



The Christmas Issue

DECEMBER 2009

VegVibe

Will your
holidays be
compassionate?

Also in this issue:

Recipes and Places to Dine especially for Christmas,
our Vegetarian Hero **Dr George Jacobs**, and considering
what **Magnificent Manila** has to offer...

The Chief Veggie Speaks!

Well, in case you were wondering, we are pleased to present our December issue earlier this month so that all the helpful tips, hints and mouthwatering recipes can come in handy as you prepare for the holidays next week.

We also hope that our cover model offers a timely reminder to one and all to ensure a compassionate and eco-friendly holiday this year.



From Earth-friendly party ideas (Page 16), to delicious recipes (Page 18), festive shopping suggestions (Page 21) and dining leads (Page 3), we focus on your immediate needs in this issue. We are also pleased to feature the popular community leader Dr George Jacobs, the president of the Vegetarian Society (Singapore), in this special issue (Page 8).

Of course, we continue to devote attention to the more serious issues such as the recent media suggestion that climate change was not a big deal (Page 6) and why some meat-eaters behave the way that they do (Page 10).

Do continue to visit the [VegVibe blog](http://vegville.com/blog) at <http://vegville.com/blog> for follow-up content, chat with us via email at vision@vegville.com or visit our website at <http://vegville.com> for more information.

Finally, the [VegVibe](http://vegville.com) team would like to wish each and every one of our readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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The editor would like to thank Dr George Jacobs for graciously agreeing to be featured in this issue.



Mind Your Iron

Iron, considered to be the second most important mineral after calcium, is a fundamental component of red blood cells and muscle tissues and plays a vital role in the transportation of oxygen around the body. It is also essential for the formation of haemoglobin, a healthy immune system, and the efficient functioning of the liver. A lack in iron can lead to anaemia which manifests in fatigue, coldness in the extremities, reduced mental capacity and insomnia.

Though the popular misconception is that a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle leads to iron deficiency, a well-balanced diet does provide all the iron the body needs - along with other minerals as well. The issue is not so much with the food intake but rather, the complex interaction of various nutrients that may either inhibit or encourage iron absorption.

How Iron Works

Basically, there are two types of iron - *heme iron* (from meat) and *non-heme iron* (from plants and some animal tissue), and while our body absorbs heme iron efficiently, non-heme iron has a lower absorption rate. Hence, vegetarians, and vegans in particular, have to be conscientious in planning their diet to allow for sufficient intake of non-heme iron.

Research suggests that several nutrients inhibit iron absorption as well. For example, coffee and tea contain *polyphenols*, a compound that binds with iron and makes absorption harder. Also, *oxalates* which are found in green leafy vegetables also inhibit iron absorption but the significant iron content in these vegetables offsets the effects of these oxalates.

Calcium, in particular, has been found to hinder iron absorption especially if the food is high in



By Halimah

Photo courtesy of Bill Longshaw / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

iron, hence, it is suggested that calcium-rich food should be taken at least half an hour before the consumption of iron-rich food.

Fret Not, All is Not Rusty

Fortunately, this apparent conflict between calcium and iron absorption is limited to meals that are especially concentrated in either mineral and complex meals that typically consist of different ingredients and nutrients generally do not inhibit iron absorption.

As amazing as it may sound, it has also been found that using iron pots for preparing dishes seems to effectively draw out the iron from the utensils due to the acidity of the food, and leads to an increased iron content in the final concoction.

Also, Vitamin C plays an integral role in converting non-heme iron to heme iron which essentially makes it easier for our body to absorb the iron in our food. So the next time you reach for some spinach salad, remember to pair it with some orange juice for better iron absorption!

High-Iron Food

Blackstrap Molasses (2 tablespoons = 7.2mg)

Tofu, cold or cooked (4 ounces = 6mg)

Soybeans, cooked (1 cup = 8.8mg)

Spinach, cooked (1 cup = 6.4mg)

Tempeh, cooked (1 cup = 4.8mg)

Lentils, cooked (1 cup = 6.6mg)

Quinoa, cooked (1 cup = 6.3mg)

For a complete list please see
http://www.chezbettay.com/pages/health1/h_ironfoods1.html



Vege Sensation
530 Upper Serangoon Road
Tel: 62857525

Review by Ganga
Photos by Halimah

Inspired by French cuisine, *Vege Sensation* led by Chef James will be offering special set meals for the Christmas holiday week - from the 21st to the 27th of December. Having perfected the dishes over the past month, the Christmas Set Meal will include a choice from 3 main courses, the soup of the day, a sparkling mocktail drink and a dessert item of home-made ice-cream (or sorbet for the vegan option). Diners will also be treated to a complimentary cookie on Christmas day as well.

The 3 main dishes available for the set meal are all equally exquisite and cater to a range of tastebuds. For the typical diner, the *Grilled Mock Chicken with Pepper Sauce* (bottom) will be a no-brainer and may even satiate the die-hard meat-eater. The *Grilled Mock Fish with Mango and Lemon Sauce* (top left) meanwhile offers a refreshing blend of citrus flavour with that of the 'sea'. Finally, for those who enjoy sweeter-tasting meat, the *Grilled Mock Steak with Mushroom and Pepper*

Sauce (top right) leaves no desire unfulfilled.

The 'meat' in all 3 dishes is marinated in black pepper, rosemary, oregano, lemon and vegetarian beer (no alcohol, of course), and when combined with the grilling process, gives the unmistakable smoked taste that adds the authenticity to each dish.

Chef James assures us that the dishes are all vegan-friendly and, with no garlic or onions used in the preparation, the *Vege Sensation* Christmas Set Meal looks the safest bet for motley groups comprising vegans, vegetarians, staunch Buddhists and meat-eaters alike.

The Christmas Set Meal is priced at \$24.80 (mock fish), \$26.80 (mock steak) and \$28.80 (mock chicken). and Vege Sensation is open from Sunday through Saturday from 10:00am to 11:00pm and from 11:00am to 2:00am on Fridays and Saturdays, with extended operating hours on Christmas eve to 1.00am.



