thus decided to slowly phase out meat from her diet and eventually became a pescetarian.

A personal relationship with a vegetarian and a visit to a vegetarian doctor during a bout of illness - where she was advised about heavy metals contained in fish - led her to stop consuming seafood altogether.

As a vegetarian for the past two years, she has naturally had her share of ups and downs. The biggest challenge has been educating her parents on her diet and what was suitable for her to consume.

For example, her parents unassumingly thought that vegetables cooked in oyster sauce were fine and struggled to prepare proper vegetarian meals for her. To help them get past their reservations, Olivia purchased some cookbooks to serve as a reference point for them.

Another challenge she faced was the development of mood swings which she later found was due to a lack of B vitamins in her diet. The deficiency was causing her to turn nasty at the slightest and she has countered the problem by including a wide range of vegetables, fruits, grains and nuts in her daily consumption.

Practical Approach

From her own experience, Olivia advises those considering vegetarianism to make a gradual transition at a comfortable pace. She believes that is important to make changes only when one is ready in order to prevent lapsing.

However, she adds that this should not mean taking time off from the transitioning process

to go on a meat-eating binge as that would be tantamount to going on a killing spree.

She also recommends would-be vegetarians to do plenty of research on the nutrition needed and where to derive vegetarian sources of such nutrition.



As Olivia finds the idea of putting anything with a face into her mouth unappetising, she says that she does not face temptation and, besides, she dislikes the taste and texture of meat in the first place.

Newfound Energy

Olivia finds that turning vegetarian has helped to boost her energy levels and she has realised that she is now more compassionate towards people and animals. Physically, the already-svelte Olivia says that she feels lighter and healthier as well.

The self-professed chicken-lover, who tends to her seven *bantam* chickens during her free time, hopes that the public will be conscious that their every choice has an impact on the environment. She feels that people need to be more aware of what activities their spending supports.

To exemplify, she raises the case of the palm oil industry - where forests have to be cleared for palm oil trees leading to the loss of habitats for animals such as the *orang-utan*. She feels that by purchasing unsustainably-sourced palm oil products, we inevitably encourage such industries to continue inflicting environmental degradation.

She thus firmly believes that everyone can make a difference and every effort counts. Olivia also

hopes that people will come to realise (soon) that the impact on the environment affects not only themselves but the subsequent generations as well - if we choose to pollute the environment and consume resources indiscriminately, the ramifications include increased risk of health issues, birth defects, and climatic changes.

Indeed, we couldn't agree more with this spunky vegetarian hero with an incredibly noble mission!

1) What is one veg food that describes you best?

Probably a mushroom. I grow best when left alone!

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

I wish for people to be filled with compassion for everything around them, and see that we are not treating each other, animals, and our environment right.

3) What misconception about vegetarianism gets your goat?

That we are really troublesome to dine with! The truth is, we can eat anywhere, just that our choices are more limited, and we really don't mind. Also, several men have told me that they could never date a vegetarian because they could never be with someone who doesn't enjoy their food. However, it's not that we don't enjoy our food, it's that they perceive, based on their personal preferences, that we don't enjoy our food!

4) What is your favourite book or movie on vegetarianism?

My favourite (cook)book is 'The Complete Italian Vegetarian Cookbook: 350 Essential Recipes for Inspired Everyday Eating' by Jack Bishop. These recipes are really good!

5) Name a Quotable Quote to you...

"If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace."

- John Lennon -

This phrase can be applied to any situation. Nothing is impossible as long as we have the will to make it happen.



Riveting, harrowing, suspenseful.

The Cove delivers all the trappings of an action-adventure movie without any of the fictional situations.

Instead this documentary (which won the *Best Feature Documentary* award at the recent *Oscars*) confronts the audience with the real and hard-hitting issue of dolphin massacres that take place annually in Taiji, Japan.

Directed by former *National Geographic* photographer Louie Psihoyos, *The Cove* showcases the efforts of a team of activists, filmmakers and free divers on a covert mission to expose one of human beings' most horrendous acts of cruelty.

The documentary revolves around a remorseful dolphin advocate, Ric O'Barry, who used to contribute to the captive dolphin entertainment industry as a dolphin trainer, and focuses on his single-minded quest to document the dolphin hunting operations in Taiji.

