

Vegvibe

JANUARY 2010

**NOMINATE
A VEGAN OR
VEGETARIAN
WHO INSPIRES
YOU AND WIN A
PAIR OF MOVIE
TICKETS!**

Also in this issue:

**Going
Receipt-less
in Singapore,
The Bane of
Vegetarianism
and touring
Marvellous
Melbourne...**

**Introducing
the effervescent**

NG SHWU HUEY

The Chief Veggie Speaks!

It's a new year with new hopes and fresh dreams, and here at **VegVibe**, we continue to explore the ways in which we can bring the community closer together - as well as forward. We are heartened to note that the last issue resonated well with animal-lovers and went a distance in bridging the gap between traditional vegetarians and non-vegetarian animal-lovers.

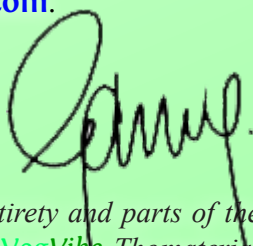
It was indeed satisfying to see our purpose achieve actualisation - where people of different philosophies were able to see common ground. This is what we have always hoped for **VegVibe** to be - an agent of change for the community and a facilitator of cohesion between the various factions.

We continue to build our identity and are encouraged by the positive reception from the vegetarian, vegan, animal welfare and environmental welfare communities. Our next big goal now is to ensure the financial sustainability of **VegVibe** and ascertain its viability to function as a print magazine.

Meanwhile, in this month's issue, we suggest Going Receipt-less (*Page 2*) for a better future, address the issue of Getting Your Protein (*Page 10*), outline what Marvellous Melbourne (*Page 4*) has to offer, highlight a reader's Bane of Vegetarianism (*Page 8*), and finally, would like you to consider sharing your copy of Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating (*Page 7*) with other readers.

We are also on the lookout for an inspirational vegetarian or vegan to feature in the March 2010 issue, and invite you to make a nomination (*Page 18*) - with a pair of movie tickets on offer for your troubles!

Finally, as ever, we continue to include more and more updates on the **VegVibe** blog at <http://vegville.com/blog>, and remain contactable via email at vision@vegville.com or our website at <http://vegville.com>.



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The editor would like to thank Ms Ng Shwu Huey for graciously agreeing to be featured in this issue.

GOING RECEIPT-LESS IN SINGAPORE

By Trina Tan

By the time you read this sentence, I am sure that everyone would have got into the rhythm of the new year. Nevertheless, the new year resolutions that were made within the last 2 weeks or so will no doubt still be fresh in everyone's minds.

For me, I always make it a point to think clearly about what I want in my list of resolutions for the year, and I categorise them into one of the following four: *family, work, personal* or *the environment*. Now, resolutions typically fall under the *family, work* and *personal* categories - such as "find a job that pays more", "spend more time with mum and dad" or "lose weight".

So how about the fourth category - *the environment*? Well, here's my challenge for you this year - why not have a 2010 resolution that includes saving the environment? And I have just the easy thing that everyone can do - go receipt-less.

Recede the Receipt

Receipts to me are really troublesome - they come in many different shapes and sizes, making it hard to keep them for filing purposes even if I wanted to. The ink also often fades with time or gets smudged when water spills on it.

But receipts annoy me most because I do not want them in the first place. What I really need is a digital copy of my spending to be stored

somewhere online where I can view, sort and keep for as long as I want.

Although going receipt-less may not be a good idea for everything, we can definitely do away with much of the receipts in our lives. Yes, there are those annoying times when we have to get a hardcopy of a receipt just so that

we can have the proof to claim from the company or school, but apart from this almost all hardcopy receipts can be replaced electronically or done away with altogether.

Buying small quantities of items from department stores, snack foods to go, or fast food largely do not require an accompanying receipt. Especially when you just bought a bottle of water costing less than fifty cents, why is there a need for a receipt then?

One quick act you can employ is to request not to have the receipt printed out because it's either going to get tossed out immediately or stashed in the wallet - till it gets tossed out eventually.

And you could do the same if you really do not require a receipt for anything you may buy. In the long run, if everyone makes this a habit, thousands of trees will be spared from being cut down and deforestation rates will be slowed down. It is also a win-win situation for the company you buy from as they reduce their operating cost in buying the paper and ink as well!



Photo courtesy of Bonnie Gillespie

Changes Underway

The option to replace physical receipts have existed with the proliferation of the internet. Today, some companies have already initiated going receipt-less by allowing customers to view their purchases online.

Take the *Apple* store for example. In America, it has many assistants who hold a hand-held device with them and upon purchase, they simply key in the product details and the data gets transferred to the cashier where the payment via cash or credit is made. The receipt would then be forwarded to the customer's email - although, of course, older folks may not be as ready to reveal personal data or may not have an email address to begin with.

While *Apple's* method of emailing receipts is novel, it is unfortunately not a holistic solution in going receipt-less - imagine having to give every store your email address! If the world is indeed going to go receipt-less, we need to have a universal way for all stores globally to be able to mail the receipt to our email address.

Revolutionising the Process

This is probably where the credit card companies can start the ball rolling. How about including our email address as a data entry into the magnetic strip? This way, any charge made to

the ATM, credit or debit card will automatically generate a digital receipt that is sent via email. This is however easier said than done, and how long it might take for the banks, *Visa, Mastercard*, and *American Express* to all collaborate and coordinate is anyone's guess.

In addition, not everyone will appreciate retailers and merchants getting hold of their email address, for fear of being spammed with advertising.

Alternatively, if we rather not have receipts emailed to us, how about digitising them instead? As it is, purchases made via ATM, credit or debit cards are reflected online (via internet banking facilities).

We could take this a step further by enabling customers to click on that purchase detail to actually view the digital image of the actual receipt generated.

Admittedly, there is the cost factor involved for the merchants and retailers to establish a system to digitise their receipts though, and cash payments will also pose further complications.

