

# *The Valentine's Issue* Vegvibe

FEBRUARY 2010

Evergreen  
Lovebirds

NGO KAU WEE &  
RACHEL CHENG

Also in this issue:

AsiaForAnimalsConference, Having  
a Green Heart, Aphrodisiac 'Love  
Potions' and Magical Mauritius



# The Chief Veggie Speaks!

Love is in the air and we're not just talking about the love all of us have for our fellow sentient beings! Yes, it is *THAT* time of the year when romance takes precedence over work and friends, and woe betide the poor soul who takes his partner for granted come February 14.

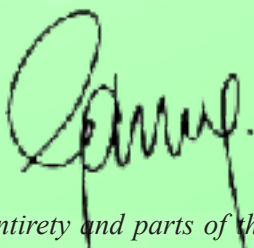
The world of romance may sometimes be unfriendly to the vegetarian in love and so, to help the vege-romantic, we offer inspiration and ideas in this issue on how to celebrate with that special someone - be it cooking a aphrodisiac meal yourself (*Page 16*), bringing her to the honeymoon paradise of Mauritius (*Page 04*) or to wine and dine her in style (*Page 11*).

In addition, we take this opportunity to discuss related issues such as how our diet affects acne (*Page 10*) - many a date have been cancelled for this reason alone - and feature a couple who have continued to be in a perpetual state of puppy-love in spite of being married for almost 6 years (*Page 14*)!

Our search for an inspirational vegetarian or vegan in readers' lives has also unearthed many worthy characters and we have shortlisted the most interesting person to be featured in the March issue.

We are also pleased to announce our appointment as the Singapore correspondent for the *European Vegetarian and Animal News Alliance (EVANA)*, where our news stories will reach the international community.

Finally, as ever, we continue to include updates and breaking news stories on the [VegVibe blog](http://veg.vibe.com/blog) at <http://veg.vibe.com/blog>, and remain contactable via email at [vision@veg.vibe.com](mailto:vision@veg.vibe.com) and through our website at <http://veg.vibe.com>.



*This issue may be freely distributed in its entirety and parts of the content may be quoted so long as it is credited to VegVibe. The material in this publication is the intellectual property of Gangasudhan and Halimah, both of whom reserve copyright.*

## CONTENTS

<b>Have a Green Heart this Valentine's Day!</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Magical Mauritius</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Know Your Asparagus</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Making a Difference Together - For All Animals</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Talk Shop</b> <i>Product review</i>	<b>10</b>
<b>Out &amp; About</b> <i>Food review</i>	<b>11</b>
<b>Squeezing the Dairy Out of Acne</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Vegetarian Heroes</b> <i>Ngo Kau Wee &amp; Rachel Cheng</i>	<b>14</b>
<b>Veg Kitchen</b> <i>Aphrodisiac 'Love Potions'</i>	<b>16</b>
<b>Print &amp; Film</b> <i>Media review</i>	<b>19</b>
<b>Excuse Me, Is Your Cheese Vegetarian?</b>	<b>20</b>

**Design & Editing by Ganga**  
**Concept & Content by Halimah**

**Contributing Writers**  
*Trina Tan*

*The editor would like to thank  
Mr Ng Kau Wee & Ms Rachel Cheng  
for graciously agreeing to be featured  
in this issue.*

# Have a green heart this Valentine's Day!

By Trina Tan

When you think February, what comes to your mind? Do you picture pink red roses and hearts everywhere? Yes, I am talking about Valentine's Day, a day where tonnes of flowers all over the world are harvested and sold and millions of expensive chocolate with fancy wrappings and ribbons are bought by husbands, boyfriends and secret admirers.

Valentine's Day, second only to Christmas, is a holiday that is really deadly to the environment. Regardless of the holiday's origins or original sentiments, in this present day - just like most holidays - it has been transformed into a highly commercialised expression of love around the world.

What many consumers don't realise though is that the gifts associated with Valentine's Day - chocolate, flowers, diamonds, gold and cards - come with a serious cost to the environment. So, instead of being surrounded by the theme colours of pink and red, why not have a little tinge of green in your heart this year?

Now that I have changed the 'colour code', in your mind, let's see what old-fashioned sentimentalists with new eco-mentalities can do.

### Chocolates

Did you know that many children that work on cocoa farms in developing countries have never actually eaten a chocolate bar in their lives? This

Valentine's Day, when you buy a box of chocolates for that special someone, consider getting chocolates that are 'certified' (left). Organisations that practice fair-trade in producing chocolate work to ensure that the product is not the result of slave labour, is pesticide-free, grown and manufactured without

genetically-modified (GM) ingredients, and that the farmers and cocoa workers involved receive fair wages for their effort.

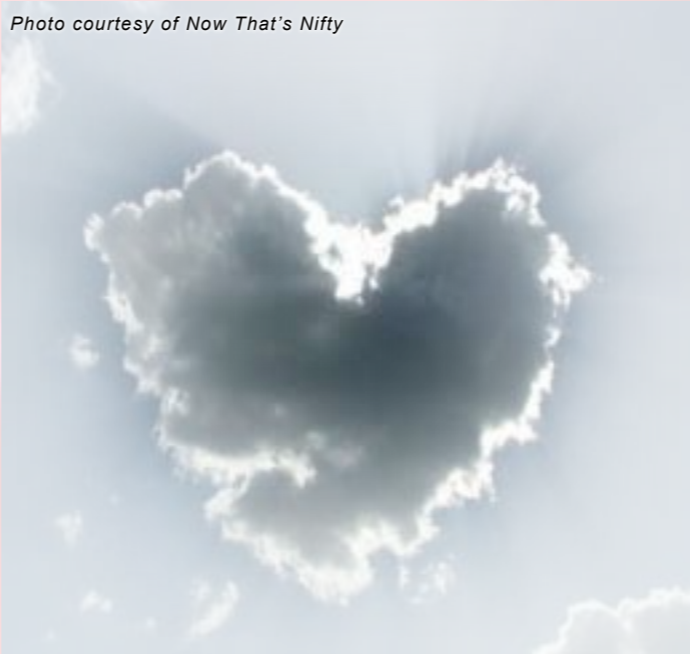
### Flowers

Flowers are one of the top pesticide-intensive agricultural crops in the world! The *Green Book* estimates that if all the roses purchased for Valentine's Day in the USA alone were organically grown, it would prevent the use of 22,700 pounds of pesticides.

Reports also indicate that the female farmers who harvest and grow these pesticide-filled flowers experience a wide range of pregnancy issues such as miscarriages, deformed babies and premature births. In some areas, more than 50% of flower workers suffer from the symptoms of pesticide poisoning.

What is even more sad when you think about it is that these flowers eventually wither and most get tossed away. Are we so willing to please our other half - even at the expense of the Earth? Surely there are other ways around this, and one is to opt for flowers that are organically grown.