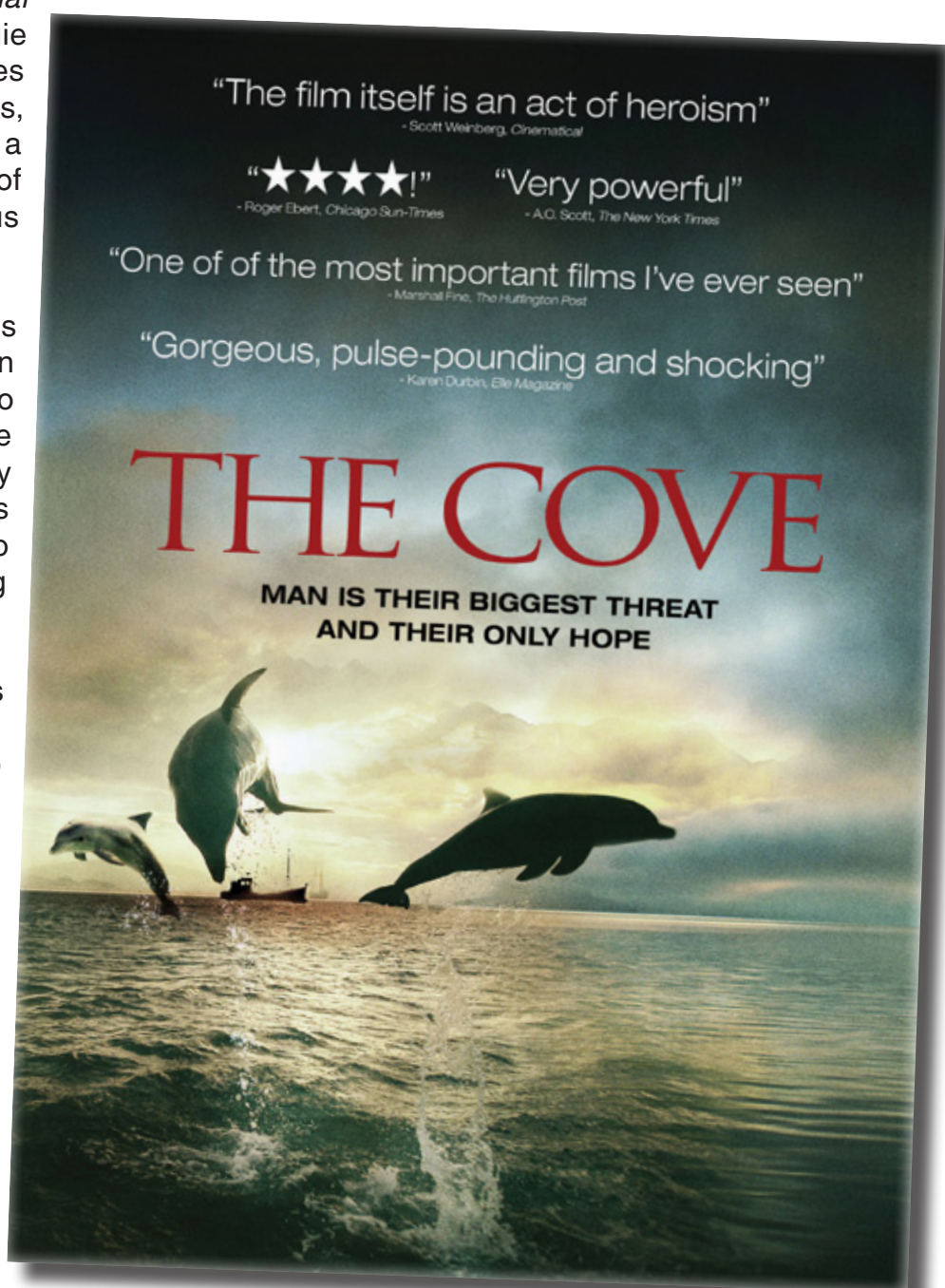
The Cove highlights the pains the Taiji fishermen and local volunteers go through to keep the culling secretive - to the extent of using aggression and intimidation to stop filming. Hence, the crew engages in an espionage-like operation where they hide disguised high-definition cameras underwater and on cliff tops to film the atrocity.

The resulting footage of boats of fishermen spearing trapped dolphins - not unlike shooting fish in a barrel - with

a resulting crimson lagoon fills the hearts of the audience with dread, anger and anguish.

The Cove also raises other issues such as mercury-tainted dolphin meat that is given free to local school children and passed off as whale meat at supermarkets and the 'buying' of votes by Japan at the *International Whaling Commission*.

Though this documentary makes no apologies for being one-sided, it provides real evidence for the very urgent need to stop dolphin culling and to heal the marine world.



The Cove is available in DVD format for USD\$23.97 (S\$33) from Amazon.com

Veganism

By Halimah Ilavarasi

Fad or Movement?

"I'm having hotcakes at McDonald's!" screamed the Facebook status. "But isn't he supposed to be the self-proclaimed vegan?" I thought, perturbed at how wrong it was on so many levels. Not only are hotcakes not vegan, he was also in essence supporting an organisation that promotes the meat industry and environmental degradation.

Well, I'm certainly not the Vegan Police (and I don't want to be one) but I get annoyed by people who claim to be vegans and blatantly consume animal-based products. Not only does it create confusion, I feel that it undermines the credibility of veganism.

Veganism, a term coined in 1944 by British woodworker Donald Watson, is a philosophy that transcends beyond the diet and shuns animal cruelty in every possible way. Hence you will not find vegans wearing leather, wool or animal fur, using skin care products that have been tested on animals or consume products that have used animal by-products in their processes.

Whether veganism is truly practicable within urban environment - where everything has been mechanised and industrialised, is another can of worms, but without doubt veganism today is becoming increasingly popular around the world.

Fame or Notoriety?

With celebrities and sports personalities opting for a vegan diet, veganism is starting to become the next '*in thing*' to keep fit, stay healthy and lose a few pounds. However, whilst vegans have generally rejoiced the validation from celebrities, some in the community have questioned the sincerity behind these diet choices.

For example, when the famous talkshow host Oprah Winfrey embarked on her 21-day vegan diet cleanse, she made specific mention of



factory-farming and the cruelty associated with the industry, giving much hope that she would at least continue being vegetarian after the self-arranged programme.

Unfortunately though, not only did she choose not to turn vegetarian after completing the diet programme, a year later, the hypocrisy of offering coupons for free *Kentucky Fried Chicken* caused much unhappiness and disappointment among many.

Putting a very confused Oprah Winfrey aside, as recent as June Jessica Simpson tweeted about shocking her system with an 'extreme vegan diet'. Though she later claimed that it was not for weight management, the net was abuzz with criticism and scepticism on her diet choice.

With such celebrities jumping on a vegan diet - apparently to lose weight, veganism is at significant risk of appearing to be another fad diet - to be added to the long list of dubious diet plans that have come and gone.

The philosophy of veganism as an all-embracing lifestyle choice and not just simply a whimsical diet option may be dissipated by the sensationalisation of this 'novel diet'.

More Good Ambassadors Needed

However, just as there are celebrities promoting the weight management and detoxifying aspects of a vegan diet, there are thankfully other personalities who are working towards advocating animal rights and the necessity to protect the environment.