Read more on our adventures at *Vege Sensation* exclusively on our blog at <http://veg.vibe.com/blog>, including details on a Brownie dessert that was specially created for us!

In the spirit of sharing, Vege Sensation will be also holding a Christmas Eve Party on 24 Dec 2009 from 6.00pm onwards. Diners are encouraged to bring along up to 2 wrapped gifts each to exchange at the party which will entitle them a chance to enter into a lucky draw which will be held later that night.

Out & About

The Green Room Café located amidst the lush greenery of Bishan Park II will be offering a scrumptious spread especially on Christmas eve and Christmas day this year. Available throughout these 2 days, the Christmas set meal offers an interesting *Avocado and Pink Grapefruit*

Mille-Feuille for starters, followed by *Roasted Cauliflower Soup* to warm you up and finally, *Grilled Zucchini and Eggplant Strudel* to leave you satisfied.

The *Avocado and Pink Grapefruit Mille-Feuille* (below) comprises layers of crispy tortilla skin



(which do not contain egg) interspersed with the tangy grapefruit and accompanied by some non-spicy red bell pepper coulis (thick sauce) which we are told is prepared by roasting the bell peppers before being pureed.

The *Roasted Cauliflower Soup* (above left)

meanwhile is served with a cheese twist and the base is made using non-GMO soy milk instead of regular cream or dairy milk for the healthier option. The cauliflower is also roasted to bring out the flavour, and while the choice for a vegetable-base soup may be unusual, the creaminess is deliciously savoury and goes well with the cheese twist.

The main attraction, *Grilled Zucchini and Eggplant Strudel*, is served with mushroom sauce and comes seasoned with salt, pepper and olive oil. Similar to the other dishes in the spread, the zucchini and eggplant are grilled to bring out the palatable taste of these Mediterranean vegetables and the saltiness of the sautéed mushroom sauce only serves to enhance the taste.

Don't miss this offering that is certainly fit for that special Christmas celebration!

The *Green Room Christmas All Day Set Meal* is priced at \$30+ per person and The *Green Room Cafe* is open everyday from 11am to 10pm



The Green Room Café
Bishan Park II

1382 Ang Mo Kio Ave 1

Tel: 6556 1533

www.greenroomcafe.com.sg

Know Your Cranberries!



M
The Native Americans were the first to use cranberries - to remove poison from arrow wounds and also as a natural dye for rugs and clothing



Legend has it that cranberries were served during the 1st Thanksgiving and hence the tradition continues today



Cranberries are 90% water



Cranberries are high in Vitamin C and were used by American sailors to prevent scurvy



Cranberry was originally called 'crane berry' as the cranberry flowers in bloom apparently resemble the head and bill of a crane



You can temper the extreme sourness of fresh cranberries by enjoying them with sweet fruits like apples and grapes



Research suggests that cranberries can prevent stomach ulcers and tooth decay

Carson City Café

Homemade Pastries - Gourmet Coffee - Catering



Cranberries have five times more antioxidant content as compared to broccoli



Fresh cranberries can be kept frozen for up to nine months



Fresh cranberries contain the most antioxidants followed by dried cranberries, with bottled juices containing the least



Cranberry juice is often used as an informal remedy for urinary tract infections



Attempt by Media to Confuse Public Thinking on Climate Change?

Eugene Tay offers a measured response to deconstruct the underlying fallacies that lead to the erroneous conclusion that global warming is not a serious issue after all

Fallacy Number One

Singapore should be slow to sign up to any emissions cap

Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew spoke at the Singapore Energy Lecture last year and discussed Singapore's green efforts over the years and the need to maintain such efforts because the "point is, if we don't do this, we lose our status as a clean, green city and we'll lose our business and lose our extra premium for being an unusual city."

Well, Singapore is beginning to lose that extra green premium in the coming low-carbon world. Asian countries like Japan, South Korea and even China are taking proactive steps to become low-carbon economies, sign up to emissions caps, and be recognised as green leaders. It is thus no longer enough just to be 'clean and green' in this new carbon-constrained world.

Singapore has to fundamentally and holistically look at its economy and consider whether a business-as-usual economic development is possible and competitive. In light of climate change, a real green country has to take the lead in setting emissions targets and reducing them, ensuring energy and food security and sufficiency, and creating a green economy and green jobs as well.

Climate change represents crisis as well as opportunity - there are great opportunities to make the change now and lessen the future impact and cost of climate change. And whilst the cost of taking action on climate change may be high, the cost of not taking action is arguably even higher. The *Stern Review* published in 2007 concludes that the earlier effective action is taken, the less costly it will be in the long term.

Fallacy Number Two

There is consensus among 2,500 scientists in the IPCC that they disagree with man-made global warming

The IPCC's 4th Assessment Report (AR4) released in 2007 is a collaborative effort supported by the many Working Groups, authors and reviewers to show a consensus on man-made global warming and the need to take urgent action based on the climate sciences and observable changes in the climate. The 2,500 scientists referred to are the scientific expert reviewers involved in the scientific and technical review process of the AR4.

As reviewers, the 2,500 scientists' work was to provide comment and feedback on parts of the report so as to make it better and more accurate. And, as in any review process, not all the comments were accepted in the final draft and so it is no surprise that the "number actually includes those who disagreed with parts of it but had no say in the final text".

What is important though is that there is a process of explaining why the comments were rejected and all the IPCC reviewers' comments and responses to their comments are in fact available for public inspection at <http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/ipcc/>.

Fallacy Number Three

Climate science is not an exact one yet as a petition by scientists demonstrates

The 9,029 scientists who reject man-made global warming at www.petitionproject.org are only those with PhDs - in fact, the actual number is 31,478 American scientists. The petition (also known as the *Oregon Petition*) was started in 1998 and circulated in the US together with a 12-page review paper among those with BSc, MSc, and PhD degrees in science, engineering, and related disciplines.