I agree that these ideas may seem a far way off from becoming a day-to-day reality right now, but the technology is certainly capable of achieving this one day - if people and businesses want to.

Be that as it may, the habits of mankind can definitely change overnight and if enough people set their mind to it this year, just maybe we could make a positive impact after all. So my wish for 2010 is for all of us to start going receipt-less and to make it a habit that sticks with us for years to come, because I believe every little change goes a long way eventually.

Happy 2010 Everyone!





Marvellous Melbourne

Melbourne city, located in the heart of the beautiful Australian state of Victoria, is culturally rich, vibrant and has something for everyone. Immigrants from all over the world, including Italy, Vietnam, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, China, Greece, Malaysia, South Africa and many more, have added to its flavour by bringing in their own culture and heritage. Nevertheless, Melbourne has still retained some of its past Victorian and European influences which are evident from the design of many buildings in the Central Business District (CBD), the many outdoor cafes, and as well as the trams.

Getting Around

With the roads set up in a simple grid, getting around the city centre couldn't be easier. A must-try are the iconic trams (below) which run throughout the CBD and even extend into the nearby suburbs. Tickets can be bought inside



the trams from coin-operated machines and cost AUD\$6.50 (S\$8.20) for a day pass which provides unlimited travel.

There is also a free burgundy and gold *City Circle* tram which travels the perimeter of the CBD. You could hop off at the *Old Melbourne Gaol* if 19th century criminal justice interests you - this attraction features Melbourne's old prison and courthouse among other exhibits. The tram also stops at the *Melbourne Museum* for those interested in history and various city parks for nature lovers as well. But for most purposes within the CBD itself, setting off on foot is still the best way to explore and find the hidden gems of the city.

Tucked away in quiet back lanes are countless cafes offering anything from lattes to pizzas. These cafes are a good place to grab a quick bite and get away from the hustle of the city, but are not very easy to find and one has to keep a lookout or ask an ever-friendly *Melbournian* for directions.

Your first stop in the city should be *Federation Square* (located at the intersection of *Swanston Street* and *Flinders Street*, opposite *Flinders train station*) where not only good food, shopping, street performances and sometimes even protests can be found, but also where the tourist information centre is. Here you can find out everything you need to know as a visiting tourist, buy souvenirs, get informed on the latest happenings around Melbourne and book tours and other travel packages as well.

Things to do

Depending on when you arrive in Melbourne, you may have the privilege of attending cultural festivals, films and theatre productions, fashion shows, Formula One racing and many more!

While shopping is not one of the main attractions of Melbourne, Singaporeans can usually sniff out a good bargain at places such as the *Direct Factory Outlet* (DFO) at *Southern Cross Station*, where good brand names can be found at cheaper-than-normal retail prices. There are other factory outlets on the outskirts of the CBD as well and shopping tours can be booked from about AUD\$70 (S\$88). There are also many malls and shopping arcades located within the CBD to whet the ardent shopper's appetite.

Melbourne's nightlife is equally as vibrant and exciting, and a wide range of clubs and pubs are on hand to suit any traveller's needs - be it young or old, mainstream or alternative. Clubs and pubs often host live shows and event listings can be checked online to find the coolest events, music performances, stand-up comedy and even belly dancing!

And for those feeling lucky, *Crown Casino* (located south of the *Yarra River* and a 10 minute walk from *Federation Square*) is the place to be with 2 floors of gambling galore! *Crown Casino* also hosts numerous pubs, clubs, food joints, shops, an arcade, and a movie theatre to boot.

Beyond the city proper, Victoria itself offers a multitude of attractions as well. Summer time (between December and February) is a great time to stroll along the beaches of *St Kilda* or *Mornington* with nude beaches also available for those who dare!

A trip to Victoria would also not be complete without a drive along the absolutely gorgeous *Great Ocean Road* and the *12 Apostles*. Unfortunately, the *Apostles* are fast eroding and won't be around

for much longer, so do hurry. Penguin lovers meanwhile, will want to head to *Phillip Island* to catch a glimpse of these cute feathered friends.

During winter, the ski slopes of nearby mountains offer a cool getaway whilst whale-watching at a quiet town called *Warrnambool* is just a few hours' drive from the city.



For the Veg Traveller

Vegetarian and even vegan food is easy to find in Melbourne, and almost every restaurant and café offers a few vegetarian options clearly indicated in their menus. Also, the vegetarian tourist can always ask the ever-friendly staff if certain dishes can be made vegetarian or vegan and usually such requests are happily indulged. In addition, many cafes routinely offer soy milk as a replacement for dairy if required.

And if you're planning for a longer stay in Melbourne, head to the main supermarkets (*Safeway* or *Coles*) for an amazing variety of vegetarian food. Mock meat such as burger patties, nuggets, hot-dogs and *schnitzels* are easily available, most of which contain high protein and low fat! Vegans will be pleasantly surprised to find vegan mayonnaise, cheese, yoghurts, chocolate and biscuits among others as well.

Places to Eat in Melbourne

VegieBar

378 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

www.vegiebar.com.au

Opens Monday to Thursday from 11am to 10pm; Friday from 11am to 10.30pm; Saturday from 9am to 10.30pm; and Sunday from 9am to 10pm



Situated in a hip and vibrant area, the *VegieBar* epitomises multi-cultural Melbourne with its Mexican, Asian, Mediterranean and Italian spread. The interior is rustic and simple, giving it a nice homely feeling as well. You can start off with stuffed mushrooms or *nachos* and cheese and follow with local favourites such as *roti prata* and stir-fry noodles. Popular dishes include the *tagine*, pizza with vegan cheese and the *tempeh* burger, and a delicious vegan chocolate cake topped with vegan ice cream awaits dessert. It's advisable to go down early as this place fills up fast, and be prepared to wait up to 20 mins for a table after 7pm!