For example, Ellen DeGeneres (right) has been a vegan since 2008 and she not only provides vegan recipes on her website but also takes the effort to state her reasons for going vegan. On



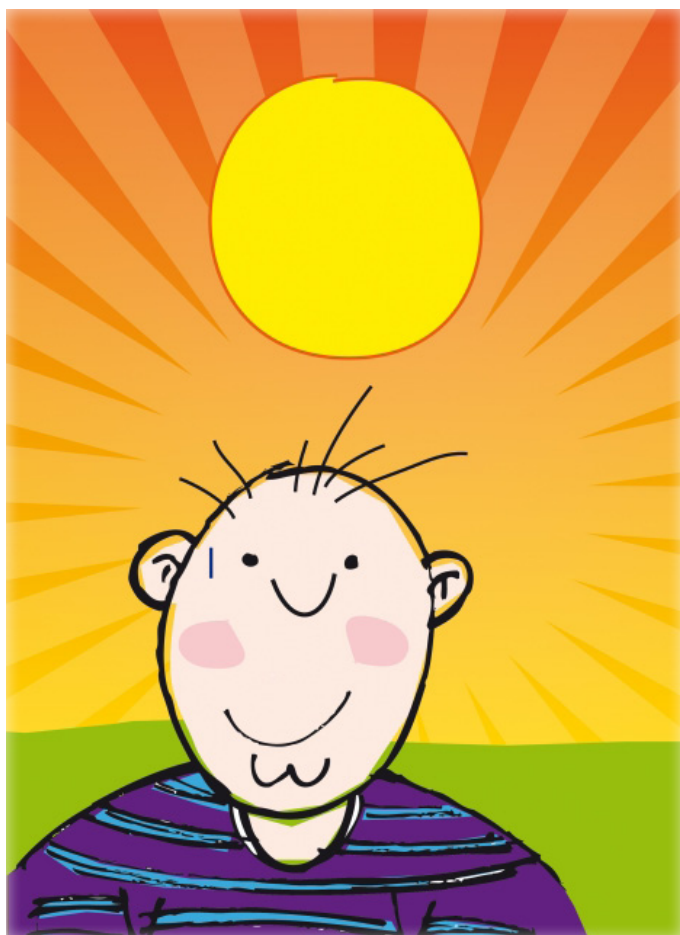
Image courtesy of Warner Bros. Entertainment

her birthday last year, she also gave out vegan doughnuts to her audience during her talkshow and periodically hands out gift certificates to vegan-friendly companies.

Whether celebrities have anything to do with it, anecdotal evidence shows that veganism today is more openly discussed in the media and slowly, the awareness of this philosophy is gaining momentum.

In the United States, a few food columnists have turned vegan and blog about their steps to adopting a vegan lifestyle. Even in the context of Singapore, there certainly appears to be a mindset change towards veganism and greater appreciation of the benefits of this lifestyle.

On a personal note, several people I know have turned vegan - be it for ethics, environment or just health, whilst others have been grappling with the idea for some time. At the end of the day though, even if veganism seems to be just a fad for now, it is nonetheless gradually enlightening people and evolving into a movement anyway.



Chef Oh is a household name in vegetarian circles and is equally as well-known among those interested in organic food. A trainer who is certified by the *People's Association*, his passion for cooking started in childhood under the pupilage of his mother.

His passion extended to baking at the tender age of 17, and since then he has gone on to obtain professional qualifications in baking from the *Baking Institute Training Centre* (BITC) in 1998.

An engineer by training, Chef Oh dabbled in the culinary arts only as a past-time till 10 years ago when a fasting retreat he participated in inspired him to take on a more involved role in helping others. He thus joined the *Tzu Chi Foundation* as a volunteer conducting bakery workshops.

In 2004, he decided to answer his true calling and traded his computer for the humble whisk. He joined *Kampung Senang* as a consultant and trainer and helped many a cancer patient enjoy good soulful food.

Then, in 2008, Chef Oh decided to do more for society and started *Wholesome Living* to reach out to the wider community. Today, the business

has evolved to supplying eating establishments and retailers with his acclaimed creations - such as *Chickpea Miso* and *Sambal Belacan*.

He revealed that the secret is in the organic soybean that he ferments himself to create that almost-authentic taste and smell. Similarly, he enjoys working with *tempeh* as he finds it a good substitute for meat.

He is proud of his involvement with the VSS cookbook *Asian Traditions* in which he contributed 5 to 6 recipes. The experience has led him to consider releasing a cookbook himself sometime in the future.

His pet peeve is *Monosodium Glutamate* (MSG) in food and he aspires to help people be smarter about their food consumption. He subscribes to the notion that '*prevention is better than cure*' and considers sharing the logic behind food choice as more important.

And when he is not preparing his own food for his wife and one year old daughter, the 42 year old enjoys dining at Indian restaurants due to the wide range of vegetarian options available.

Chef Oh Chong Fah

Wholesomely Yours



Fruit (Kiwi/Strawberry/Orange) Jam - 250ml (makes 3-4 jars)

Fresh fruit (Kiwi or Strawberries or Peeled Orange) 500g

Organic Raw Sugar 300g-400g (or Agave Nectar)

Water 100ml

Pectin Powder 25g

- 1) Add the dry ingredients into a food processor and blend well
- 2) Add the selected fruit and blend until smooth
- 3) Pour into a heavy base stainless steel pot
- 4) Rinse out the food processor with the 100ml water and pour into the pot
- 5) Cook over medium heat, stirring regularly to prevent burning
- 6) Bring to a boil and simmer for about 3 to 5 minutes
- 7) Store in clean air-tight glass jars (fill the jars with jam to the brim while it is still very hot)
- 8) Turn over the jars to sterilise the caps
- 9) Once cooled, jam is ready to be served



Apple Cinnamon Spread - 250ml (makes 3-4 jars)

Apple (Granny Smith) 500g , peeled and core removed

Cinnamon Powder 1/2 tsp

Organic Raw Sugar 300g - 400g

(or Agave Nectar)

Pectin Powder 25g

*1 Green Lemon Juice and Julienne Lemon Peel
(without the white part)*

Water 100ml

- 1) Add the dry ingredients into a food processor and blend well
- 2) Add the apple and lemon juice and blend until smooth
- 3) Pour into a heavy base stainless steel pot
- 4) Rinse out the food processor with the 100ml water and pour into the pot
- 5) Cook over medium heat, stirring regularly to prevent burning
- 6) Bring to a boil and add some lemon peel, and simmer for about 5 minutes
- 7) Store in clean air-tight glass jars (fill the jars with jam to the brim while it is still very hot)
- 8) Turn over the jars to sterilise the caps
- 9) Once cooled, jam is ready to be served



Ms Kanchan Devi would never have imagined the day she hit *Butters*, her pet dog, on the head for chewing on her cushion to spiral out into an accusation of vicious animal abuse.