The petition itself is questionable as firstly, it is too easy for anyone with a degree to just sign the petition without proper credentials or understanding of the climate sciences. Secondly, the signatories may very well have signed the petition before reading the latest information available. Lastly, it was widely reported that the review paper, the people involved and the organisations behind the petition are not credible.

So, it is laughable to say that climate science is not exact by loosely quoting a petition of 9,029 American PhD holders. Scientists do not only exist in the US; there are many scientists in other countries that support the idea of man-made global warming as represented by the IPCC and national science academies such as the *Science Council of Japan*, *Russian Academy of Sciences*, *Australian Academy of Sciences*, *Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Sciences and the Arts*, *Brazilian Academy of Sciences*, *Royal Society of Canada*, *Chinese Academy of Sciences*, *French Academy of Sciences*, *German Academy of Natural Scientists*, *Indian National Science Academy*, *Indonesian Academy of Sciences*, *Royal Irish Academy*, *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Italy)*, *Academy of Sciences Malaysia*, *Academy Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, and *Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences*.

Fallacy Number Four

Climate change debate is often just emotional as shown by the public challenge issued by Christopher Monckton to Al Gore

Firstly, Christopher Monckton is widely reported to have a dubious reputation and is not taken seriously by the community at large. He is also not trained in the climate sciences and although he has published several articles and papers to 'debunk' man-made global warming, these are not peer-reviewed and (necessarily?) contain dodgy claims and misleading errors.

It is therefore entirely up to Al Gore whether he wants to respond to a character such as Christopher Monckton and if he wishes not to, that certainly does not imply that Christopher Monckton is right. Besides, the definition of 'debate' is a serious discussion on a subject in which many people take part, so public challenges issued by a dodgy person do not represent a debate, let alone a heated one.

Fallacy Number Five

Water vapour and clouds could be the cause of climate variations, not human activities

The debate on water vapour and clouds boils down to whether water vapour is considered feedback or radiative forcing.

According to the IPCC, radiative forcing is 'a measure of the influence that a factor has in altering the balance of incoming and outgoing energy in the Earth-atmosphere system and is an index of the importance of the factor as a potential climate change mechanism' whereas 'feedbacks can amplify or dampen the response to a given forcing'. In other words, forcings are processes that can force changes in our climate, and feedbacks are indirect or secondary changes in our climate in response to such forcings.

Dr Roy Spencer was cited as arguing that water vapour is as significant as forcing and whilst the IPCC AR4 defines water vapour as feedback in climate models, it nevertheless acknowledges the importance that water vapour can play in such models.

There will always be questions on climate science and there is also no such thing as perfect climate models. However, the mere existence of such questions and imperfection does not automatically mean that there is no consensus on man-made climate change as the study on climate change is not just based on climate models but also on other climate sciences and observable data.

Fallacy Number Six

Global emissions reduction is too expensive as it will cost at least US\$100 billion a year

To put this cost of US\$100 billion in perspective, consider the following - the world's GDP for 2007 was US\$54,891 billion;

the world's military expenditure for 2008 was US\$1,464 billion; and the world's advertising expenditure for 2007 was US\$455 billion.

So we are not really short of money to devote to reducing greenhouse gas emissions but are just spending them in the wrong areas with a lack of political willpower and foresight to redirect the expenditure. Surely, spending about 0.2% of global GDP yearly to mitigate climate change is not asking too much? Furthermore, the sooner effective action is initiated, the less costly it will be overall, as concluded by the *Stern Review*.

Fallacy Number Seven

The majority of the world's population does not share the values and attitudes on combating global warming

It was suggested that countries within the G77, including China and India, in fact do not share the values on combating global warming as they are not agreeing to reduce their use of fossil fuels.

However this is not true as China's President Hu Jintao, in a recent speech on climate change at the United Nations General Assembly, has already committed to "endeavour to cut carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by a notable margin by 2020 from the 2005 level" and "to increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 15% by 2020."

Similarly, India has also highlighted its efforts through the *National Action Plan on Climate Change* to "significantly increase the share of solar energy in the total energy mix while recognizing the need to expand the scope of other renewable and non-fossil options such as nuclear energy, wind energy and biomass" and "is determined that its per capita greenhouse gas emissions will at no point exceed that of developed countries even as we pursue our development objectives."

Fallacy Number Eight

There is a decline in the proportion of the US public that believes human activities cause global warming as illustrated by the Pew Research Centre poll

However, the *Pew Research Centre* revealed that "other issues also were overshadowed as more people focused on the economy and jobs. There were sharp declines as well in the proportions rating dealing with illegal immigration (down 10 points), reducing health care costs (10 points) and reducing crime (eight points) as top priorities for the president and Congress."

This suggests that public thinking on whether the earth is getting warmer or whether it is human activity that causes global warming has been distorted and influenced by the overriding economic downturn, which is not a reflection of any actual shift in thinking.

George M Jacobs, 57 Educationist

A familiar story where an educated young man realises the simply inefficient use of resources in a meat-reliant world, Dr George Jacobs went through such an enlightenment whilst in his mid-twenties. Further encouraged by his cousin then, he embraced vegetarianism and hasn't looked back since.

The past 30 years have seen this once-introverted man turn advocate and then into the environmental activist that he is today, not to mention become the president of the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)* as well.

He recalls that it was a difficult time when he first turned vegetarian, where the world - and the places where he lived in particular - were not too kind to the vegetarian lifestyle (or vegetarians for that matter). He credits his introverted personality at the time - where having friends was not that important to him - for enabling him to ignore the peculiarities then.

He finds that what changed his life more than turning vegetarian was becoming an activist for the vegetarian cause. He shares that he feels proud of what he does and, hinting at the perfectionist in him, chides himself on the perceived lack of quantity and quality of his involvement, suggesting instead that he needs lots of improvement - *VegVibe* of course disagrees with this overly harsh self-assessment!

On top of all the teaching and volunteer work he does, Dr Jacobs

also finds time to stay active and is an avid tennis player. In addition, he enjoys swimming and dabbles in yoga for good measure.