Photo courtesy of Now That's Nifty



### Cards

The paper trade is considered to be a non-sustainable industry as there are not enough wood resources to meet the global paper demand indefinitely. Whilst alternative

sources for paper production are increasing, the fact is that more than 90% of the paper we use still comes directly from trees.

This Valentine's Day, why not buy cards that are made from sustainable materials like animal dung, cotton rags, straw and flowers. Many of these recyclable cards can be extremely fanciful and would be

thoughtful not only to the receiver, but also the environment.

### Get Creative for Environment's Sake

Of course, not every Valentine's Day needs to be accompanied by flowers, chocolates or jewellery. You could always think out of the box, which should be the case anyway since this is the one day in the year you should really be giving from the heart.

There are many cheap eco-friendly gift ideas to choose from, ranging from customised gift baskets which will enable you to select the items you know your partner will like, a collection of photos compiled onto a CD with songs, or a framed collage of the sentimental items that hold dear to the heart. In any case, I'm sure it must be pretty boring to always receive or give the same chocolates and flowers year after year right?

And who says Valentine's Day dinners should be an occasion to splurge? Try whipping up something (see Page 16 for ideas) in your own home and turn it into a candlelight dinner instead, followed by an activity that allows both

of you cosy up to each other. And if you are lost for ideas, there are thousands of websites that offer couples great ideas on what they can do together.



Photo courtesy of Susy

Whilst a do-it-yourself romantic evening significantly reduces costs on the dinner, you can as easily replace a getaway trip (to save the cost of petrol used in travelling) with something that is equally fun too - if you just put your mind to it.

So I hope this Valentine's Day, you will have a big heart to not only make your sweetheart happy, but Mother Earth too.

### Happy Valentine's Day!



Photo courtesy of BlissTree.com



# Magical Mauritius

By Halimah

A picturesque turquoise island, Mauritius is truly the *Shangri-la* of tourist paradise. Flanked by the aquamarine *Indian Ocean*, it is home to pristine sandy beaches, an eclectic group of hospitable inhabitants, and rich historical and cultural legacy. Popular with honeymooners, there is no doubt that Mauritius is *the* alluring getaway from bustling city life.

## Getting Around

Mauritius is divided into five broad regions and provides ample public and private transportation to reach all corners of the island. Buses are an affordable and popular option to travel and grant the opportunity to take in the sights and interact with the effervescent locals.

Bus fares are usually between 12 to 30 rupees (about 55 cents to \$1.40) depending on the distance travelled, and buses are often packed during the morning and evening period. The standard advice is to board the express buses

which stop less frequently than the standard ones - and, more importantly, take only half the time to reach the desired destination.

Commuters are generally encouraged to have small currency as conductors (yes, they still have them there) do not always have sufficient change - and rounding is up, never down.

For those who prefer to avoid jostling in crowded buses, taxis offer a convenient and comfortable mode of transport. Dime a dozen, taxis can be hired for a full-day excursion or for single trips. Though taxis are supposed to be metered, it is hardly used and instead it is essential to haggle and clearly state the fare even before boarding the taxi.

Do choose taxis that are licensed though as some unlicensed taxis have been found to bait passengers with cheaper fares in an attempt to rob them later (literally, not metaphorically).

## Things to do

Mauritius has something to offer every discerning traveller. Acclaimed for its azure seas and silky, sandy shores, the island is perfect for a romantic escape or exhilarating sea sports. *Grand Baie* beach is perhaps the most popular with tourists and offers a breathtaking beachfront and easy accessibility to many amenities such as hotels, restaurants and shopping outlets.

But if *Grand Baie's* touristy buzz is not your cup of tea, you can alternatively head to *Belle Mare's* 10km-long stretch of spectacular beach. Home to luxury hotels and residences, *Belle Mare* is touted to be finest beach in Mauritius.

Blessed with a wide expanse of flora, fauna and natural terrain - all created by a volcanic eruption under the sea, nature lovers will definitely enjoy taking hikes at the *Black River Gorges National Park*. At over 67km<sup>2</sup>, endemic creatures such as the *pink pigeon*, *Mauritian flying fox* and *Mauritius cuckoo-shrike* inhabit the park and are protected by the thick rainforest.

Meanwhile, for those seeking thrilling encounters, *Casela Nature and Leisure Park* provides safari walks with free-roaming lions in the midst. The less adventurous can alternatively consider the photo safari where zebras, African antelopes and ostriches can be observed in their natural environment.

Another tourist spot is *Port Louis* (below) that impresses visitors with its colonial architecture and plenitude of sights - all set against the backdrop of majestic mountains. Being the capital of Mauritius, the city is overflowing with activity - which means shopping fiends need not look further than the *Central Market* where handicrafts and souvenir items are plentiful.