By any measure, the video of Butters getting cornered and being hit repeatedly on the head with a broom was not a pleasant sight. Understandably, netizens across Singapore boiled with rage and raucously called for swift action to be taken against her.

But was it really animal abuse? The *Agri-Veterinary Authority* (AVA) of Singapore for one does not think so. After investigating the case, they concluded that the owners did not have the intention to hurt Butters and issued them with a stern warning instead.

The Big Picture

But what in fact is the problem with this picture? While only Ms Kanchan Devi knows if her well-intended actions were misconstrued or if she had wilfully ill-treated Butters, what is glaringly obvious is the pressing need to educate owners on how to care for their pets.

Furthermore, AVA's reluctance to intervene and instead claim that they will send the owners for a course if needed highlights the need for the government to step up efforts to protect animal welfare through education in Singapore.

One of the key challenges in animal welfare is the lack of awareness on the commitment and effort required to take care of a pet. Those who purchase (and to some extent, even those who adopt) an adorable, cuddly kitten or puppy out of impulse do not often comprehend the extent of

Buttering Up to Animal Welfare

Recent case of animal mistreatment highlights importance of education and awareness

commitment required to look after it.

On average, cats and dogs can live up to between 12 and 15 years, and need to be provided with constant attention, love, and timely medical checkups in the form of vaccinations and sterilisation. In the case of pedigree pets, more grooming and a special diet may even be necessary - becoming a costly affair.

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated

Mahatma Gandhi

Not surprisingly, once the novelty of having a pet wears off and these dependents become a burden, many are conveniently 'offloaded' somewhere or are neglected. The result: in 2009, *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (SPCA) alone took in 7,678 abandoned animals (this does not include other private shelters that take in strays).



(Much) More Can Be Done

While it is laudable that organisations such as SPCA and *Animal Concerns Research & Education Society* (ACRES) have their own education programmes to spread awareness on animal welfare, a multi-pronged approach is nevertheless needed to address both the continuous supply and demand for pets.

Just as there are talks for would-be parents, potential adopters or purchasers of pets need to be educated on the needs and the cost of maintaining a pet. This can be done as a dedicated course or via visits to existing shelters to experience handling a grown animal before being allowed to make a purchase.

This would clearly help to limit impulse buys and, upon enlightenment, a more informed decision can be made as to whether the potential pet-owner has the means to care for a pet for the duration of its lifetime.

On the supply side of the equation, a quota should be put in place on importing animals for sale and breeding farms should be imposed with

(clear, strict and fully enforceable) regulations on animal welfare with (regular) periodic surprise checks to ensure that animals under their care are treated properly (though in an ideal world breeding farms should be eradicated altogether). And in cases where the regulations have been flouted, severe punishment should be carried out.

However, for all this to happen, the government has to take the reins and lead policy change. It needs to take an active role in promoting animal welfare and at the same time work with animal shelters to introduce various guidelines and regulations for the industry to adhere to.

As a 'country of campaigns', the government should consider creating a campaign promoting ethical pet ownership which in turn would signal to the pet industry to adopt better standards for the animals under their care.

Truly, a mark of a developed society is one that is not only cultured and takes care of its people, but also one that cares for every other sentient being.



Photo: FreeDigitalPhotos.net



Hard Rock Hotel, Level 2 Resorts World Sentosa Tel: 6238 7013

Nestled in a cosy corner of the spanking new *Resorts World Sentosa*, *Rang Mahal Pavilion* has been quietly gaining interest among tourists and the general public at large for its wonderful ambience and great food.

Part of the *Rang Mahal Group* which owns the Rang Mahal outlet at the *Pan Pacific* hotel, *Rang Mahal Table* at *Marina Bay Sands*, and *Vansh* next to the Indoor Stadium - with another *Vansh* outlet in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, this recent edition to its award-winning line-up offers more of the same top-quality experience and food.

The most commendable aspect of *Rang Mahal* has been its willingness to bend over backwards for its customers. For example, on all occasions where our team visited, the chefs had taken the trouble to customise the dishes to suit our needs as vegans. In addition, the various chefs involved each time came to ask how they could better prepare the dishes to fit our needs.

Similarly, walk-in customers can also expect such concerned service - something which is hard to come by in busy Singapore.

As for the pricing, *Rang Mahal* has been trying to reach out to the larger community and offers an attractive lunch buffet aimed at the working executives near Keppel. With the entry-cum-parking charges to Sentosa significantly reduced during 12pm and 2 pm on weekdays (an amazing \$1 for the first hour and \$2 for the subsequent hour), it is cheaper for a party of five to visit *Rang Mahal Pavilion* than to travel anywhere else!

And while some may argue that the pricing is steep for a lunch-time meal, one has to consider that by comparison, the experience and food-quality are many-fold superior than a (slightly) cheaper restaurant.

The additional plus point is that *Rang Mahal Pavilion* (and all their outlets, for that matter) is one of the rare places where a vegetarian, vegan and I-will-die-without-flesh-on-my-plate meat-meater can all eat together in peace and harmony.

Rang Mahal Pavilion is open daily from 12.00pm to 2.30pm and from 6.30pm to 10.30pm. If you are travelling by car, proceed right to the end of the carpark (West B1), past the drop-off point of *Hard Rock Cafe*.

Rang Mahal Pavilion

Slice of heaven at earthly prices

On our visit, we were treated to 5-dish vegan spread that wowed us on presentation and taste. Starting off with an interesting (right) brinjal creation (*Badal Jam*) which superbly combined the flavours of tamarind and passionfruit, the *Bombay Vegetable Cake* (below, right) gave us a familiar potato-cutlet feeling - only much more spectacular.

This was followed by a *Carrot Shorba* soup (\$12) that tasted anything but carrot. Coming across as a rather creamy soup (not unlike mushroom), it left us wondering how the chef managed to transform such a typically-bland vegetable into a mesmerising soup.

The main course then followed - the *thali* meal (bottom, right), the traditional serving of rice with various accompaniments. In our set, we had a wonderful blend of legumes, leafy vegetables and roots.

Black kidney beans were magically adapted into a salsa of sorts; and okra (or lady's fingers) was fried to somewhat resemble *Ikan Bilis* in texture and taste (but without much of the oil). Meanwhile, spinach and corn were deliciously prepared into a *palak* and a traditional *aloo gobhi* (\$18) consisting of potato and cauliflower was provided to complete the authentic Indian dining feel.