During his free time he enjoys hanging out with his family, watching NBA games on TV, and improving his handiwork in the kitchen, preparing healthy vegetarian cuisine.

Looking ahead, ten years from now he hopes to see vegetarian options in all eateries, wide acceptance of vegetarianism as more than just a lifestyle choice, and the universal understanding that vegetarianism is much more than something that is done only by people of certain faiths.

He also hopes that the realisation will come by then for everyone that it is perhaps the #1 best daily action that all of us can take to make the world a happier, healthier, wiser and kinder place.

Ever ready to champion the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)*, Dr Jacobs also cordially invites one and all to join the society and be actively involved in its grassroots work.

He argues that being a part of the society is a great way to get lots of good information on not only the 'why' but also the 'how' and points out that there is no better way to meet like-minded vegetarians and those considering becoming vegetarians.

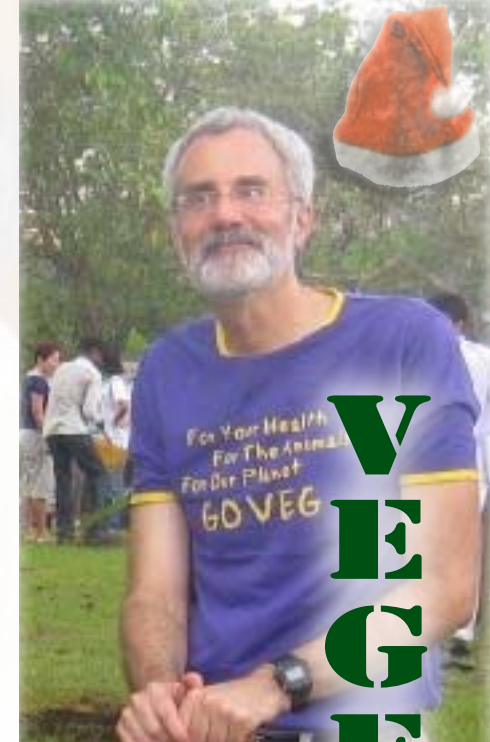


He adds that there is still much to be done to make the world a more veg-friendly place and, in his words, "the VSS needs soooooooooooooooooo much help!"

Reflecting on his life, Dr Jacobs feels that he has been mostly a 'quiet vegetarian' - "I just ate my vegetarian food and didn't do anything to try to convince others to eat less or no meat", and is therefore firm in his belief that the world today desperately needs more 'noisy vegetarians'.

He thus calls on everyone in the community to work together "so that we can make more noise".

Pointing to the proverb 'the squeaky wheels get the grease', the objective is to quickly draw attention to the hard facts and create the awareness of the issues so that people can realise the importance of making the necessary lifestyle choices that benefit the world we share with all living things.



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

Brown rice porridge. It's unpredictable; there can be so many different ingredients. Every time you encounter it, it can be different.

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

No real choice (in mind) ... that everyone goes veg?

3) What misconception about vegetarianism gets your goat?

I'm mystified why people think that you can't be healthy on a veg diet. Hundreds of millions of people in India have been veg for generations. Plus, local and international athletes and centenarians are veg. Last but not least, the research tells us that we can obtain all the necessary nutrition on a veg diet.



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

I guess I'll take this chance to plug the booklet VSS is now working on, *Meat Less in Singapore Starter Kit*. It's going to provide info, debunk myths and offer recipes to get folks started with meat reduction.

5) What would be a 'Quotable Quote' to you?

This is the hardest question as I'm a fan of quotes. I like this one because I like people to disagree with me: "Our ... advantage was that we had evolved unstated but fruitful methods of collaboration ... If either of us suggested a new idea, the other, while taking it seriously, would attempt to demolish it in a candid but non-hostile manner."

- Francis Crick, co-discoverer of DNA



MEAT EATERS EXPLAINED

By Ganga

integral to him and the very act of doing so - even though it may be a temporary adjustment for just one meal - causes him to go into a panic and act irrationally. Throughout history humans have been known time and again to do silly things out of fear and panic, and it is no different in this case.

We therefore hear of mothers sneaking eggs into the dishes at family gatherings, grandmothers frying the most decadent chicken wings they can find especially when their young grandchildren (who are being raised vegetarian) come to visit, and friends suddenly find themselves allergic to anything green when planning a jaunt around town.

Kindness & Compassion is the Key

Although it is understandable for the aggrieved vegetarian to fly into a fit of anger - especially the parent of the chicken-wing-seduced grandchild - it may be worthwhile to deal with such circumstances in the same way we view our fellow sentient beings instead - with compassion.

After all, by getting annoyed, angry or upset, we only provide fuel for the misconception that vegetarians and vegans are an unreasonable lot (on top of being 'troublesome' and 'eccentric'). Instead, we can use the opportunity to explain our exact needs if the host is genuinely ignorant, or demonstrate our resolve if the offending party couldn't care less about our philosophy.

We've all been there. That annual dinner and dance with colleagues or the pre-arranged dinner with family where vegetarian options were somehow 'overlooked'. Several of us would have been deeply outraged at the insensitivity of it all and may have yet to forgive such a faux pa.

But why does it happen? After all, we are in a multi-ethnic community in which awareness and sensitivity is bedrock. Even worse, the perpetrators are often people who should know better (or at least be aware enough) - and sometimes even our own flesh and blood.

Unfamiliarity & Fear is the Cause

On the face of it, it seems ridiculous that arranging for vegetarian options is so hard - practically-speaking, vegetables are easier to find and simpler to cook.

Well, it is largely a case of unfamiliarity - meat-eaters are typically not used to having no meat on their plate - they have not yet even imagined a life without meat for that matter (and for some, this is in spite of having watched actual footage of animal-suffering).

It is thus daunting for the average meat-eater to be faced with the task of excluding something so



Photo courtesy of 7thsens / FreeDigitalPhotos

Fighting the Irrationality = Forgiving

Many people are aware of the cruelty that happens to animals within the 'civilised' world but not enough are willing to turn vegetarian. There are also the millions who are prepared to

take up arms to defend their pets from harm but think nothing of eating like barbarians at KFC - they genuinely fail to see the irony.