The *East Brunswick Club* is actually pub which serves both veg and non-veg food, however, it has a special vegetarian and vegan menu. Being a pub, the atmosphere is laid back and the vegan *nachos* and cheese offers a perfect start to the meal. The pub's signature dish is an absolutely delectable vegan chicken *parma*, but you won't



East Brunswick Club

280 Lygon Street, East Brunswick

www.eastbrunswickclub.com

Opens Daily from 6pm to 9.30pm and additionally from 2pm to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday

go wrong with their vegan fish and chips, or cheese steak either. Although a non-veg place, their dessert menu rivals most vegetarian outlets and the fully vegan dessert menu includes a must-have peanut butter and chocolate-chip cheesecake, raspberry cheesecake, sticky-date pudding and brownie.

Lord of the Fries

Various locations

www.lordofthefries.com.au

This may not be a dine-in joint but it's definitely worth a mention. Especially useful for busy tourists wanting to grab a bite while walking around the city, this eatery offers takeaway veggie burgers, fries and nuggets, with a variety of sauces to choose from, as well as authentic-tasting veggie sausage rolls and minced 'meat' pies. Prices are affordable with a burger, fries and drink costing about AUD\$9.35 (S\$11.90), and additional options such as vegan cheese are available on demand.



A recommended read by many leading organisations that practise a pro-vegetarian philosophy, *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating* is an engaging book that takes the reader through the reasons as to why veganism simply makes sense.

It stays clear of in-your-face antics and casually presents the case with only the most important information included. The reader does not get bored down (in both senses of the word) with the details but instead, is allowed enough information to consider and reflect - and then look up further information as necessary.

Although the 228-page resource was first published in 1998, it has stood the test of time since a revised second edition was released in October 2000. This is due to its focus on the 'why' aspect alone, without any discussion on how to become a vegan. Whilst this may seem odd, it is in fact a masterful stroke that enables this book to appeal to a wider, general audience without sounding 'preachy' at all.

Readers have found that the book is so objectively written that it can be easily offered to any meat-eater as a casual read - and this has indeed been the case for many. In practical reality, this could very well be one of the rare few books dealing with the genre of veganism that is being actively recycled and often found in the hands of non-vegans!

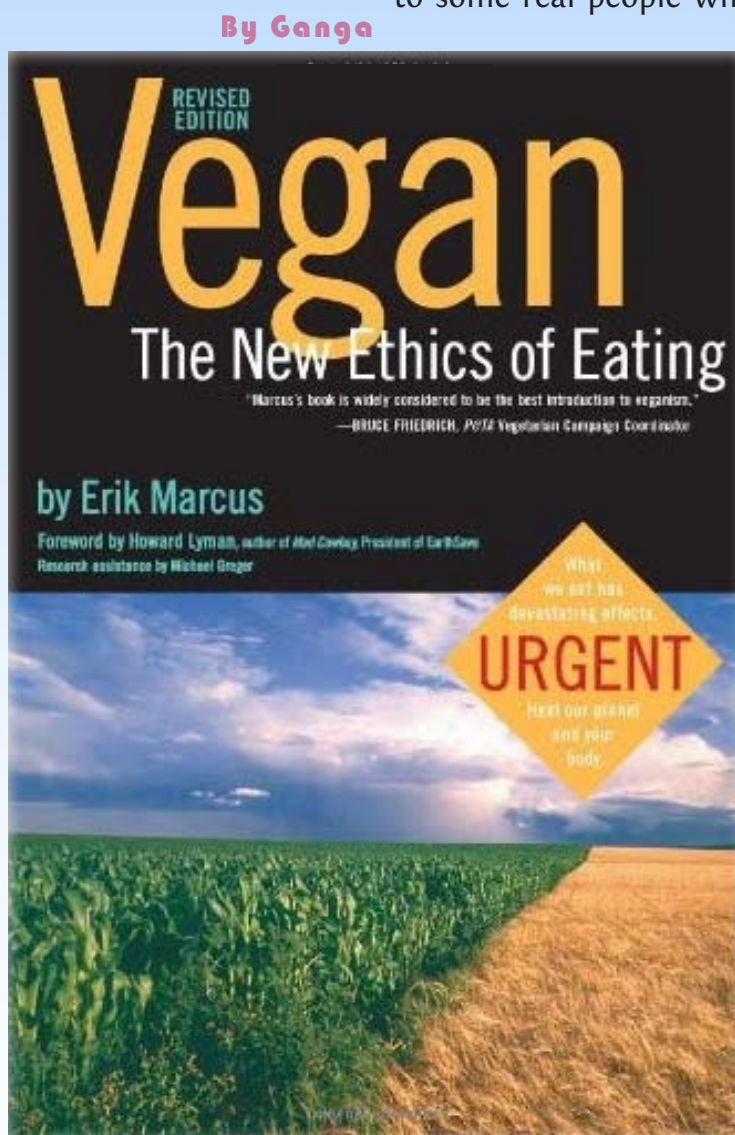
Whilst enough cannot be said about the powerful and authoritative content, the layout of the book deserves special mention as well. Portraying

an artistic feel, it reads like a reader-friendly textbook - with important statements in bold-type font, critical information quoted separately as soundbites, and further descriptions of events and people in standalone block-text.

All these make for some fun reading and brings the book alive as it informs, and makes what should be a dry, factual subject into something like a *Hardy Boys* novel! First, the reader gets introduced to some real people who have survived death by cutting out meat and, from there, is told of all the major ailments that can be avoided.

Then, the reader is taken through the issue of animal-cruelty by discussing both the meat and dairy industries before the final section outlines the environmental impact of our dietary choices.

Some of the words used to describe *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating* include 'groundbreaking', 'best by far', 'changed my life' and 'wake-up call' - and 90% of the reviews we've seen correspondingly give the book either a 4 or 5-star rating.



Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating is available for purchase online from Amazon for about S\$30 with shipping (delivery within 30 days) and copies are available at the National Library (2) and Bukit Merah Library (1) as well.