As we have come to expect of dining at *Rang Mahal*, the dishes blended excellently and were absolutely delicious. We were also treated to some *mini-prathas* and *tandoor roti* (below) which we sampled with the aforementioned accompaniments - and certainly worked well too.

The perfect place to dine your clients for a working lunch, or celebrate that very special birthday or anniversary, *Rang Mahal Pavilion* offers a high-class adventure without a resulting misadventure on your pocket.



naïve

99 East Coast Road
Tel: 6348 0668

With a fresh new concept, *naïve* burst onto the scene early last year and has since established itself as a posh-yet-cosy place to have that romantic dinner or gather together with like-minded friends to share drinks.

Housed in a two-storey shophouse along East Coast Road, *naïve*'s preference to not overtly advertise the fact that it is a vegetarian establishment has led to some interesting situations where diners are astonished that their delicious meal was cruelty-free.

Paying close attention to detail, dining at *naïve* is all about the experience and from the moment you step in you will be engaged. For example, every guest is required to participate in a *Blessing of the Sesame Seeds* (BLOSS) ceremony where the diner is given a pounding set with a mixture of black and white sesame seeds to crush.

One of *naïve*'s popular dishes include *Cheeky Monkey* (\$12.90), which is specially-sourced monkeyhead mushrooms coated in an aromatic and flavourful blend of curryleaf and oatmeal (below).

The juicy texture of the mushroom coupled with the savoury taste make this dish suitable as a snack or meal accompaniment.



Meanwhile, the *Rendang Padang* (above) is an authentic-tasting rendition of the famous Indonesian dish - the beef having been replaced with the versatile *shiitake* mushroom - and comes served with *pau*.

And for those looking to have a yuppie-styled night out, *naïve* also offers *Three Buddies* (\$5.90) for desert, which is a trio of shot-glasses filled with organic soy, lemongrass konyaku, and an apple concoction, respectively.

A place that won't disappoint, the above-average price is matched by an equally above-average quality, and is definitely worthy of its reputation.

Naïve is open daily from 11.30am to 10.00pm. The upper floor is suitable for holding small events and can accommodate up to 80 persons.



There are several reasons why a person chooses to be vegetarian. It can be health, environment, religion or ethics - or a bit of all.

But if you are one of those who belong to the last group, this book is definitely a must-read.

Tracing the historical basis of ethical vegetarianism - from the ancient world to the modern philosophical arguments, *Ethical Vegetarianism* provides a well organised overview with in-depth and compelling essays by well-known advocates.

Each section of this book is divided according to a specific time period in history and the editors provide a lucid introduction to the trends and concerns of the particular era.

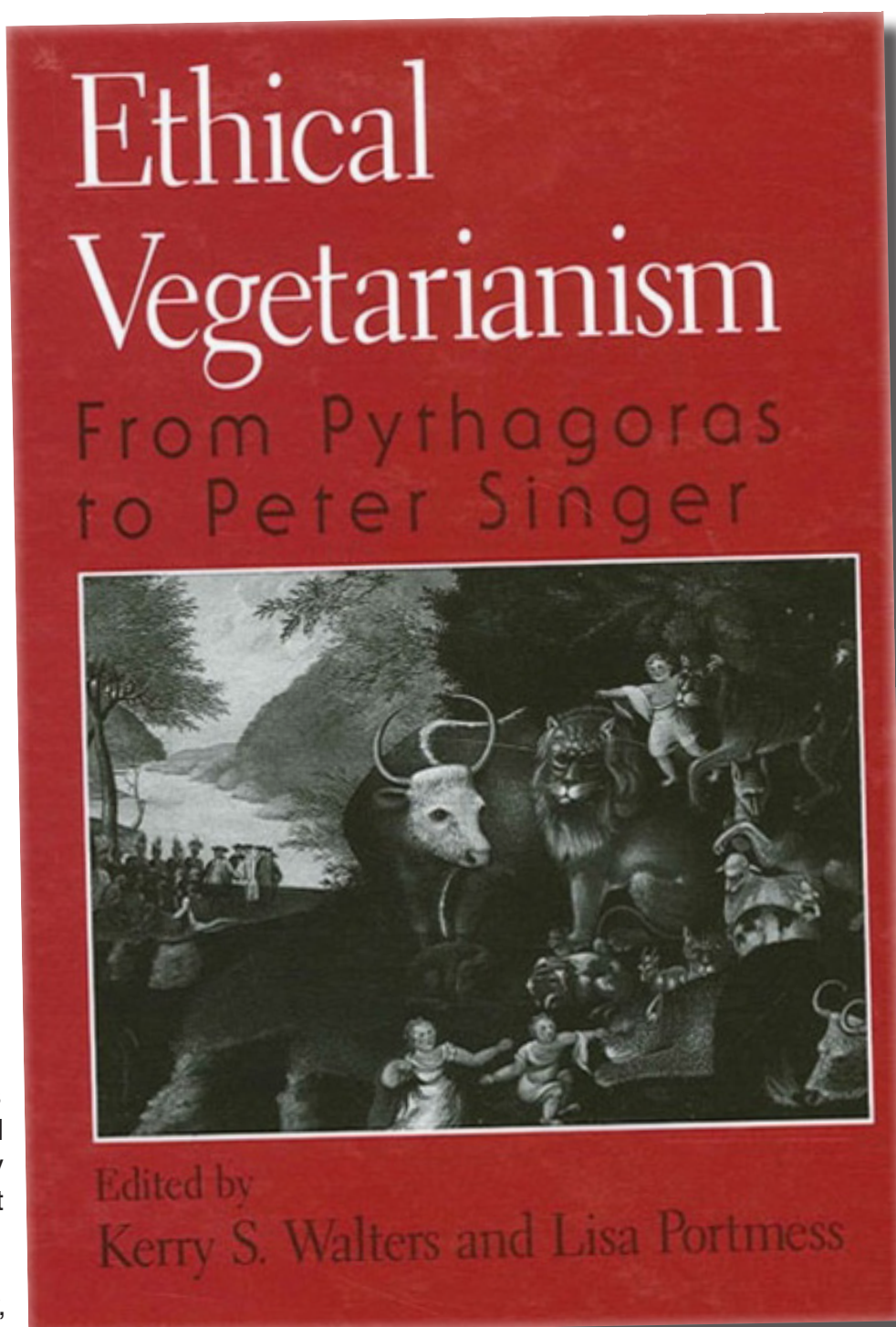
The book starts off with Pythagoras' moral reasoning for vegetarianism and shows how thinkers during that period and in the eighteenth century believed that consuming meat tainted humans spiritually.