Honestly, it is sometimes easier for the vegetarian to forgive the meat eater for his transgressions as opposed to educating him on our philosophy. This is no different from forgiving an animal that scratches or bites you out of fear - we understand that it is acting out of instinct and no amount of explanation can change this behaviour.

Similarly, we can choose to see the irrational meat-eater as acting out of instinct as well, and just as we recognise the right of sentient beings to live as nature intended them to, we could apply this logic to meat-eaters who cannot help but live in fear and act irrationally as a consequence.

Vegetarian Society (Singapore)

Vegetarian Society (Singapore), VSS, is a non-profit, non-religious organisation formed in 1999 which is also a member of the International Vegetarian Union. We strive to build a more humane and harmonious world for everyone on the planet - for our children, as well as for our fellow creatures.

VSS is the proud publisher of the *Singapore Vegetarian Food Guide*, a convenient, easy-to-carry 76-page booklet which showcases rich offerings of Singapore vegetarian cuisine - available at all major bookstores (S\$2.80) and directly from the VSS (\$2.50).



Join VSS

You can join the VSS as a member for as little as S\$30 a year and enjoy the many privileges from our partner organisations - in addition to receiving a complimentary copy of the *Singapore Vegetarian Food Guide*!

Meanwhile, no membership is required to join our online forum that has over 4,000 users, or to subscribe to our

VSS Newsletter

bi-weekly newsletter!

FORUM

<http://www.vegetarian-society.org/>



Magnificent Manila

By Halimah

Widely recognised as the most densely populated city in the world, Manila - the capital city of the Philippines, is the melting pot of cultures from far and wide. Waves of Chinese migration added to the Spanish and American colonisation over the centuries have influenced the already-eclectic indigenous culture, creating an incredibly vibrant and rich society.

Getting Around

Infamous for terrible traffic jams, travelling around Manila can either be relatively painless or prolonged frustration. Public transport, in the form of the *Light Rail Transit* (LRT) and *Metro Rail Transit* (MRT), may be one of the cheapest and most convenient ways of navigating around Manila. Costing between 12 to 15 pesos (35 to 45 cents), these rail networks are well-connected to shopping centres and tourist destinations and thus offer easy accessibility for tourists and locals alike. However, it is best to avoid rush-hour as the stations will be extremely crowded with commuters (not unlike Singapore).

Another travel option and a must-try is the *Jeepney* (right) which is unique to the Philippines and are vehicles that evolved from American military jeeps left behind after the *Second World War*. Gaudy and flamboyantly decorated, Jeepneys are an

integral part of the public transportation system, servicing about a third of the commuters in Manila alone.

Starting at 8.50 pesos (25 cents) per journey, each Jeepney has its own specific travel route and the sign on the windshield will indicate this information. On the downside, passengers have to be mindful of their valuables as Jeepneys are usually crowded with about 20 to 30 passengers and theft is commonplace.



Photo courtesy of City of Manila

Things To Do

Thanks to Manila's prolific historical legacy, a plethora of sites await the avid traveller. Some of the sites not to be missed include *Intramuros* (above), a fort city built during the Spanish era. Though much of Intramuros was destroyed during the Second World War, it is the only remaining district in Manila where old Spanish-era influences are preserved.



Photo courtesy of Netwizardllc.com



Photo courtesy of Paraiahsophilippines.com

Today, although many schools are located within the fort city, much of its old-world charm remains in the streets, walls and churches which are minimally disturbed by modernisation. In fact, the *San Agustin Church Manila* located within Intramuros was awarded the *UNESCO World Heritage Site* status in 1994.

For a spot of shopping, you can head down to *SM Mall of Asia*, touted as the third-largest mall in the world and home to 600 shops catering to shoppers' every need. Another option is *Chinatown* (above), located in the *Binondo* district, for those seeking an authentic experience - and some serious bargains. While at Binondo, do not forget to visit some of its remarkable religious monuments such as the *Seng Guan Temple*, the main temple for Buddhists in the Philippines, and *Binondo Church*, a fine example of Spanish architecture.

And to wind down at the end of a tiring day of travel, you can chill out by the *Manila Baywalk* which is famed for its picturesque sunset (right) and offers live-band music to complete the ambience. It is popular with both families and couples and is a good place to mingle with locals as well.

For The Veg Traveller

Though traditional Philippine cuisine is not vegetarian friendly and Manila city has limited vegetarian outlets, *Metro Manila* (encompassing the wider region of several cities surrounding Manila city) offers several full-vegetarian and vegan dining grub for the hungry traveller. In particular, *Quezon City* appears to have a higher concentration of vegetarian outlets as compared to other parts of Metro Manila.

Thus Manila is a true delight to discover; whether it is nature that beckons you or historical architecture that is your cup of tea, Manila has something to offer everyone. And although it may have limited vegetarian and vegan options, some foresight, clever planning and ample snacks in tow will keep the vegetarian traveller filled mentally, emotionally and gastronomically!



Places to Eat at Metro Manila

Greens Café and Restaurant

92 Sct. Castor Street, Quezon City

Opens Monday to Saturday from 11am to 10pm
and Sunday from 12pm to 9pm

Yet another restaurant to make it to PETA's top ten list, *Greens Café and Restaurant* offers an extensive menu of local Pinoy dishes in addition to typical Western cuisine. Set in a cosy atmosphere with an inviting verdant garden, *Greens Café and Restaurant* is known for its unique barbeque kebabs which are made using fresh button-mushrooms, tofu and gluten, and marinated with a delicious barbeque sauce before being charbroiled. Another must-try would be the decadent vegan chocolate cake which will leave you wanting more.



Photo courtesy of Spot.ph

Corner Tree Café

150 Jupiter Street, Miladay Building,
Makati City

Opens Tuesday to Sunday
from 11am to 10pm

The *Corner Tree Café*, voted as one of the top vegetarian restaurants in the Philippines by PETA, offers an eclectic menu serving typical Egyptian fare like *dukka* with white bean *hummus* to Italian cuisine like *pasta*. This Café also offers several organic and vegan dishes including its famed baked tofu and walnut burger served on wholewheat buns.