VegVibe would like to extend an invitation to those who currently own the book to share with other readers through us - drop us an email at vision@vegville.com if you would like to share your copy, and those interested can check our [blog](#) to see if any are available from us.

The Bane of Vegetarianism

Every vegetarian, vegan - and in fact anyone with a specific preference has encountered this - unapologetic ignorance of his or her needs. Ask for a dish without egg and meat at a run-of-the-mill stall and, more often than not, you will get a blank stare - or worse, an off-the-cuff retort like "how to cook like that?"

Such is the Singapore culture where anyone who is not of the mainstream mettle is considered a freak or social anomaly, and many of us have already gotten over this hang-up with being different by devising various strategies to manage.

For example, a large proportion of the vegetarian and vegan community pack their food from home to avoid unpleasant situations at work, and for the few who do not have that luxury, much time and effort is undertaken to scout out the various oases prior to joining a new workplace.

But even with all this management techniques, most of us continue to live with ignorant people in our midst who still stubbornly hold on to the misconception that a vegetarian lifestyle is somehow a life less ordinary - and some even take it upon themselves to 'show us the error of our ways'.

Time to Wake Up

But isn't it about time that the mainstream segment of the society in Singapore get up to speed with the realities? With so much information readily available today, ought not everyone be aware of what constitutes as vegetarian (and

Why is it so hard to be a vegetarian in Singapore?

By Ganga

what does not)?

And with the leading authorities such as the *Health Promotion Board* and *Singapore Tourism Board* acknowledging the importance of reducing meat consumption and moving towards a balanced vegetarian diet, is it not obvious by now that the philosophy is no longer just that of an 'alternative lifestyle'?

One reader, Ms Martha Lee, was so incensed that she wrote to us (see right inset) about her difficulties - after having endured a year of indifference to her dietary needs from at least 3 stalls near her workplace.

Is such a situation normal? More importantly, is it acceptable by any standard of measurement?

Asking for Too Much?

There will invariably be those who simply say, "it's your choice; it's your problem" but I wonder if the tables were turned, would these same people react with the same level of candour?

Would they be alright if they get struck down by some ailment such as diabetes and a food stall nonchalantly threw mountains of sugar into their food?

No vegetarian or vegan in his or her right mind believes that their lifestyle choice should be imposed on others. Most, in fact, accept that there will be many inconveniences to overcome as a result of their lifestyle choice.

But inconveniences should be distinguished from indignities and the vegetarian and vegan community should itself recognise the difference.

I have been a vegetarian since November 2008. I turned vegetarian because I have always had bowel movement problems since young and was also experiencing fatigue and low energy. I had begun to feel the positive effects of vegetarianism not long after making the change.

However, complete strangers, acquaintances, family, friends and relatives, once they learn of this fact, would often be discouraging, and pass negative comments. They often assume I am undergoing some kind depravation; that this was just a 'phase'.

It wasn't long after I became a vegetarian that I realised just how unfriendly Singapore as a society was towards vegetarians. There is a lack of understanding of what being vegetarian means.

I would go to a bakery and ask if a bun was vegetarian to get this reply from the staff, "Yes, vegetarian - only chicken".

At one Chinese-vegetarian stall, on more than one occasion, when I specifically instruct the staff to not include any egg, I'd go home and find egg or, worse, seafood in my packed meal.

At Indian stalls, I often encounter times when the gravy given to me - in spite of repeated clarifications that it is suitable for vegetarians - contains remnants of meat floating in it.

What surprises me the most is that these are stalls I frequent regularly (due to having limited choice near my workplace) and have told them on every visit that I am vegetarian.

What if somebody were allergic to seafood and a stallholder intentionally disregarded their request, should action not be taken? Shouldn't stallholders be mindful and respectful of the wishes of their customers? Vegetarians may be a minority but that does not mean that our wishes can be disregarded and ignored.

I hope the authorities in Singapore recognise that vegetarianism is a way of life and spend some time educating the public, especially people in the food industry, what being vegetarian means and how they should respect the needs and choices of their customers.

Martha LEE H C

An inconvenience is when the sole vegetarian stall in the food court is closed when you're out with your meat-eating colleagues. The suffering then is in having just drinks and dessert as your colleagues have their choice of meals.

Having the mixed-rice stall holder assume that it is alright to pour chicken gravy without the chicken pieces is, however, not an inconvenience - that is an indignity. And having your colleague tell you that it is alright to have *ikan bilis* because it is 'almost like vegetables anyway' is not an inconvenience - that, my friends, is an insult.

Stand Up For Your Community

It is because of too many apologetic vegetarians and vegans who allow misconceptions, insults and ignorance from others to go uncorrected - for fear of coming across as confrontational - that such people continue believing their false notions to be fact.



And when the vegetarians and vegans around them continue to not say anything, they assume the 'fact' to be cast in stone. This then leads to indifference which manifests in ugly scenarios where others suffer - much like the case of Ms Lee.

As a niche community living within a larger society, we all have to be on the same page when it comes to dispelling half-truths and demolishing whole myths.

If you are a vegetarian who eats eggs, then it should be your responsibility to tell your meat-eating friends that not all vegetarians eat eggs.

If you are a transitioning vegetarian who can settle for *prata* with fish curry without the fish, then let your regular *prata man* know that you alone are making this exception and that he should not in any way assume that the next vegetarian customer has the same tolerance.

If each of us does our small part (however small it may be), the larger community will slowly come to understand the specific nature of our motley group and, more importantly, that it is more complex than 'people who don't eat meat' or 'crazies who eat only vegetables'.

As Dr George Jacobs of the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)* often advocates these days, it's not good enough just to observe our beliefs and carry on with our individual lives (and the indignities we suffer); we need to be 'noisy' and let people know who we are and what we stand for too!



Photo courtesy of Zaida Lily

Photo courtesy of Left News & Views



By Halimah

As a new vegetarian, I was initially stumped for an answer when queried on my protein sources. I only knew soy was a complete protein substitute, but what else was out there? Not wanting to be stumped again, I delved quickly into the world of plant-based protein sources.