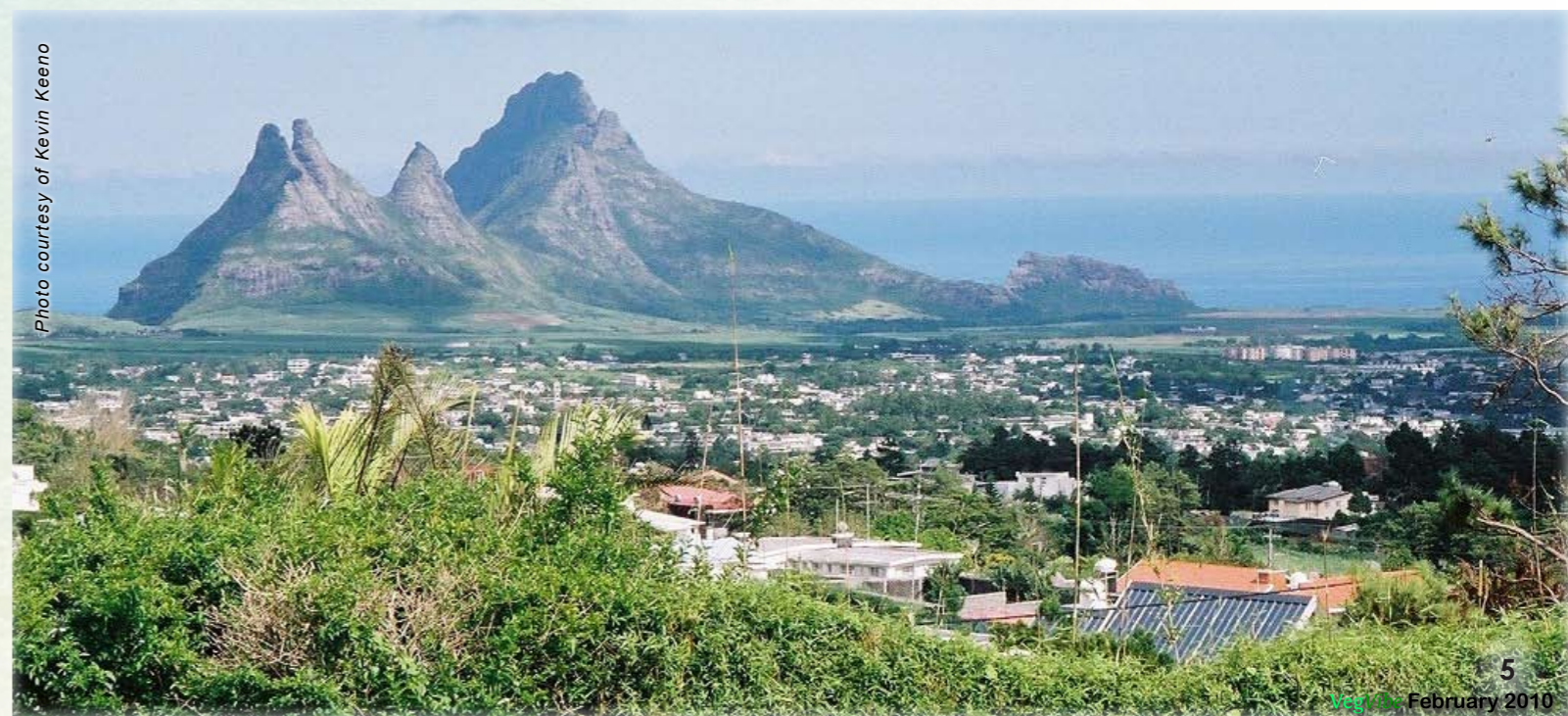
*Port Louis* also boasts several religious institutions with spectacular architecture and notably, *Jumma Mosque's* aesthetic blend of *Moorish* and *Munhal* elements in its construction are worthy of a visit. Be enchanted by elaborate glass chandeliers that once illuminated the prayer halls and stand under the old *Badamia Tree* that takes centre stage in the courtyard as you contemplate the wonders of Mauritius.

## For the Veg Traveller

Mauritian cuisine is actually a confluence of Indian, Chinese, Creole and European influences, and as half of the population is *Hindu*, vegetarian and vegan food is available widely. However, even as most restaurants are able to cater to vegetarians, there are only a few dedicated vegetarian restaurants in Mauritius.

Nevertheless, it is worth the slight inconvenience to enjoy one of the few places on Earth where Mother Nature's sheer beauty can take your breath away.

Photo courtesy of Kevin Keeno



## Places to Eat in Mauritius

### **Bharati Vegan Restaurant**

*Camp Fouquereaux, Phoenix,  
Plaines Wilhems District*

[www.bharati-vegan.restaurant.mu](http://www.bharati-vegan.restaurant.mu)

*Call (230) 696 8472 for more details on operating hours*

This might be a first even for the most conservative Indian vegetarian - a vegan restaurant for those who shun all animal products, including milk products like cheese and butter. The *Bharati Vegan restaurant* is a small shack just off the highway from the Seewoosagur Ramgoolam airport, the father of the modern Mauritian nation. Now that is something you'd be hard put to find even in India. - *India eNews*



*Photo courtesy of Indian delicacies*



*Photo courtesy of Vegan Food Photo Blog*

*Govinda's Restaurant at Phoenix is centrally located near Jumbo Hypermarket. Drop in on your way back from sight-seeing, take a break after shopping or just join in for an unforgettable evening. The daily buffet consists of rotis, 3 varieties of curries, fried rice and briyani on alternate days, pasta, dahl, rice, pizza, baked samosas, and a variety of savouries, pastries*

*and sweets. Reservations are recommended during evening dining to avoid disappointment.*

### **Govinda's Restaurant**

*Hare Krishna Land  
(near to Continent),  
Pont Fer - Phoenix,  
Plaines Wilhems District*

*Phone: (230) 697 6504*

[www.iskconmauritius.com](http://www.iskconmauritius.com)  
*Opens Monday to Saturday  
from 11.00am to 8.30pm  
and is closed on Sundays  
and public holidays*

### **The Clubbers Resto & Bar**

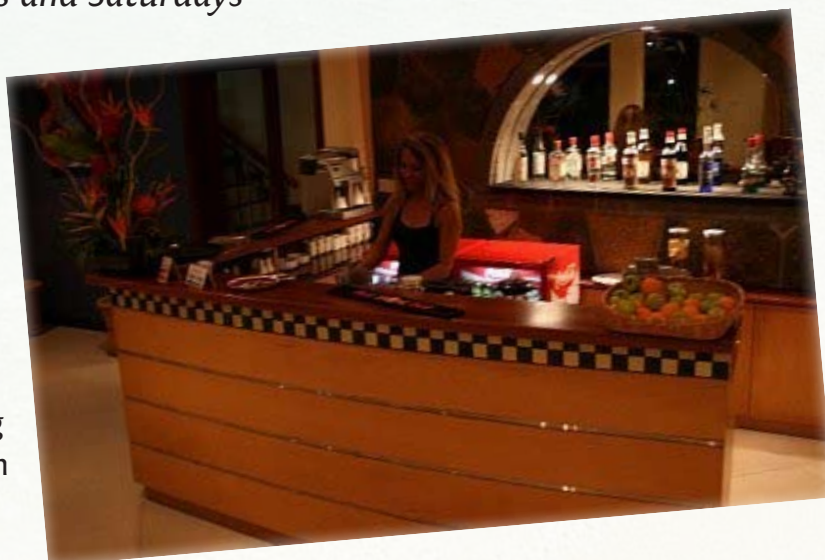
*Country Club Complex, Chemin 20 Pieds, Pereybere, Rivière du Rempart District*

*Phone: (230) 263 5664*

*Opens Monday to Saturday from 10.00am to 2.00pm and 6.30pm to 9.00pm, with extended operating hours until 10.30pm on Fridays and Saturdays*

[www.theclubbers.restaurant.mu](http://www.theclubbers.restaurant.mu)

A place to chill out that has vegetarian options, *The Clubbers Resto & Bar* offers a wide range of healthy dishes from lunch to dinner and has a Bar, Swimming Pool and Billiard Room as well. The range of facilities together with the selection of delicious food, cater to everyone, from individuals who want to have a good healthy meal to big families looking for having a great afternoon of relaxation and fun beside the pool.



# Know Your Asparagus!

Asparagus is rich in protein, iron, vitamins A, C, E and K, and is a good source of vitamin B6, calcium, magnesium and zinc.

In ideal conditions, an asparagus can grow up to 10 inches in a single day!

Asparagus is considered an aphrodisiac as it is high in Vitamin E, a vitamin thought to stimulate sex hormones. So eat up!