Towards the nineteenth century, the focus shifts to animal welfare and animal cruelty and by the twentieth century, current debates such as ecological damage and advocacy for animal rights are discussed.

The editors, Kerry Walters and Lisa Portmess, go one step further and suggest possible arguments against ethical vegetarianism and even provide a bibliography of anti-vegetarian literature for

contrast.

In just 287 pages, this book offers a balanced and incisive examination of ethical vegetarianism and provides illuminating arguments and perspectives for not only vegetarians but for just about anyone who is keen to learn more about vegetarianism.



Ethical Vegetarianism: from Pythagoras to Peter Singer
is available for USD\$28.83 (S\$41) from Amazon.com

Just the thought of a peaceful green meadow filled with cheerful bright flowers has a way of lifting one's spirits. Yes indeed, flowers have been constant companions in both happiness and sadness; with a 2005 study suggesting that flowers have a slew of positive impact on emotions.

Apart from the immediate gush of delight that we feel when we receive a lovely bouquet of flowers, the study concluded that blooms create a greater sense of well-being in the long term as it reduces depression, stress, anxiety and agitation.

The mere presence of flowers has also been found to foster intimate relationships with friends and family. For those who are not 'morning people', flowers have also been found to improve mood and provide the jolt of energy needed for

Don't Just Sniff, Scurp Your Flowers!

the rest of the day.

Interestingly, in addition to these rather obvious emotional benefits, flowers also offer an array of health benefits. For instance, due to the large quantities of plant hormones contained, blossoms have become part of traditional medicine and they have even made their way onto the culinary scene.

In medicinal usage, flowers are often served as an infusion or its compounds are extracted to make essential oils for application.

So what are the benefits of some of the flowers that we commonly encounter?



JASMINE - The exotic aroma of Jasmine flowers is thought to be an aphrodisiac that enhances libido and even correct sexual dysfunction. Women can benefit from the Jasmine flower's properties of regulating menstruation, relieving pain during childbirth, postponing menopause, and promoting uterine health. Jasmine also functions as an expectorant that helps to clear phlegm for those suffering from colds and cough, and the essential oil is used for reducing wrinkles, scarring and stretch marks.

CHRYSANTHEMUM - Easily available as a tea, Chrysanthemum is a prominent 'cooling' herb used in Chinese medicine. The cooling nature of the flower is used to ease 'heatiness', sore throat and fever. Chrysanthemum tea is also known to relieve constipation and aid digestion while at the same time strengthen lung functions and reduce shortness of breath. Though not proven, Western holistic practitioners believe that Chrysanthemum can treat varicose veins as well. Flowers that are steeped can be applied on the eye to reduce dryness and itchiness.



LAVENDAR - Most commonly used as an essential oil in aromatherapy, Lavender has a calming scent that soothes tension and stress. Hence, it helps to alleviate headaches, depression and anxiety, and promotes better sleep. Lavender oil can also be used to relieve muscle aches, sprains and joint pain. Frequently, Lavender extract is also used in skin care and specifically, its antiseptic and antifungal properties are used to treat acne, psoriasis and other inflammatory skin conditions.



CHAMOMILE - Part of the daisy family, Chamomile has several applications. As it contains anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic compounds, tea brewed with the flower is used to treat stomach discomfort and menstrual cramps. Its antibacterial properties are

known to boost immunity and keep colds at bay, whilst emerging research suggests that Chamomile tea may even help in diabetes management and cancer. Topically applied, Chamomile accelerates wound healing and is used to treat scrapes and burns.



ROSE - Perhaps the most legendary flower of all, the rose has been used extensively in medicine as well as beauty. Rose tea has been known to clear toxins in the kidney and bladder, and also reduces the risk of urinary tract infection. The astringent quality of the rose assists in muscle, intestine and blood vessel contraction, thereby toning and lifting skin. The organic compounds in Rose essential oil is used to reduce scarring and fade stretch marks while its antiseptic properties protect wounds from becoming gangrenous.

While we have so much to gain from the wonderful world of flowers and should enjoy a sip of flower

tea, do note that if you are pregnant or applying it to a child you should check with a doctor first.

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It's more than a toothbrush. It's a Mouthbrush.

Radius Toothbrush (Original) is an eco-friendly alternative to the traditional toothbrush made from natural bio-plastic that is derived from sustainable yield forests. This toothbrush is ergonomically designed to allow both right and left handed users to automatically place bristles at 45 degrees to the gum line as recommended by dentists. The very fine bristles in its wide oval head clean every part of the mouth thoroughly and gently - the *American Dental Association* even recommends it for the reduction of gingivitis.

Retails online at Choose Eco Store -
<http://www.oliveventures.com.sg/>
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Chopping boards are available in an assortment of materials, but why settle for something inferior when bamboo chopping boards offer a long list of advantages such as durability, easy maintenance and anti-bacterial properties. Compared to traditional wooden boards, bamboo chopping boards are tougher and kinder on the knives reducing knife bluntness. In addition, bamboo is a highly renewable source (it grows as much as six feet in a day) and is thus eco-friendly. This beautiful set of three **Bamboo Chopping Boards** comes with a stand for easy drying.

Retails online at Choose Eco Store -
<http://www.oliveventures.com.sg/choose>
 for \$50 per set



Lovers of cosmetics will know that *Urban Decay* produces excellent quality trend-setting cosmetics for women with spunk. Not many might have realised though that *Urban Decay* has a vegan line of cosmetics with its vegan **Heavy Metal Glitter Eyeliner** being a sell-out. These arresting shades of glitter are suspended in a clear base and applied with a tiny precise brush allowing for the control that can create a subtle look or dramatic, jewel-crusted eyes. Once dry, the eyeliner is smudge-proof and the glitter will not flake off or transfer to your significant other while smooching.