Photo courtesy of Corner Tree Cafe

Bodhi Vegetarian Restaurant

Several Locations

Visit <http://www.bodhivegetarian.com>

Want to try some traditional Pinoy food? Aimed at providing affordable vegetarian fare to locals, *Bodhi Vegetarian Restaurant* has several outlets around *Metro Manila*. Serving up vegetarian versions of Pinoy dishes like *kare kare*, *menudo*, *bopis* and *adobo*, *Bodhi Vegetarian Restaurant* is popular with locals for its healthy, wholesome and unpretentious food. Outlets do not use garlic or onion and have several vegan-friendly options as well.



Photo courtesy of Yes, I Am Precious



A FILM BY
YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND

HOME

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY ARMAND AMAR



A compilation of visually stunning aerial footage of over fifty countries, *HOME* presents some of the most awe-inspiring imagery Earth has to offer. Directed by award-winning Yann Arthus-Bertrand, this artistic film's graphic macro view of human beings' indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources is a chilling reminder of the consequent environmental damage.

Narrated by Glenn Close, this film opens in a story-like manner, chronicling the development of human civilisation - from rudimentary villages to the emergence of the urban society.

all discussed through the course of the film.

Though most of the film is relatively sombre, it does offer a glimmer of hope. Towards the end of the movie, it showcases the green efforts undertaken by various countries - such

as utilising geothermal and wind energy to create electricity - and urges us to look towards the abundant sun as an alternative energy source. *HOME* makes a compelling case for all us to rethink our lifestyle choices and do our bit in environmental conservation.

HOME is available online at <http://www.home-2009.com/us/index.html>

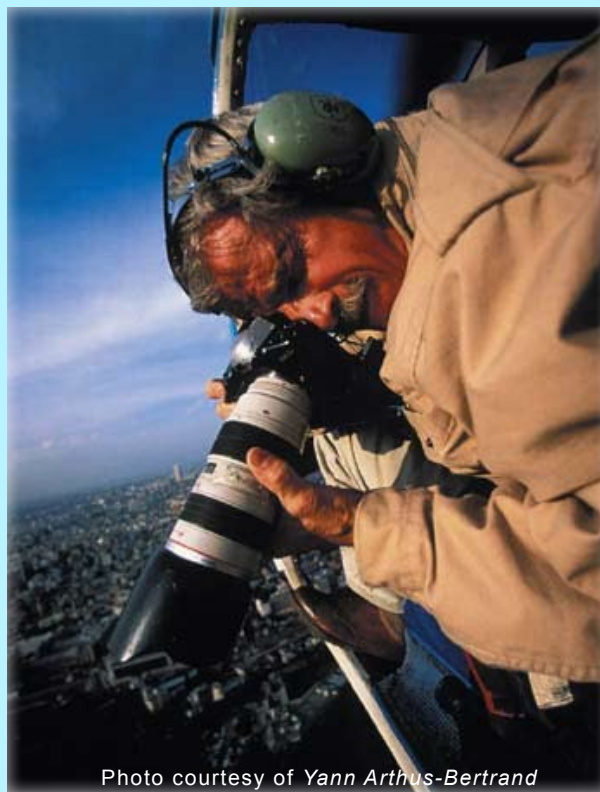


Photo courtesy of Yann Arthus-Bertrand



By Trina Tan

Hey Earth, Merry Christmas!

Christmas can get intimidating - what with all the gift shopping, parties to plan and people to visit, and being one of the most celebrated holidays here in Singapore, it inevitably is also the most 'consuming' time of the year.

Parties leave behind excess food, which goes needlessly into the trash; thousands of Christmas cards get sent out; and, massive amounts of wrapping paper gets ripped off and thrown away.

Having said that, I don't want to sound like a scrooge either as Christmas only comes around once a year and it could very well be the only holiday that you spend the most time showing affection to your family and friends.

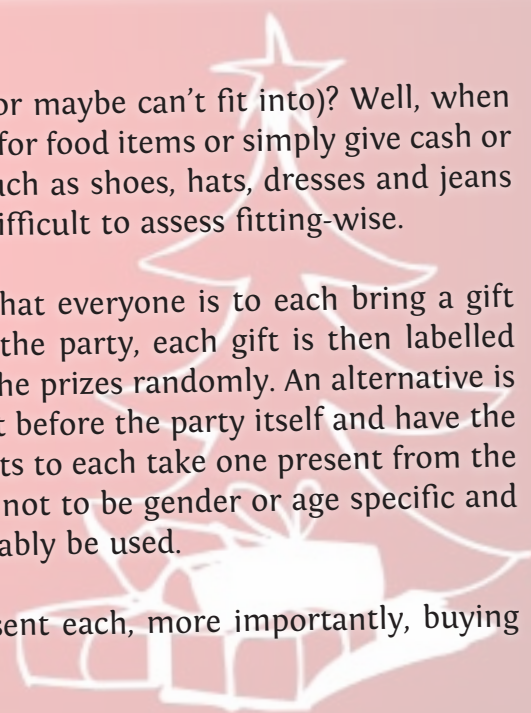
So, to help make this holiday sustainable and 'green', here are a few simple tips that you could consider as you plan and celebrate an eco-friendly Christmas.

Getting the gifts...

How often do we receive gifts that we don't even like (or maybe can't fit into)? Well, when buying gifts for someone you may not know too well, go for food items or simply give cash or shopping vouchers. Try to avoid buying fashion items such as shoes, hats, dresses and jeans because these are items that are highly subjective and difficult to assess fitting-wise.

A great tip for party hosts is to clearly tell the guests that everyone is to each bring a gift worth about \$15 wrapped in recycled material. During the party, each gift is then labelled with a number and a simple draw is done to distribute the prizes randomly. An alternative is to arrange for guests to buy presents for one other guest before the party itself and have the gifts exchanged during the party, or simply getting guests to each take one present from the 'present pile' as they leave. In most cases, the gifts tend not to be gender or age specific and each guest leaves with something that could most probably be used.