Asparagus is a native of the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor regions.

Asparagus should be cooked quickly to prevent the loss of nutrition - popular methods include steaming, blanching and quick stir-frying.

White asparagus is created by burying it under the soil to prevent chlorophyll production.

Asparagus is a natural diuretic and has been traditionally used to treat problems such as arthritis and water retention due to PMS.

Never wash or soak asparagus before storage.

Eating asparagus will cause strong smelling 'asparagus urine', however, only 22% of the population has the genes to smell this odour.

# Making a Difference

By Ganga

## Together - for all Animals



Following a year's worth of planning and organising, *Animal Concerns Research & Education Society*, widely known simply as ACRES, successfully held the 6th installment of the *Asia for Animals Conference* in Singapore last month. The 5-day event was held at the *Furama Riverfront* hotel and welcomed 390 delegates representing 207 organisations from 26 countries.

The largest-ever gathering of animal activists in Asia, the conference was a huge success and is still the talk of the town, one month on. Considering that even the *Singapore Tourism Board* was keen to support the event, there is no doubt that animal welfare has reached a more mainstream status today and its concerns now command the attention of the public at large and not just animal lovers.



### Simple Conference with Powerful Message

The opening ceremony was simple yet meaningful, with the guest-of-honour Mr Seah Kian Peng, the Member of Parliament for *Marine Parade GRC*, arriving at the conference with a *Lion Dance* troupe in tow. A short interpretive performance by *Cedar Primary School* students on the impact of shark fishing later, Mr Seah addressed the audience to officially welcome everyone and deliver his speech.

The mood was thus set for an exciting few days and Mr Louis Ng, Executive Director of ACRES then came onstage to provide a comprehensive overview of the progress that the animal protection movement has made within Asia. In fact, the overview was so comprehensive that during the first break, the conference office was inundated with requests for a softcopy of this overview to be furnished.

Also, the atmosphere was so friendly that the organisers had a hard time getting the delegates - mostly of whom had embarked on animated conversations with various counterparts - back into the conference auditorium at the end of each break period to continue on with the presentations.

### Issues with a Specific Cause

The conference discussed various issues under the broad categories of *Running Effective Education Programmes*, *Improving the Welfare of Animals in Captivity*, *Achieving Long Term Changes for Farm Animals*, *Effective Stray Animals Management*, *Wiping out the Wildlife Trade*, *Running a Sustainable Rescue Centre*, *Campaigning for Change*, and *Working with Government Agencies* - with the overall guiding focus being 'the urgent need for a common vision for the animal protection movement and the development of long-term, concrete steps to take to achieve this vision'.

The conference thus explored ways to work together through collaboration that would result in greater impact for the cause, as opposed to localised solutions that typically treat the symptom rather than solve the underlying problem.



And where animal welfare was once just about dogs and cats, there has been a shift to include circus animals and those held in captivity. And although the discussion on cruelty to farm animals was limited, it was clear that the general mindset with regard to animal welfare is heading towards this area as well.

There were also some achievements that were celebrated during this conference - namely, the eradication of the dancing bear industry in India and Chennai becoming rabies-free as of June 2009.

### Attention to Detail

Both Mr Louis Ng and his wife-cum-working-partner, Ms Amy Corrigan (*see interview below*), being vegetarians themselves, took the trouble to ensure that the food catered during the event was from a vegan source - truly a first-of-its-kind as far as conferences go.



A vegetarian since age 11, Ms Amy Corrigan, Director of Education & Director of Cruelty-Free Living Campaigns at ACRES, shared her thoughts in a post-conference interview with *VegVibe* at the ACRES headquarters.

She told us that for the first time in the conference's history, the number of presentations was so overwhelming that all could not be included - with about 50 papers successfully presented over the 5 days. She also revealed that the organising team was just 38 volunteers-strong, making ACRES's achievement in organising the event all that more remarkable and impressive.

Reflecting back on the 5 days, she singled out one of the workshops in relation to the topic of *Running Effective Education Programmes* as being extremely fun with lots of participation from everyone involved.

She was also candid in admitting that whilst there are more groups involved in animal protection than ever before, there is still a lack of attention



The organisers also took painstaking effort to ensure that the conference was interesting, interactive and fun, with the workshops being more practical than theoretical, and a more free-flowing format adopted during the conference presentations.

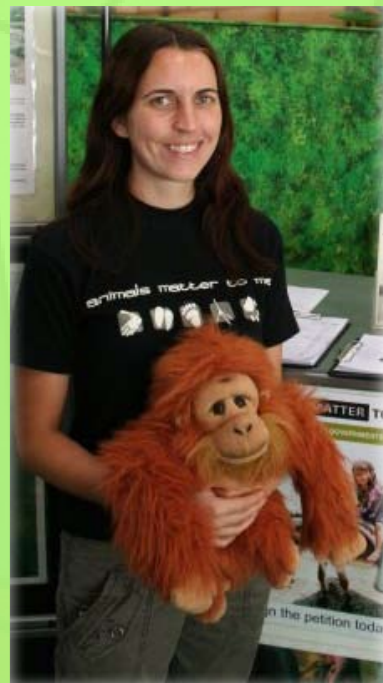
By all accounts the *AfA Conference 2010* can only be deemed a huge success and without the passionate ACRES team spearheading this initiative, this success might very well have been significantly limited.

As for the animal protection movement itself, it is clear from all the delegates and presentations that today's animal activist is focused on creating awareness and education rather than just rescue - because only the former approach will solve the problem once and for all.

in the areas of laboratory animals and farm animals. Nevertheless, she sees this being addressed and is confident that more awareness will ensue within the near future.

Ms Corrigan is also proud of the fact that ACRES has grown from strength to strength since its inception in 2001, and has successfully relocated a few primates and several exotic reptiles, as well as worked closely with the *Traditional Chinese Medicine* (TCM) industry to introduce labelling and stop the selling of endangered species' parts.

However, she feels that there is more work to be done as the organisation seeks to get its Rescue Centre up and fully running, and continues its main role of education, coupled with animal rescue.



## Talk Shop

A festive blend of cinnamon and clove essential oils and red currant; this exquisite spa candle is just the thing to set the mood right on Valentine's evening. Made from the purest of waxes - 100% natural soy beans sourced from sustainable crops grown in the USA - the 100% biodegradable wax gives excellent scent throw and, even better, the melt pool can be used to moisturise the skin, with each candle coming in a reusable gift box complete with removable sleeve.