Retails at Sephora Singapore for \$32 a tube

Made with the finest USDA certified organic pears, **Earth's Best 1st Pears** is a vegan first-food for babies. An excellent source of Vitamin C, this pureed pear does not contain wheat, artificial flavours, colours, preservatives or added salts and sugar.

***Retails at all
major supermarkets
for \$1.75 a bottle***



Wheat free and made with whole organic soybeans, **Abundant Earth Organic Tamari** is unlike any other commercially produced soy sauce. Made by small producers with all-natural ingredients and unhurried fermentation that spans over many seasons, it results in a dark, rich gourmet seasoning that enhances the flavour of all dishes. Suitable for longer-cooking foods such as soups and stews, it also works well as a marinade and salad dressing. With about a third less sodium than regular salt, *Abundant Earth Organic Tamari* is a versatile all-purpose condiment that is a must-have for the health conscious.

Retails at all major supermarkets for \$9.75 a bottle



Hand made using only the highest quality fresh, natural and vegan ingredients **Steam Cream** is an all-purpose cream that comes in quirky Japanese-designed aluminium tins featuring limited edition graphic art images. It boasts soothing ingredients such as *Oatmeal Infusion*, *Lavender Oil*, *Orange Flower Water*, *Blue Chamomile* and *Rose Absolute*. *Steam Cream* gets its name from its unique pioneering steam technique that creates an easily absorbed, hydrating and light-textured cream that does not leave an oily film behind. This stylish product is convenient to slip into your bag on your way to work, holiday or even to the gym.

***Retails online at Soap 'n Sorbet -
<http://www.soapsorbet.com>
for \$26 per tin***



Date Night

With the ongoing Muslim fasting month in full swing, rest assured you will find an abundance of dates available at supermarkets. So here are a handful of date recipes you could try to make full use of their availability.



Date Apple Crumble

400g apples
100g pitted dates
70ml hot water
100g ground almonds
100g plain flour
50g brown sugar
50ml corn oil
20g rolled oats (optional)
1 tablespoon vegan margarine (optional)

1. Peel, core and cube apples
2. Add hot water to pitted dates and let it soak until soften
3. Remove from liquid and chop finely
4. Mix together ground almonds, plain flour and brown sugar
5. Pour in corn oil and mix until it becomes crumbly
6. In baking pan, add apples and dates and mix well
7. Top with dry mixture and press down slightly
8. Sprinkle some rolled oats and dot the top with some vegan margarine
9. Bake at 180°C for 20 to 30 minutes until top is browned

Spiced Pear-Date Juice

200g Packham pear
50g pitted dates
150ml water
2 tablespoons coconut cream
Pinch of nutmeg
Some chopped dates for garnish
Coconut cream for garnish

1. Blend ingredients together in blender (except chopped dates)
2. Pour into glass and top with coconut cream and chopped dates (serve with ice)





1. In wok, add oil and sauté onions until soft before adding ginger and garlic
2. Once fragrant, add chilli powder, dates and water
3. Stir to disintegrate dates
4. Simmer for about a minute and add bell peppers
5. Continue to stir fry until bell peppers are cooked
6. Sprinkle some sesame seeds and serve hot

Sweet and Spicy Date-Vegetable Stir Fry

1 tablespoon olive oil
 100g onion, quartered
 2 cloves garlic, pounded
 ½ inch piece of ginger, pounded
 50g pitted dates
 1.5 teaspoons chilli powder
 100ml water
 80g red bell pepper, sliced
 80g yellow bell pepper, sliced
 80g green bell pepper, sliced
 Sesame seed for garnish

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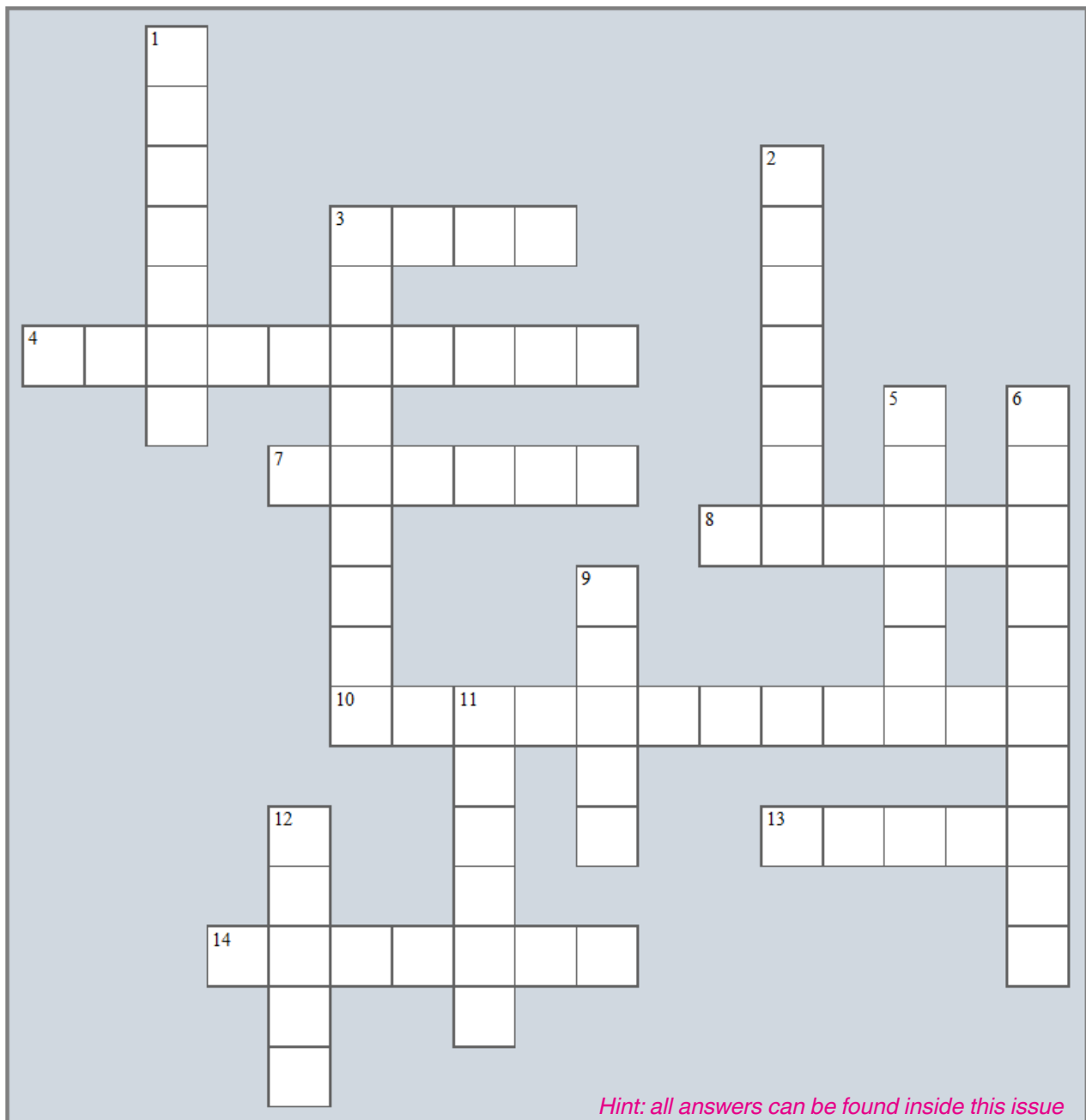
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The VegVibe Test!