Whilst it also facilitates equality - everyone gets a present each, more importantly, buying one present each is more environmentally friendly.



Wrapping the gifts...

Wouldn't it be great if you as the receiver could let others be aware that you do not need to have your gifts wrapped up at all? And if you are the host of the party, you can even use your 'authority' to insist that everyone brings an unwrapped gift!

It is no secret that millions of tonnes of wrapping paper go to waste after the Christmas holidays. Many would not go through the trouble of removing the wrapper nicely for reuse (good on you if you do!) and children, who are the main receiver of gifts, most certainly do not know how to do this delicately.

But if the gifts have to be wrapped, then using expired textbook pages, used comics, old newspapers, draft music sheets and outdated magazines would be some of the creative ideas to rely on. If you really need the wrapping to be neat, brown recycled paper is a fantastic option to consider as well.

Finally, to avoid having a 'naked' gift whilst not using wrapping paper, a simple decorative box or attractive paper bag can be used instead - such gift boxes and paper bags can always be re-used or kept as storage options.

Settling the decorations...

In the old days, fancy synthetic Christmas tree decorations did not exist and the people then used cookies, *gingerbread men* and other biodegradable items to hang on their Christmas trees. Whilst the humidity and warm weather in Singapore prevents us from using food items as decorations, we can still decorate our trees with recycled art and craft materials like old Christmas cards, corks from wine bottles, ribbons from leftover gift-wrappings, and even dried nuts and fruit. Just let your imagination run wild and rest assured you will have the most unique tree that acts as a great conversation starter at your party. Also, do use *LED* lights instead of the normal ones as they considerably cut down on energy consumption.

Sending your wishes...

Once upon a time, sending Christmas cards used to be the way to go but not today. With the advent of so much technology, you could send a shout-out via *twitter* or *Facebook*, send emails, e-cards, and SMS or MMS messages to most of your friends and family who are tech-savvy enough.

As for the older relatives, you could still send Christmas cards by using recycled materials instead. Alternatively, you can consider buying Christmas cards that have been made by clients of charitable organisations so that you know the money spent will be used for a good cause. It is also possible to send a few cards together in the same envelope if you are mailing people living together - better still if you could just use one card made of organic material for the whole family to share.

Overall, it would mean less postage costs for you, with less fuel and less trees being used in the process. Another good and novel way of sending the season's greetings is through a phone call! Although it may seem too easy, it actually has a more personal touch and is very effective in cementing the relationship further. Not to mention, it would be a pleasant surprise for the receiver on the other end that would put both you and the person in a cheerful mood!

Preparing the invitations...

Sending out invitation cards on top of Christmas cards results in so much paper being used and additional postage costs. Why not invite friends and relatives through electronic means instead such as *Facebook* event invites, emails, SMS messages or by just plain phone calls. In fact using tools like *Facebook* even helps monitor the replies and confirmations to your event!

Taking care of the food...

This is one holiday where lots of food is dished out at party after party. Unfortunately, this means a lot of leftovers for sure and it's up to the host to convince the guests to pack home the extras. For example, the plastic containers that are given when purchasing food from hawker centres can be easily reused and provided to the guests for them to pack back some of their favourite items - when provided with these plastic containers, guests are usually more than delighted to take home some food.

Another angle to consider besides the food itself is the amount of disposables used at a party. For smaller gatherings, it is always possible to use normal cutlery instead - guests can even be invited to help clean whilst chatting near the end of the evening. Also, the menu can determine if any cutlery is even necessary at all - finger food such as sandwiches and pizza slices can be easily supported on a napkin. Remember, the host has the power to plan a menu that is eco-friendly and the guests too can exercise their own power by using the same plate and cup throughout the event.



In the Mood for Christmas

By Chef Halimah with photos



Method

- 1) Wash and soak black-eyed peas in water overnight
- 2) Using fresh water, boil black-eyed peas with teaspoon of salt until soft and mushy (using pressure cooker is faster)
- 3) In mean time, mince chilli, shallots, garlic and coriander until fine
- 4) Drain water from peas and mash until smooth, then add minced ingredients, flour, salt and pepper to mashed peas - mix well until incorporated (mixture will still be wet)

For Patties
 150g dried black-eyed peas
 2 red chilli
 5 shallots
 3 cloves garlic
 5 sprigs coriander
 50g flour
 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt
 pinch of pepper
 vegetable oil for pan-frying

For Lemon Tahini Sauce
 2 tablespoons tahini
 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 2 tablespoons water
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon cumin

Bean Patties with Lemon Tahini Sauce

- 5) In flat non-stick pan over low heat, drizzle some oil, make ping-pong sized ball of mixture and press directly onto non-stick pan - press gently to spread to desired thickness
- 6) Cook over medium heat and flip patties over when top starts to dry and bottom is golden-brown - remove from heat when both sides turn golden-brown
- 7) In bowl, mix tahini, lemon, water, salt and cumin and whisk well to incorporate before serving with bean patties

800g potatoes, peeled
 2 cloves garlic, peeled
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 2 teaspoon olive oil
 4 shallots, peeled
 200g red capsicum
 100g sugar peas
 120g carrots
 120g sweetcorn
 3 stalks celery
 1 tablespoon vegetarian oyster sauce
 1 teaspoon thyme
 1 teaspoon black pepper

Method

- 1) Cube potatoes to desired size and boil with garlic and teaspoon of salt until soft and tender
- 2) Drain water then mash potatoes and garlic until smooth
- 3) Prepare vegetables by dicing into similar sizes
- 4) Slice shallots and sauté until golden-brown in heated olive oil
- 5) Add vegetables, oyster sauce,

thyme and black pepper and fry until soft and nearly cooked

6) Layer 11-inch by 8-inch pan with vegetable mixture, spoon mashed potatoes over and spread evenly