HOW ARE YOU GETTING YOUR PROTEIN?

Protein is a vital component of the body, assisting in all biological processes including growth, tissue repair and overall health maintenance. Proteins are long chains of amino acids and there are about 20 types of amino acids found in plant and meat proteins.

As the body does not store proteins, a daily intake of proteins is necessary - on average, 0.8g of protein is needed for every kilogram of body weight, for example, a person who is 50kg would require 40g of protein. However, most plant sources of proteins are not considered 'complete proteins' as they lack certain essential amino acids that the body cannot produce or modify from other amino acids.

Get a Leg Up with Legumes

Hence, vegans, in particular, have to be mindful that they consume a wide range of plant-based protein sources to absorb the required amino acids. Soy and quinoa have been found to be complete proteins, comparable to that of meat-

based proteins. Apart from these, legumes are an easily obtainable and cheap option for vegans and vegetarians as well.

An important food source in many countries, legumes come in a variety such as lentils and beans and can be used in stews, stir-fries, and many ethnic dishes like hummus and dal curries.

Although nuts are high in fats, they are an excellent source of proteins too - for example, 100g of almonds provide 21g of protein. Nuts can be easily incorporated into our diet as snacks, nut butters or as an addition to salads.

Whet Your Appetite with Wheat

Yet another plant-protein source that is consumed extensively but not often realised is wheat. Wheat flour has as much as 12g to 13g of protein per 100g of flour and it is what noodles, bread and similar gluten products are made of. By incorporating wheat flour with nuts and other grains, in the form of multi-grain bread or cereal, it becomes easier to obtain the complete proteins.



Whilst consuming too much protein has been associated with a high risk of osteoporosis and colon cancer, a lack of protein can be equally detrimental. Protein deficiency may cause superficial problems such as hair loss or sunburns, and also more serious muscle wastage and skin ulcers as well.

Nevertheless, as long as a range of whole foods are consumed, vegans and vegetarians alike can live a fulfilling and energetic lifestyle without too much worry.



Whole Earth
76 Peck Seah Street
Tel: 63233308
www.wholeearth.com.sg

Unlike most vegetarian restaurants which rely solely on the talent of a single chef, *Whole Earth* boasts of a dedicated culinary team instead that is able to peruse refined, trademarked recipes to continuously dish out the good stuff.

exquisite *Nyonya Homemade Tofu Fish with Thai Dill Leaves* (below) to wow the audience with its rich sambal taste (without being overly spicy), and the *Thai Vermicelli Tang Hoon* (bottom) which belies its simplistic look with a delicious taste.

This essentially means that one does not have to worry who's in the kitchen when ordering the food. Having moved over last July from *Geylang* to a more central location in town (*Peck Seah Street*) which is just a stone's throw



Photos by Halimah

away from *Tanjong Pagar MRT* station, *Whole Earth* looks all set to celebrate its first Lunar New Year in style at its new premises.

And depending on the set selected, the interesting *Bamboo Pith* and *Wolfberry with Chinese Spinach* dish will offer not only a healthy but delicious, soupy treat, but also act as a great conversation starter with its unorthodox concoction.

Working from the philosophy of using no garlic, no onion, no off-the-shelf mock meat and no artificial flavouring (MSG), the great work is set to continue for the upcoming holidays.

Finally, the *Homemade Lemongrass Jello* (top, right) offers the perfect refreshing dessert that will re-energise you for the late night of celebrations!

Off the bat, a spectacular 28-ingredient *Prosperity Abalone Fruit Enzyme YuSheng* (top, left) which includes pumpkin, pomelo, beetroot, yam, green papaya, apricot and radish - among others, awaits the Lunar New Year diner; then there is the

Thus a healthy reunion dinner full of satisfaction - for the heart as well as the stomach - awaits those who are willing to fork out that little bit extra for the quality at *Whole Earth*.

The Chinese New Year Set meals, available from 5th February to 28th February, are priced between \$188 (6-course) and \$588 (9-course) and come with complimentary dining vouchers. Whole Earth is open daily from 11.30am to 3.00pm and from 5.30pm to 9.30pm, and will remain open through the Lunar New Year celebrations.

*Review by
 Ganga*



Diners who wish to book their set meals through paid confirmations will enjoy an Early Bird Discount of 10% with payment via DBS/POSB credit cards by 5th February 2010.

Read more about our adventures at *Whole Earth* exclusively on our blog at <http://vegville.com/blog>

Out & About

Another great place to dine in style is *Eight Treasures Vegetarian* located at the heart of Chinatown. With an ambience fit for holding wedding receptions, it is certainly a restaurant befitting such special events as the annual reunion dinner.

The set meal packages offered begin from an affordable \$98+ for a 6-course meal that is suitable for 4 and end at \$658 for a 10-course meal that accommodates 12.

A special *a la carte* menu is also available which includes a special *Treasure Pot* comprising *Mock Pork Belly*, *Vegetarian Scallops*, *Vegetarian Abalone*, *Vegetarian Fish Roll*, *Fresh Mushrooms*, *Shitake Mushrooms*, *Black Moss* and other vegetables for \$68 (additional \$20 refundable deposit necessary if you want to carry home the pot).

The set meals meanwhile offer a versatile mix of dishes that include *Vegetarian Sharks' Fin* (below,



*Review by Ganga
Photos by Halimah*

left), *Honey Sauce Mock Pork* (above), *Rainbow Yusheng* and *Prosperity Yusheng* (depending on the meal you select).

It certainly seems like you'll be spoilt for choice come reunion dinner at this elegant and classy restaurant this year.

Eight Treasures Vegetarian is open everyday from 11.00am to 10.00pm (they close from 3.00pm and 5.00pm on normal weekdays) and diners are encouraged to make reservations early to avoid disappointment.