*Soy Pohutukawa Glass Candle in Gift Box* is available online from *Lights of Bliss* and retails at S\$40 per box set



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



*Burton's Digestive Biscuits* are made without eggs and dairy, making it a suitable companion for a mid-afternoon tea break with that special someone. Mildly-sweetened and crunchy, these biscuits are good on their own or dunked in a cup of hot tea, coffee or even cocoa. These biscuits are so addictive that you can even demolish a whole packet without realising! Its subtle taste also makes the biscuits a good base for cheesecakes and other desserts that you might be planning to whip up to surprise your significant other as well.

*Burton's Digestive Biscuits* retails at S\$2.82 for a 400g pack and is available at all major supermarkets

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

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@vegville.com](mailto:vision@vegville.com)

Looking forward to the Valentine's date? *A'kin Pure Radiance Rosehip Oil* will ensure a radiant complexion with its 100% organic rosehip oil formulation. Extracted from the *Rosa Canina* seeds, this essential oil is rich in Vitamins A & E and Omegas 9, 6 and 3 essential fatty acids as well. Easily absorbed into the skin, just a few drops will leave the skin deeply moisturised, vibrant, smooth and soft to the touch. This formulation is suitable for all skin types including sensitive skin.

*A'kin Pure Radiance Rosehip Oil* retails at selected retailers and price may vary - please visit website for details



[www.int.purist.com](http://www.int.purist.com)



A fantastic concept of serving primarily Western dishes with an Indian twist to them, *Cafe Salvation* complements this interesting concept with a superb interior design and staff who are friendly and helpful - making it one of the ideal places for vegetarian couples to spend a romantic evening together.

The food does not disappoint and some dishes are certainly brilliant. For example, the *Lasagne* (below) - priced at \$10, has perfectly cooked pasta sheets layered with cheese sauce. At first bite, tonnes of Indian spices tingle the senses and instead of oregano, bay leaf and parsley - strong tones of peppercorn, coriander and anise seeds hit the palate!

The *Baked Chimichangas* (top, left) - priced at \$8 was also a highlight, with both dishes including *texturised vegetable protein* (TVP) which absorbs flavours divinely when cooked well.

Requests to exclude onions and garlic can be made



**Cafe Salvation**  
**75 Syed Alwi Road**  
**Tel: 62981412**  
**[www.cafesalivation.com](http://www.cafesalivation.com)**

and, more importantly, the spice level can be adjusted as necessary - bearing in mind that 'spicy' in Indian terms means it's likely to make your tongue explode!

The dessert of *Strawberry Parfait* (top, right) seems over-priced at \$6.50 though, but the delicious dish is one thing that doesn't include any Indian spices!

*Cafe Salvation* will be open through the Lunar New Year and opens daily from 10am to 10.30pm.

*Review with photos  
 by Luke Otter,  
 blog author of  
 The Hungry Ang Mo*



## Out & About

Nestled in a quiet pre-war shophouse opposite Katong Mall, *naïve* restaurant is certainly an interesting place to celebrate Valentine's Day.

The 2-storey establishment which turns one this month, has the cosy ambience that will naturally evoke romance. Using a novel concept of offering all dishes as single servings, its cuisine is unique and definitely sets the standards for the vegetarian food scene.

This year, due to the high volume of patrons, it will be offering set meals during the Lunar New Year period with its ala carte menu limited to a few dishes. And although the dishes on offer are themed for the New Year, they are nevertheless 'sexy' enough to celebrate Valentine's Day as well!



Starting with a simple ceremony called the *Blessing of the Seeds* (BLOSS) where diners are invited to use specially

imported mortars to grind toasted sesame seeds (which can be subsequently used to garnish the food), the mood is set from the moment you sit down.

The dishes on offer include the hugely popular signature dish aptly titled *Cheeky Monkey* (top, right), which is specially-imported monkeyhead mushroom that is batter-fried and served buried



in a mountain of pan-fried oats and curry-leaf.

Also on the menu are *Tiger Eyes* (bottom, right) that commemorate the Year of the Tiger and which are created in-house using soy, ginger, celery, black moss, and come served with a generous helping of broccoli.

And finally, to complement these exquisite New Year dishes, the *Rendang Padang* (bottom, left) adds the 'shiok' factor with its rich flavour and meaty texture made possible through the use of high-quality shitake mushrooms. Whilst this regular menu item is usually served with pau, the set meal available during the holidays will see this dish served with lettuce instead.

With the eclectic mix of great food, romantic ambience and unique experience, choosing *naïve* for that special dinner seems to be a no-brainer. And although it is on the high side in terms of price, what you are paying for is real quality.

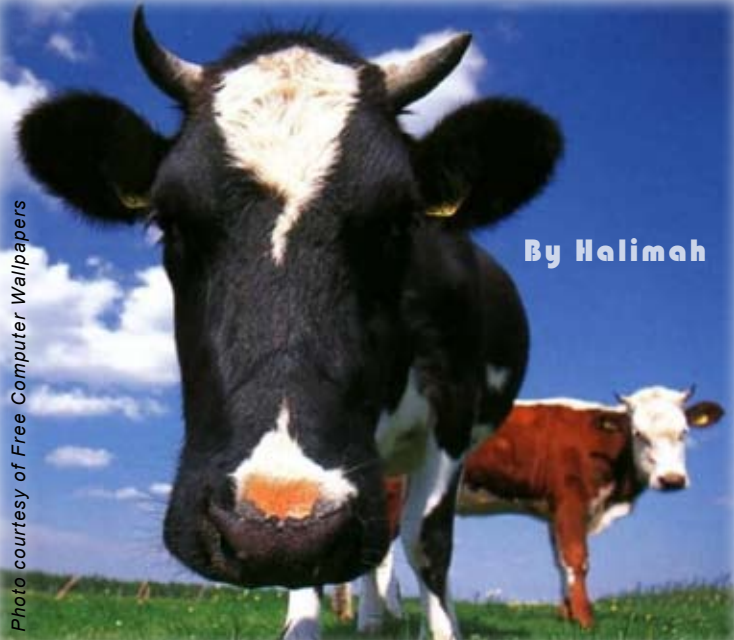
*Naïve will be open through the Lunar New Year holidays and opens daily from 11.30am to 10.00pm. Diners are advised to make reservations to avoid disappointment.*

Photos by Halimah

**naïve**  
**99 East Coast Road**  
**Tel: 63480668**  
**www.naivecompany.com**

Review by Ganga





# Squeezing the Dairy Out of Acne

Everyone personally hates it. Pharmaceutical companies make millions from it. Skincare industries tout instant cures for it. Even celebrities are not spared from it.

The dreaded acne can cause so much psychological and emotional frustration that many of us fear showing our faces in public whenever we spot the angry red bumps. Extensive research indicated that acne can be caused by various factors such as hormonal changes, environmental factors and diet. And one such food that has been linked with acne is dairy.