7) Place pie on upper-middle rack and bake at 200 degrees Celcius for about 20 to 30 minutes until top browns

Shepherd's Pie



Mixed Greens Salad with Citrus Dressing

Method

- 1) Wash and dry mixed greens and tear leaves into smaller pieces
- 2) Cut strawberries into quarters and halve each cherry tomato
- 3) Mix orange juice and rind, lemon juice and rind, maple syrup, and vegan mayonnaise in a bowl and whisk until smooth
- 4) Toss mixed greens, strawberries and cherry tomatoes in salad dressing and sprinkle toasted almonds before serving

230g mixed greens of choice
6 strawberries
12 cherry tomatoes
2 tablespoons toasted almonds
3 tablespoons orange juice
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon orange rind
1 teaspoon lemon rind
1 teaspoon maple syrup
1 tablespoon vegan mayonnaise



500g cauliflower
1 tablespoon olive oil
235g leeks
2 cloves garlic
700ml vegetable stock
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1 bay leaf
salt and pepper to taste
coriander leaves for garnish

Roasted Cauliflower and Leek Soup

Method

- 1) Cut cauliflower into florets, toss lightly with teaspoon of oil and spread as single layer on baking sheet before baking at 200 degrees Celcius until edges start to turn brown
- 2) Remove tough green ends of leek and slice
- 3) Add remaining oil in pan and sauté leeks, garlic and bay leaf until soft and fragrant
- 4) Add vegetable stock and roasted cauliflower



- florets and bring to boil
- 5) Remove bay leaf and blend cauliflower mixture until smooth and creamy
 - 6) Add salt and pepper to taste together with cumin
 - 7) Serve in individual bowls and sprinkle some chopped coriander leaves

Persimmon and Cranberry Jelly

Method

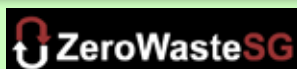
- 1) Scrape flesh of overripened persimmons and remove pits before blending until smooth
- 2) Add water, sugar and agar-agar in pot, stir and bring to boil
- 3) Remove from heat and add to blended persimmons before pouring mixture into preferred mould and cooling until semi-solid
- 4) In same pot, add cranberry juice, sugar and remaining agar-agar and bring to boil
- 5) Cool slightly and pour over persimmon layer
- 5) Chill until hard, cut and serve cold

Top Layer	Bottom Layer
100g sugar	150g sugar
2 overripened persimmon	500ml cranberry juice
6g agar-agar powder	6g agar-agar powder
300ml water	



BYOU
BRING YOUR OWN UTENSILS

An initiative of



Bottle Set
(Blue - BYOU008)
(Green - BYOU009)
(White - BYOU010)
Plastic bottle with screw cap contains stainless steel spoon, fork and chopsticks

Price: S\$ 12



How many disposable forks, spoons and chopsticks do you throw away each year? Do you realise that such practice leads to global warming? Well, you can stop this now by using your very own reusable forks, spoons and chopsticks when you eat out! BYOU offers a range of reusable utensils made in Taiwan which come in a host of attractive designs, with a delivery service within Singapore at \$5 per purchase - which we are pleased to waive for orders amounting to above S\$50.

Use our order form at

<http://www.zerowastesg.com/contact-us>

or drop us an email at

editor@zerowastesg.com today!



Compact Travel Set
(BYOU015)
Compact container contains stainless steel spoon, fork and detachable chopsticks
Price: S\$ 10

Cloth Bag Set
(Blue - BYOU004)
(Green - BYOU005)
Cloth bag with velcro and slots contains stainless steel spoon, fork and chopsticks

Price: S\$ 12



Haven't bought Christmas presents for your loved ones yet? Well, these eco-friendly and plant-based products are sure to thrill them...



Containing five luxurious plant-based body and facial care products that pamper and rejuvenates tired skin, A'kin's *Deluxe Radiant Collection* is presented in an elegant natural fibre bag that doubles as a cosmetic pouch which contains a facial mist, serum, moisturiser, cleanser and hand cream, all of which promise to leave you with vibrant, glowing, healthy-looking, youthful skin.

A'kin's *Deluxe Radiant Collection* retails at S\$69 and is available online from Eviva

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

Impress your artsy friends with Aesop's range of poetry-inspired Christmas gifts. Paying tribute to English poet William Blake, the *Aesop Poetry Gift Kit* contains three essential body-care items made with invigorating ingredients such as coriander seeds, black peppercorn and citrus rinds. Packaged in a minimalistic brown container, each kit comes with a short yet beautiful poem penned by the great William Blake.

Aesop Poetry Gift Kit – William BLAKE retails at S\$80 and is available at Aesop Millennia Walk and Aesop Ngee Ann City

<http://www.aesop.net.au>



Made with 100% organic cotton, BGO Singapore offers a range of quirky yet stylish apparel for men, women and even babies. In particular, their black and white t-shirt *HUMAN* makes a bold statement of connecting humans across battle-

lines around common human needs. Produced in Palestine with water-based ink, this t-shirt is available in both men and women's sizes and makes for a great 'couple gift' with a message.

The '*HUMAN*' t-shirt retails at S\$33 and is available online from BGO Singapore



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

If you would like to 'Talk Shop' about any product or provide further information on those featured in this column, please drop us an email at vision@vegvibe.com



ADVERTISE WITH US

To ensure that **VegVibe** remains sustainable in the long term, we have devised a hassle-free model for advertising.

For all the online issues of **VegVibe**, you can advertise your product or service in a half-page space for a flat rate of \$50 per issue, so do drop us an email at vision@vegville.com if you want to reach out to over 500 discerning readers who read **VegVibe** because they really want to!

We accept placement requests from both individuals and businesses alike, with the only stipulation being that any advertisement should be beneficial to the vegan and vegetarian community.

Our first issue saw over 300 direct downloads and a subscription rate of almost 100 readers which has now grown to 200. The subsequent issues meanwhile have maintained a download rate of 500 times each, without including the countless email forwards that we estimate would further add between 100 and 200 to this figure.

MISSING THE POINT