Hint: all answers can be found inside this issue

Across

3. Flowers can help improve this for people who are not 'morning persons'.
4. One place where the cookbook Veganomicon can be purchased in Singapore.
7. The month in which VegVibe was first released in 2009.
8. The type of chickens Olivia Choong has.
10. Blueberries have more of this than most fruits and vegetables.
13. The place in Japan where dolphins are being massacred annually.
14. The name of the dog at the centre of a storm of anger when it was beaten by its owner.

Down

1. What gives blueberries their natural blue colour?
2. Where Rang Mahal Pavilion is located.
3. The national flower of Paraguay.
5. The surname of the man who coined the term 'veganism' in 1944.
6. The process by which microorganisms break down waste into simple and useful nutrients for the soil.
9. A special ceremony that awaits you when you visit naive restaurant.
11. Chef Oh's most-liked ingredient to work with.
12. Mdm Wong sold this to raise the funds necessary to continue the shelter's operations.

ONE PHOTO = TWO MOVIE TICKETS

Take a wacky photo and send it to us now!



The VegVibe team loves to hear from our readers and what better way than to show us how much you love the magazine. Simply snap a photo of you posing with the magazine (cover showing, please) and you could win yourself a pair of *Golden Village* movie tickets.

We are looking for the wackiest photo so get those creative juices flowing. So what are you waiting for - get out your camera-phones and start snapping away with this copy!

Send in your entries to vegvibe@gmail.com or post it on our facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Clementi/VegVibe/204391798042> today! Entries close on 15th October 2010 so don't take too long.

Also, do remember to pass this copy on once you've read it, and if you really need a reference point, you can always access the identical online version at <http://vegvibe.com>.



Celebrate World Vegetarian Day with Eight Treasures

Eight Treasures Vegetarian encourages readers to bring a non-vegetarian friend to celebrate and share a unique vegetarian dining experience on this meaningful occasion.



Last year, several well-known vegetarian bloggers (and the VegVibe team) were invited to a special dinner reception at Eight Treasures Vegetarian restaurant along South Bridge Road to celebrate World Vegetarian Day. This year, to encourage and promote vegetarianism further, **20 VegVibe readers** are specially invited to bring along a non-vegetarian friend to **dine for free** at Eight Treasures, together with several prominent figures of the vegetarian community, on 1st October 2010. Those interested can email their names and their guests' to 8treasuresgroup@live.com by 20th September 2010 to confirm their seats. For more details on this exclusive invitation, please visit www.8treasuresgroup.com.sg.

VegVibe magazine was first published online in August 2009 as the first magazine in Singapore to address vegetarian and vegan issues. We are a wholly content-driven publication that strives to cover anything and everything that matters to the vegetarian and vegan community, and have positioned ourselves as a uniting platform for those interested in **Healthy Living, Animal Activism** and **Environmentalism**.

Technical Specifications

A4 size (210mm x 297mm)
44 to 60 pages (min 40 pages of content)
105gsm art paper
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Bi-monthly publication

Why Advertise With Us

- Copies available free islandwide
- Niche readers who follow VegVibe closely
- Issues released as both online and print editions (maximum ad exposure)
- Regional focus with global reach
- Longer shelf-life and retention of copies by readers due to strength of content

VegVibe has been well-received since inception and enjoys a conservative estimate of 1,000 online readers per issue, with over 200 direct subscribers, as well as almost 400 fans on our facebook page – all achieved by word-of-mouth alone. We have also established ourselves as a reliable news provider and are the Singapore correspondent for the *European Vegetarian and Animals News Alliance* (EVANA) and a registered news source with *Google News*.

SIZE	DIMENSIONS W X H (MM)	NORMAL PRICE (5,000 COPY PRINT RUN)	PROMOTIONAL PRICE (3,000 COPY PRINT RUN)
FULL PAGE	210 X 297	\$1,200	\$500
½ PAGE	210 X 149	\$600	\$300
¼ PAGE	105 X 149	\$300	\$150
VERTICAL STRIP	70 X 297	\$500	\$200
INSIDE FRONT COVER	210 X 297	\$2,000	\$800
INSIDE BACK COVER	210 X 297	\$2,000	\$800
OUTSIDE BACK COVER	210 X 297	\$2,500	\$800
CENTREFOLD SPREAD	420 X 297	\$3,000	\$1,000

Whilst the rates quoted above are for single insertions, we also offer further discounts of 5% to 10% for 3-insertion (6 months) and 6-insertion (1 year) commitments, respectively. Please contact **Mr Ganga at 90602206** or **Ms Halimah at 90057385** to book your advertisement space, or drop us an email at vision@vegville.com to find out how you can reach out to our target audience.