Eight Treasures Vegetarian
282A South Bridge Road
Tel: 65347727



Orgran's *Authentic Stoneground Buckwheat Pancake Mix* is a delightful wholesome pancake treat that the whole family can enjoy. Full of nature's goodness, this home-style recipe has no artificial ingredients and contains much of the nutritional value and benefit not found in most other wheat and gluten-free pancake mixes. Simply add your favourite chocolate or maple syrup with some fruit for a delicious start to the day.



www.organ.com

Orgran's *Stoneground Buckwheat Pancake Mix* retails at \$7.20 a box and is available at all major supermarkets

Formulated to be safe for the environment, *Seventh Generation All Purpose Cleaner* is completely plant-derived and is a non-toxic, biodegradable alternative to conventional petroleum-based cleaners. Unlike such chemical cleaners, this product does not release harmful fumes and is hypoallergenic as well. In addition, it has not been

www.seventhgeneration.com

tested on animals and is thus suitable for vegans.

Seventh Generation All Purpose Cleaner retails at \$12.95 a bottle and is available at all major supermarkets



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

Made with just wheat flour, vegetable oil and salt, it is hard to imagine how simple yet versatile



www.carrs-online.com

Carr's Table Water Crackers are. Thin and crispy, these crackers provide the perfect slate to create delicious morsels for parties or satisfy that mid-afternoon craving. Dip it in chocolate or serve it with a savoury soup - whichever way your taste bud swings, these crackers are just the right accompaniment.

Carr's Table Water Crackers retails at \$3.55 a box and is available at all major supermarkets

Ng Shwu Huey, 29 Communications Specialist

Staying true to her profession as a communications specialist, Shwuey - as she often signs off, has refined her answer to the question 'why' to an abbreviation - 'HEE'. She explains that the H stands for *health* - avoiding casein in meat protein, embracing plant-based food rich in phytonutrients, and living long and prosperous; the E is for *ethics* - respect for living creatures, and no to cruelty; and the second E is for *environment* - meat industry being a huge contributor to carbon and methane emissions.

A relative 'newbie' vegetarian of just over a year, she is currently on a 6-month timeline to become a true-blue vegan. And when asked how she manages to curb any temptation, she goes "HEE, HEE, HEE" (in obvious reference to the earlier abbreviation)!

Proponent of Gandhism

Shwuey reveals that her spiritual guide is the great *Mahatma Gandhi*, whose zeal and idealism resonates deeply within this young 'disciple'. His lifelong concern with self-discipline and self-restraint (*bramacharya*) especially fascinates her, and one instance where this can be applied is in the observation of one's diet. Gandhi has said that if you control your palette, all of the other senses fall into line and she firmly believes that when you control the senses, you control yourself and consequently, the world.

Shwuey also credits a stay at *Aenon Health Farm* in Malacca as a turning point. Whilst there, she recounts with delight how she was exposed to health talks which revealed the ills of meat consumption and the importance of

a plant-based diet, in addition to the monitoring as she undertook a 7-day water fast (no food or liquid other than water).



Finally, she adds with disgust how the 'Meet Your Meat' video made her see red (pun not intended) with the realisation of how much blood today's food industry has got on its hands. Questioning how fellow beings can be subjected to such levels of violence and cruelty, she has since vowed to disassociate herself with "something so obviously wrong".

Bit of Drama

The flamboyant young lady then illustrates how deeply impacted she is by sharing a story - "there was one time when I gave in to the beckoning of the Golden Arches and sat down with a McSpicy burger in my hands. I took one bite and then the images from Meet Your Meat came to mind. I then proceeded to deposit the contents of my mouth into a paper napkin and left with my head hung low. That was the last time I ever visited McDonald's."

She then jumps right back into her jovial self by sharing that she believes a little bit of weight has been lost. She credits her newfound discerning attitude towards food quality for this - avoiding deep fried or overly-greasy food as a result. Overall, she feels that she is more energetic and falls sick very much less these days.

The biggest difference, says Shwuey, is in her temperament. The fiery vegetarian adds the disclaimer that she is still capable of getting cross - just not as easily. Then, as an ad-lib, she goes, "Oh, and I now have less friends....who do not know the benefits of a plant-based diet! Gotcha!"

Practical Advice

Shwuey has a unique take on fighting off temptation - 'visualisation', where she thinks of all the yummy vegetarian options, the place that serves them and then, "march over and put those yummy vegetarian options into my tummy."

On a serious note, she recommends ongoing education through the internet, books, magazines and even pamphlets, as this enables appreciation on the why's of being vegetarian and helps strengthen resolve.

She also suggests attending events (*makan* sessions, talks and exhibitions) where one can meet like-minded people who will invariably provide a support network and help strengthen conviction, and, not to mention, share "best tips on where to locate yummy vegetarian options!"

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

Broccoli. Simple and versatile – delicious when baked, blanched, steamed, blended or even raw! Generally well received but can be an acquired taste for some and is occasionally misunderstood.

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

That we all give love a chance – love for ourselves, for each other, and for all living creatures.

3) What misconception about vegetarianism gets your goat?

That a vegetarian meal is lacking because there is no meat in it. People must start to realise that all the nutrition we need can be found in a plant-based diet. We truly do not need meat, especially since consuming it is also harmful to us (and to animals obviously, as well as the environment).

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

The Story of My Experiments with Truth by Mohandas K. Gandhi. Not quite a book ON vegetarianism but it planted in me the interest to become a vegetarian.

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

"You are what you eat."

It may be just me, but I believe that when you consume fear and suffering, negative energy gets absorbed into your system and in time, you start to experience its effects in the form of illnesses. That has made me agree with the view that perhaps modern man's diseases are the animals' revenge!