## Hormone Culprit

How can dairy trigger acne? Well, a study in 2005 found that consuming dairy from pregnant cows exposes the consumer to the pregnancy-related hormones produced by these cows - which the human body is not designed to ingest. The study concluded that dairy intake is linked to the increased risk of teenage acne in especially girls as they are hormonally more sensitive.

So why does the hormone in dairy cows cause acne? About 75% to 90% of the milk available comes from pregnant cows that contains *androgen hormones*, which have long been linked to acne breakouts.

*Testosterone*, an androgen hormone, is known to create oilier skin which in turn creates blocked pores and eventually, pimples. People who are genetically predisposed to acne breakouts and those sensitive to dairy may also have a stronger reaction to these hormones.

Dairy farmers who pump their cows with additional

hormones (among other unsavoury chemicals like antibiotics and steroids) to increase milk production further compound this problem. Most milk - including the organic ones - has been found to contain *IGF-1* (insulin-like growth factor) which is especially high in cows treated with bovine growth hormone. IGF-1, together with testosterone, has been associated with acne breakouts.

## Murky Milk

Switching to skim milk or lactose-free milk is of little help as well - in fact, skim milk is known to bring about severe acne breakouts as it contains higher IGF-1 levels than whole milk! It is believed that the additional whey protein added to skim milk to give the creamier consistency might be the cause. As for lactose-free milk, the different make-up does not affect the amount of hormones present.

For those suffering from acne breakouts, it is advisable to abstain from dairy completely for at least six months to determine if the acne is triggered by dairy consumption - remember, dairy items include milk, cheese, ice-cream and sour-cream.

However, even though many people have found eliminating dairy from their diet cured their acne problem, it might not be the case for everyone as there are many other causes for acne breakouts as well.

But if you are suffering from persistent acne breakouts, wouldn't it be better to see if this cheap and healthy option solves the problem instead of spending hundreds of dollars at the dermatologist?

# Ngo Kau Wee, 34 - Prisons Officer Rachel Cheng, 31 - Teacher

Always spotted together outside of their respective work commitments, Kau Wee and Rachel have been married since 2004 and have been living in their 'lovenest' - as Kau Wee calls it - since 2006.

The lovebirds met during a vegetarian potluck in 2002, and whilst Kau Wee was mesmerised by Rachel's beauty, the latter was swept off her feet by the homemade muesli which the former brought to the potluck, made using raw oats soaked overnight in soy milk, raisins, sliced bananas, strawberries and blueberries (see cover photo, bottom left).

In an unconventional spin on the old adage, it seems the way to Rachel's heart was through her stomach for Kau Wee who recalls that he managed to get her to agree to their first date rather easily as he had inadvertently suggested Original Sin which Rachel was "yearning to dine" at!



2 years prior, for which he researched the topic of vegetarianism and "was surprised by the staggering figures and sheer madness of how animal farming contributes to animal suffering, environmental problems, world hunger and the wastage of precious resources".

Being a very social person by nature, Rachel reveals that her uncompromising adherence to a vegetarian diet caused her to avoid interaction with non-

vegetarians. Similarly, Kau Wee too experienced some friction with friends initially, but they both have since developed strategies to manage social situations.

## Bedroom Secrets

When asked what each loved about the other, Rachel says he is "everything to me - my husband, best friend, playmate, mentor and role model", whilst Kau Wee gushes how she is kind-hearted, fun-loving, genuine and how "she still showers me with 'I love you' almost everyday".

As to their free time, they "spend hours lazing, snuggling and chatting in bed" and when pressed further for some juicy secrets, we are told that "in private, we have our own love language which is unique and understood only by the two of us".

And when they are not in bed, their favourite activity is to hunt for good food anywhere in Singapore or even JB, watch movies at the cinema and partake in the occasional karaoke session.

Whilst Rachel has been a vegetarian since childhood, Kau Wee joined the community in 2000 during his university days. He credits a project he undertook

And staying true to their romantic reputation, for Valentine's Day they prefer to "celebrate in simple, less commercial and more private ways such as whipping up a candlelight dinner at home or heading to the beach for a mini BBQ".

## Humanitarian Couple

Whilst Kau Wee is involved in rehabilitation through his profession as a prisons officer, Rachel shares a little-known fact that she is sponsoring a child via World Vision.

Recalling back to her secondary school days when she volunteered at the adoption department of the organisation, she had then promised herself to adopt a child when she could afford to do so.



this Valentine's Day is to experience the love that this beautiful couple share.

As fate would have it, later a colleague mentioned the organisation to her which duly prompted her to make good on that promise the very next day.

A true inspiration to all couples - young and old, the best wish we could have for everyone

1) What is one veg food that describes you best and why?  
"Nian Gao"(a type of new year cake), because we will stick together through thick and thin.



2) If you were given one wish for the world, what would it be?  
World Peace, and for every human to go veg with all factory farms and slaughterhouses becoming obsolete.

3) What misconception about vegetarianism gets your goat?  
That our diet lacks nutrition.

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

5) What would be a 'Quotable Quote' to you?  
"Love seems the swiftest, but it is the slowest of all growths. No man or woman really knows what perfect love is until they have been married a quarter of a century."

- Mark Twain

# Aphrodisiac "Love Potions"

By Chef Halimah with photos

## Method

- 1) In pan, mix all ingredients other than oil and oyster mushroom with fork until there are no lumps
- 2) Clean oyster mushrooms by rubbing them with a damp cloth
- 3) In wok, heat oil and check heat by drizzling few drops of batter (if batter sizzles and rises to top, temperature is suitable)
- 4) Dip mushrooms in batter and fry in oil until golden brown
- 5) Sprinkle additional chilli powder and serve with chilli sauce



## Mushrooming Love

50g corn flour	1/2 teaspoon salt
50g plain flour	115ml cold water
1 teaspoon garlic powder	150g oyster mushroom
1 teaspoon onion powder	Oil for deep frying
1/2 teaspoon chilli powder	Chili powder as garnish

2 teaspoon olive oil	400ml vegetable stock
30g shallots	juice of 2 kalamansi lime
2 cloves garlic	2 kaffir lime leaves
1/4 inch thick ginger	2 red chilli
1 teaspoon coriander seed	200g beets
1 sprig coriander leaves	salt to taste

## Method

- 1) Slice shallots, garlic, ginger, chilli and coriander leaves
- 2) Peel and cube beets
- 3) In pot, heat olive oil and sauté shallots, garlic, ginger, chilli, coriander leaves and coriander seed until fragrant
- 4) Add vegetable stock, salt, beets and lime juice
- 5) Bring to boil and simmer until beets are cooked - blend until smooth
- 6) Bring soup to simmer and sprinkle some lime leaves