By Chef Halimah with photos

*2 teaspoon oil
1/2 inch ginger, minced
1 tablespoon chilli paste
200g winged beans
Salt to taste*

Method

- 1) Wash winged beans and remove thick fibrous 'vein'-like membrane on both sides before slicing and setting aside
- 2) In wok, heat oil and saute ginger until fragrant
- 3) Add chilli paste and continue sauteing until concoction turns dark red
- 4) Add winged beans and salt and cook on low heat until tender and not too fibrous

Spicy Winged Beans Stir Fry



Olive Fried Rice

*1 piece firm tofu 1 carrot
2 teaspoons oil 100g cabbage
1/2 inch ginger 2 tablespoons preserved mustard in olives
2 pieces chilli padi 1/2 tablespoon reduced sodium soy sauce
160g long beans 500g cooked rice*

Method

- 1) Slice tofu into thin pieces and deep-fry until crispy
- 2) Slice ginger, chilli padi, long beans and cabbage, and dice carrot
- 3) In wok, add oil and saute ginger with chilli padi until fragrant
- 4) Add remaining vegetables and preserved mustard in olives, and saute until cooked
- 5) Add cooked rice and soy sauce, then stir until rice is well incorporated and adjust seasoning to taste
- 6) Remove from heat and sprinkle deep-fried tofu pieces before serving



Sweet & Sour Lemongrass Tofu

2 pieces firm tofu
 2 teaspoons oil
 1 piece lemongrass
 2 pieces chilli padi
 1 medium-sized stalk coriander
 60ml water
 60ml tomato ketchup
 1 tablespoon sodium-reduced soy sauce



Method

1) Cube tofu to desired size and pan fry lightly before setting aside
 2) Discard top end of lemongrass and slice remaining part, then cut chilli padi lengthwise and slice coriander to desired size

3) In wok, heat oil and saute lemongrass and chilli padi until fragrant
 4) Add coriander, water, tomato ketchup and soy sauce, then bring to simmer
 5) Add tofu and simmer until most of liquid is absorbed, then remove from heat



Method

1) Slice bamboo shoots, sweet peas and carrots into strips
 2) In pot, boil some water and simmer bamboo shoots for about 3 minutes
 3) Drain contents and set aside
 4) In wok, add oil and saute ginger until fragrant
 5) Add vegetables and seasoning and saute until cooked

Bamboo Shoots Stir Fry

150g vacuum-packed bamboo shoots
 70g sweet peas
 70g carrots
 1/2 inch ginger
 2 teaspoons oil
 1 tablespoon vegetarian oyster sauce
 1 tablespoon sodium-reduced light soy sauce
 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Sweet Potato Sago Dessert

Method

- 1) In pot, boil sago pearls until translucent
- 2) Strain sago pearls and run through cold water to remove some of the starch
- 3) Peel and cube sweet potatoes
- 4) Put sweet potatoes, pandan leaves and 500ml water in pot and bring to boil, then simmer until sweet potatoes are cooked
- 5) Add coconut milk and sugar and bring to simmer
- 6) Remove from heat and serve warm or cold

130g large sago pearls
2 pandan leaves
500g sweet potatoes
100g red sugar
200g coconut milk
500ml water



VegVibe would like to feature someone chosen by the readers for the March issue and so we are calling for nominations on your choice of a vegetarian or vegan who inspires.



**THE
SEARCH
IS ON!**

And just to make the effort worthwhile, we are pleased to offer a **pair of Golden Village movie tickets** to one lucky winner. Think of it - with just a few clicks and about 50 words, you can enjoy a nice movie with that special someone come March!

So please visit our **Facebook page discussion board** or drop as an email at **vision@vegville.com** to submit your nomination. Just tell us in about 50 words (or more) why and how the person inspires you, that's it! Nominations will be accepted from now till 15 February 2010, so do hurry.



Know Your Pineapples!

Pineapples originated in Brazil and Paraguay and it is said that Christopher Columbus was the first to discover it.

Pineapple is an excellent source of Vitamin C and manganese, and a good source of Vitamin B1, B6 and dietary fibre.

Fresh pineapples are perishable and should be consumed within two days if left at room temperature - as acidity increases in the fruit over time.

Once a pineapple is cut from the plant it will not ripen any further but instead start to ferment and rot.

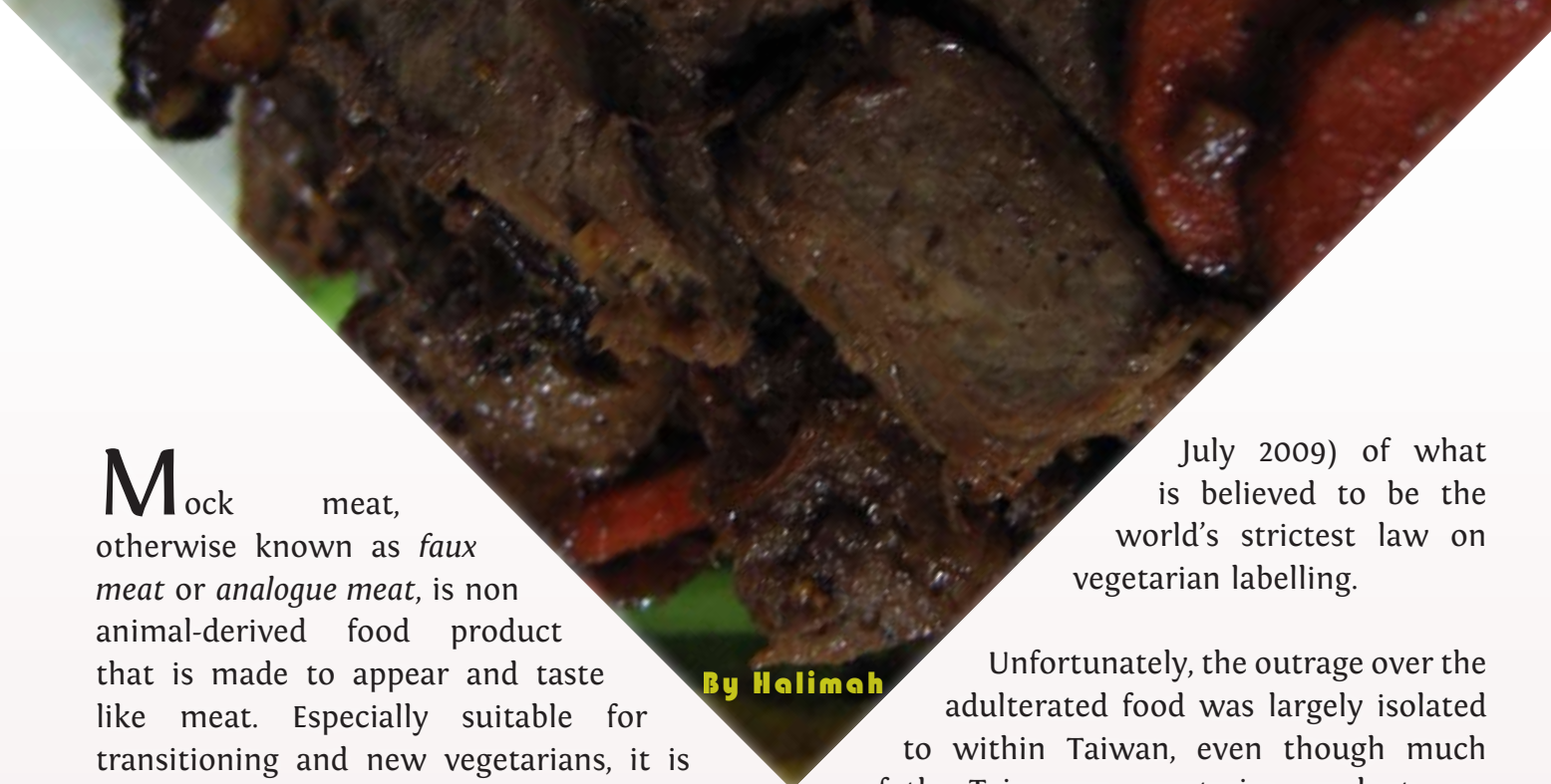
The Spanish considered pineapples as a symbol of hospitality and integrated pineapple designs in woodwork and furniture.

The acids in pineapple are similar to gastric acids in the stomach and when consumed in moderation can assist in digestion.

Pineapples contain an enzyme called bromelain which has been found to reduce inflammation caused by arthritis, sore throat, gout and acute sinusitis.

The name pineapple was coined in the 17th century in England as it resembled pine cones.

Studies have shown that the bromelain found in pineapples is also successful in shrinking tumours and preventing cancer.



Mock meat, otherwise known as *faux meat* or *analogue meat*, is non animal-derived food product that is made to appear and taste like meat. Especially suitable for transitioning and new vegetarians, it is no secret that mock meat is extensively used at many vegetarian eateries around Singapore. Ranging from 'seafood' options to 'red meat,' mock meat allows vegetarians to recreate their favourite non-vegetarian dishes for the occasional indulgence.

Chewing on Controversy?

However, even as the debate on whether vegetarians should even consume products mimicking animal flesh was going on, the shocking news hit us in June 2009 that over 50% of processed vegetarian food produced in Taiwan was discovered to contain real meat.

In two of the most serious cases, mock meat products contained at least 20% beef or pork. Sadly, this finding is not surprising considering that in 2004, mock meat produced in Taiwan was already found to contain real meat. At the time, 15 out of 21 vegetarian products examined were found to contain animal ingredients like fish, pork and beef.

The latest discovery though led to an uproar by the vegetarian community in Taiwan which culminated in the enactment (as of 1st

July 2009) of what is believed to be the world's strictest law on vegetarian labelling.

Unfortunately, the outrage over the adulterated food was largely isolated to within Taiwan, even though much of the Taiwanese vegetarian products are exported to the USA. In addition, there has not been as much furor regarding the undercover scientific investigation of vegan restaurants in the Los Angeles area which unearthed that 7 out of 17 restaurants carried ingredients that contained animal products.

Implications for Singapore?

VegVibe queried one of the local mock meat distributors here and were informed that much of the mock meat products sold here come from Malaysia and Taiwan, and assured that new products are regularly sent for ingredient-testing.

However, as we inspected the products ourselves, we realised that some did not list the country of manufacture - as they had been repackaged for local distribution in Singapore.

More disturbingly, as we scanned the ingredient lists of various products, we noticed that nearly every product had an ambiguous 'natural seasoning' or 'vegetarian seasoning' listed. And when asked what they referred to, we were told that it was the spices in the products and not milk or egg.

Why do you mock me so?

Knowing the Problem

Part of the haziness over food labelling arises due to translating ingredients from other languages to English. The limited space on a packaging to list all ingredients means clarity (in terms of font-size as well as adequate description) is routinely sacrificed.

Compounding matters, the lack of concrete regulations enables manufacturers to circumvent the declaration of undesirable ingredients by using vague headings.

Whilst it is saddening that unscrupulous manufacturers use unethical means to generate profit, we must not just be shaking our heads in despair. For one, we can and should petition for a stricter labelling system to be in place for vegetarian products imported into Singapore.

And until the day comes when we can say without a shadow of a doubt that the product is bona fide for vegetarian consumption, we should try to avoid processed food as much as possible - for a peace of mind and definitely much better health.



Photo courtesy of Teeenie Weenie Newsletter



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.

The research is clear - many modern diseases are linked to our diets, and evidence shows that the risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis can all be dramatically reduced through a healthful diet. VSS is committed to bringing this awareness to as many people as possible, and through its road shows, work with schools, public talks, community activities and online resources, thousands have already been inspired to make positive change in their lives.

Now help us reach thousands more - *Sow the Seeds of Hope* - so that daughters don't have to lose their fathers prematurely, husbands and wives their spouses, parents their children. For a monthly contribution of just S\$5, you can become a *Seeds of Hope* donor and automatically enjoy VSS Premium Membership as well as the following benefits - \$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*.

Just drop us a line at **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>



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.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