*Tip: may be served hot or cold*

## Blushing Beets Soup



## Asian Strands of Desire

### Method

- 1) Mince garlic and dice bell pepper
- 2) In pan, add olive oil and sauté garlic over low heat until fragrant
- 3) Add bell pepper, water, sesame oil, soy sauce and sesame seed, and cook until bell peppers are done
- 4) Meanwhile, prepare buckwheat noodles according to instructions on package
- 5) Once buckwheat is cooked and drained, pour sauce over and coat well
- 6) Remove tough ends of asparagus and coat with olive oil and salt
- 7) In grill pan, cook asparagus for about 1 minute on each side until brown spots appear
- 8) Plate noodles and place grilled asparagus on top

*Tip: serve immediately*



### For Noodles

1 teaspoon olive oil  
3 cloves garlic  
100g red bell pepper  
2 tablespoon soy sauce  
2 tablespoon water  
1 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil  
200g buckwheat noodle  
1 1/2 teaspoon sesame seed

### For Grilled Asparagus

250g asparagus  
1/2 teaspoon olive oil  
pinch of salt



## Tall, Dark and Luscious

150g non-dairy chocolate  
150g silken tofu  
2 teaspoon maple syrup  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
cherries and chocolate shaving for garnish

### Method

- 1) Melt chocolate in microwave oven in 10-second spurts
- 2) Blend tofu until smooth and add melted chocolate, maple syrup and vanilla
- 3) Blend mixture until smooth
- 3) Spoon mixture into serving glasses and chill
- 4) When ready to serve, top with some chocolate shavings and cherries

## Liquid Heat

400ml water    1/2 inch thick ginger  
6 cardamom pods    pinch of saffron  
4 cloves    2 black tea-bags  
4 star anise    sugar to taste  
8 black peppercorns

### Method

- 1) Crush cardamom pods, black peppercorns and ginger
- 2) Bring water to boil, then add all ingredients (except sugar) and simmer for about a minute
- 3) Remove from heat and let spices steep for about 20 minutes (the longer it steeps, the stronger the flavour)
- 4) Strain mixture and add sugar to taste



**Post-Museum 107+109 Rowell Road**  
**21 - 28 February 2010**



**Sunday 21 Feb 7.30pm Tiger Show Opens**

with feline-inspired art exhibition and bazaar  
exhibition opening hours 6-10pm (Tue-Fri), 12nn-10pm (Sat-Sun)

**Thursday 25 Feb 8.00pm "I am Cat. Hear me Roar."**  
an advocacy & mediation workshop for the welfare of cats

\$8 with non-alcoholic drink, \$12 with alcoholic drink

**Friday 26 Feb 7.30pm Animal People Singles' Night**

\$12 with first drink

**Sunday 28 Feb 12.00pm Cats' Day Out**

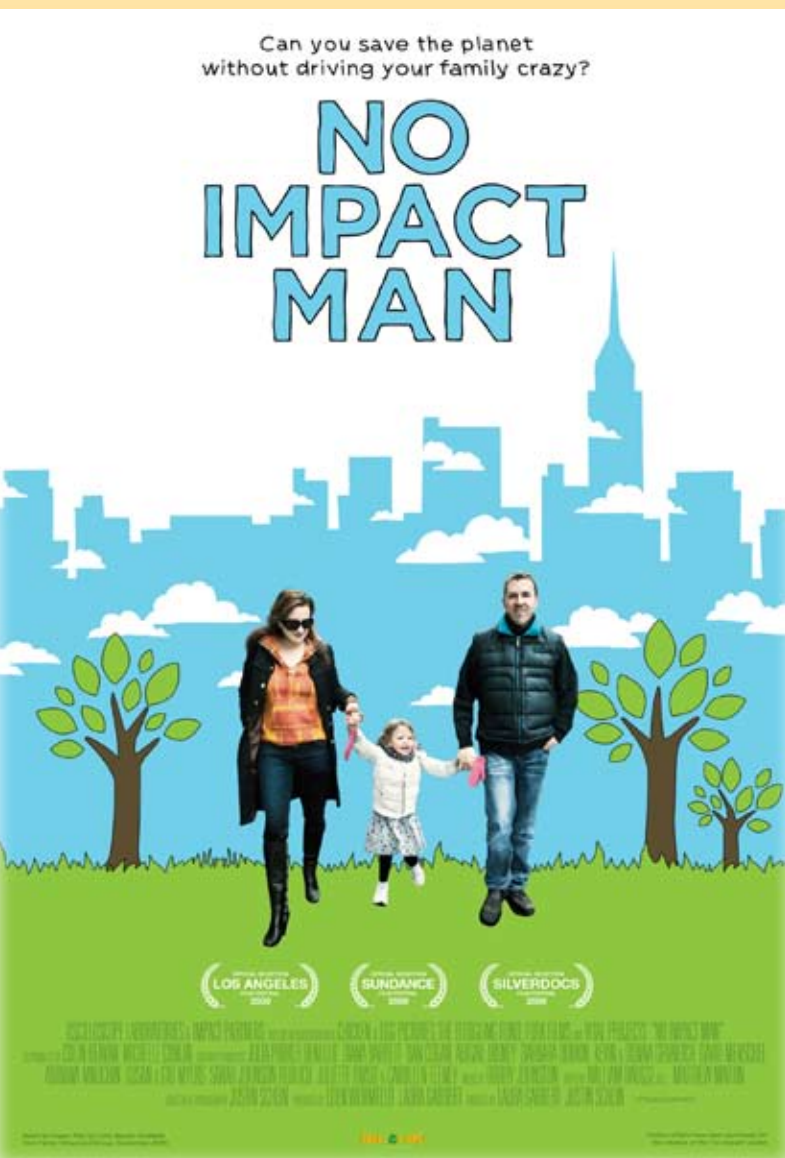
\$30 per ticket (one person & one cat)



Registration and ticket sales at [www.catwelfare.org](http://www.catwelfare.org)

*No Impact Man*, the brainchild of Colin Beavan, is an inspirational film which showcases one family's struggle to minimise their carbon footprint for an entire year. Set in New York City, Beavan, together with his high-flying journalist wife and two-year-old daughter go through a year without the comforts that we have come to take for granted.

By Halimah



The documentary-film begins earnestly enough, with Beavan explaining the rationale for his radical experiment - wanting to live out what he preaches. Enlisting the support of his initially-reluctant, *Starbucks*-addicted, retail-junkie wife, they consequently spend a year producing zero waste and zero carbon emission. This means not using fuel-based transportation, going vegetarian, eating only local-produce, and cutting off electricity and disposable items such as toilet paper.

Despite the hardship the family faces - they face

a media frenzy, hostility from co-workers who question their hygiene habits, and even their occasionally-strained relationship - *No Impact Man* is a fine example of how we can live a more sustainable lifestyle even in an urban society.

Through conscious effort, careful planning and sacrifice, the film ultimately illustrates that it is possible to reduce our environmental impact.

Even more, it adds the heart-warming message of how family relationships can actually improve when technology is taken out of the equation - think family outings to the park, cycling around the city and visits to a nearby farm.

### It's the message not the movie

That said, it is rather obvious that *No Impact Man* should have been more accurately titled 'Low Impact Man' as, despite calling it a year-long project, Beavan and his family only stop electricity use six months after the project starts and only gradually reduce their consumption pattern over the year.

In addition, there are also other irregularities such as taking a train journey for the farm visit after they swear off fuel-based transportation and even taking ice from the neighbour to keep their produce cold (the logic being that the environmental impact is caused by the neighbour, not them).

And even though such transgressions are included in the documentary-film for all to see, the overall feel is more of a reality TV show (that often incorporates drama and controversy).

Thus, not everyone will appreciate the film or Beavan's intention for embarking on this project, but the underlying message still holds true - if you set your mind to it, you can reduce waste and enjoy a better quality of life too.

*No Impact Man* is available for DVD purchase online at [www.noimpactmandvd.com](http://www.noimpactmandvd.com) for US\$32 (S\$45) and includes shipping. Details of the project, including educational resources, are available at [noimpactproject.org](http://noimpactproject.org).

# EXCUSE ME, IS YOUR CHEESE VEGETARIAN?

By Ganga

We often come across many vegetarians who are quite comfortable with consuming cheese products. Some are aware that cheese may not be vegetarian but do not give it much consideration, whilst others simply assume that a dairy-related product may involve some animal derivatives during the processing but never any actual meat in the product.

But whatever your philosophy may be, it is important to understand what exactly is the issue and make an informed decision from there.

Cheese is a result of processing milk - specifically, the milk is curdled and cheese is formed via coagulation of the milk protein *casein*. The manner in which this coagulation occurs is the crux of the matter - after the milk is acidified using vinegar or lemon, the enzyme *rennet* is added to complete the coagulation process.

## So what is Rennet?

Although the term 'an enzyme called rennet' sounds innocuous, it is ambiguous. There are many happily-ignorant vegetarians who assume that an enzyme is something obtained in a laboratory and can never fathom it being anything

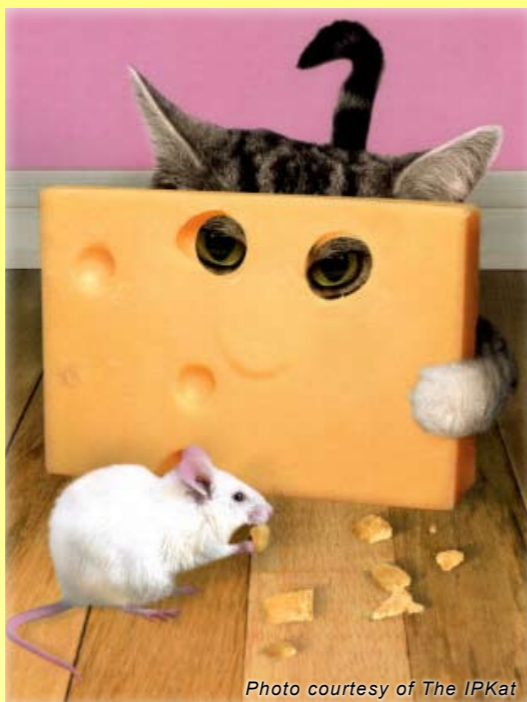


Photo courtesy of The IPKat

resembling animal flesh.

However, the truth is that rennet occurs most abundantly in milk-fed calves who require the enzyme to process and absorb the nutrients in the milk they drink from their mothers. So, to gain access to this enzyme, the calves are butchered, and the fourth stomach is then removed and freed of its food content.

After this, the stomach goes through several steps including being dry-salted, washed, scraped to remove surface fat, stretched onto racks where moisture is removed, then finally ground and mixed with a salt solution until the enzyme is actually extracted.

Granted, the calves would typically have been butchered anyway for the veal industry and that this rennet procurement is a by-product, but there is no denying that eventually a part of the animal ends up in the cheese - unlike processes involved in some other products, here, the enzyme becomes part of the end product.

Thus, it is arguable that most cheese products contain animal flesh as opposed to being just processed via animal derivatives, and makes it highly questionable for vegetarians to consume rennet-based cheese which do not specifically declare the rennet is not animal-derived.

## All is Not Lost

However, as awareness increases, so too has the care taken to produce alternatives. Whilst in the past, fig leaves, melon, wild thistle and safflower have all supplied plant rennets, now we have



Photo courtesy of Traditional Cheese Making from Benin

vegetarian cheese which is produced using rennet from either fungal or bacterial sources.

Advances in genetic engineering processes meanwhile have also resulted in *chymosin* - the active ingredient in the enzyme - itself being produced by genetically altering micro-organisms. The rennet produced through this process is identical to that found in the calves' stomachs, making all argument on taste irrelevant.

But until the veal industry is eradicated and genetically-modified rennet becomes the only source used, any cheese product that is not explicitly labelled as vegetarian should be assumed to be of animal origin.

And for vegans, do take note that vegetarian cheese that uses non-dairy ingredients such as soy flour, often employ the use of an ingredient labelled as *casein* (below) or *calcium caseinate*, which is a milk protein used to give texture to the cheese. Thus, they should only rely on cheese products that are labelled as vegan and not base their decision on the ingredient list alone.



*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.*

For the year 2010, as we enter into our second decade of existence, we would like to become a thousand-strong society - which can then move mountains. And for this, we need your support - both from the pocket and the heart.

If you are not yet a member, please consider putting your thoughts into action by committing a monthly contribution of just \$5 to enjoy VSS Premium Membership as well as \$100 worth of food vouchers per year, discounts on all VSS organised events, invitation to special 'Members Only' events, and a complimentary copy of the *Singapore Vegetarian Food Guide*.

Meanwhile, if you have already become a member (thank you!), please help us to encourage your friends and family who support the work that VSS does to turn their moral approval into physical action by joining us officially as a member.

Just drop us a line at [soh@vss.sg](mailto:soh@vss.sg) for the GIRO form to be mailed to you, or download the GIRO form from the VSS website and mail it to Seeds of Hope, Vegetarian Society (Singapore), 3 Pemimpin Drive, #07-02, Lip Hing Building, Singapore 576147.



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

## OVER-SIMPLISTIC ARGUMENTS



## 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 S\$50 per issue, so do drop us an email at [vision@vegville.com](mailto: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.



*We currently have over 250 subscribers and each issue is downloaded about 500 times every month, not including the countless email forwards that we estimate would further add between 100 and 200 to this figure. We also maintain a fan page on facebook that has attracted over 200 fans - click on the button to join us there!*