

VegVibe

NOVEMBER 2009



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION

community comes together



Also in this issue:

Discover the vegetarian side of **Phuket**, Crunch our knowledge about **Celery**, Meet our Vegetarian Hero **Shawn Lau**, and Learn more about the **Vegetarian-Cholesterol** link...

The Chief Veggie Speaks!

Another month has flown by and I can't believe we're into our fourth issue! I am heartened to note that more people are coming onboard this project and our readership is ever-increasing - by about 15% per issue.

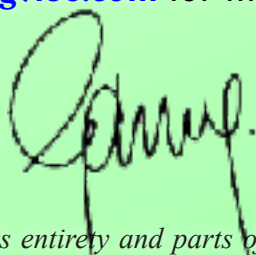
As more and more members of our wonderful community become aware of **VegVibe**, so too has the number of leads on good events accumulated. Fortunately, we have been able to rely on the goodwill of well-wishers to gather the reports and forward their wonderful photos to us so that we may share these stories with you.

Meanwhile, the team here made the trip down to Phuket last month to personally witness the *Vegetarian Festival* there (Page 12), however we were not too impressed by what we found.

The highlight of this issue, of course, is the community celebration of the *International Day of Climate Action* and we capture the mood and excitement in our photo essay (Page 10).

As usual, we have lots of information to share such as the history of celery (Page 9), what 'Going Green' really means (Page 2), and we feature *Shawn Lau* - the wonder boy of environmental activism (Page 16) this month!

As usual, do visit the **VegVibe** blog at <http://vegville.com/blog> for follow-up content, drop us an email at vision@vegville.com to chat with us or visit our website at <http://vegville.com> for more information.



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Design & Editing by Ganga
Concept & Content by Halimah

Contributing Writers

*Trina Tan, Edmond Chua, Luke Otter,
Shwu Huey Ng, Chef Crystal*

Cover Photo (top) by Clarence Tan

Cover Photo (bottom) by Neil Madhvani

*The editor would like to thank
Mr Shawn Lau for graciously agreeing
to be featured in this issue.*

Joining Hands for a Real Greener Deal

By Trina Tan

The word 'green' has many meanings in different cultures and religions. The colour green could mean envy, money, nature, health or life - in fact, it is the official religious colour of Islam. Recently, there seems to be a unifying meaning for green where it is seen to convey the message of saving the environment.

In Singapore, the word 'green' would imply energy-saving light bulbs, biodegradable products, solar-powered houses, green buildings and, of course, the 3Rs - reduce, reuse and recycle. But why is the word 'green' not directly linked to protecting and conserving biodiversity? Is it because we humans are selfish?

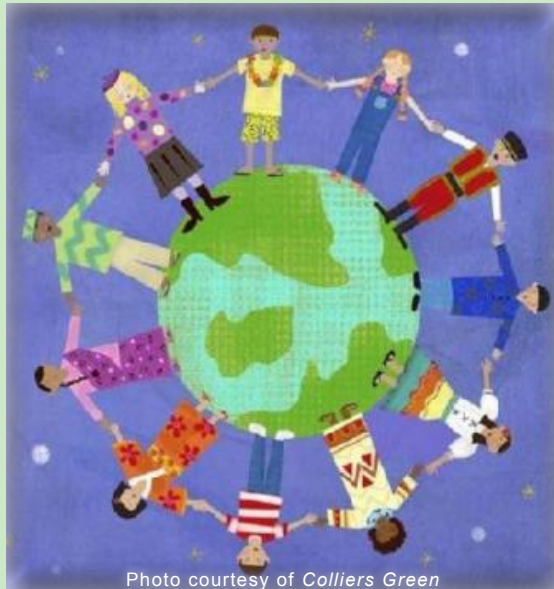


Photo courtesy of Colliers Green

stand these concepts, we will realise how our daily actions have such a big impact on the millions of species with whom we share the Earth.

Plants, animals and the natural world are indeed fascinating and we have spent centuries learning about them - and from them. Many of our problems are solved by solutions from nature - using bacteria as medicine and discovering gravity through observation of falling apples.

While we try to change and adjust our bad human habits that lead to the destruction of Earth and the extinction of species, we ought to also put in more 'greener' efforts to help the environment directly as well.

The Singapore Context

As a small nation with little natural resources, let us not forget that even the flora and fauna in Singapore are defined as resources which are in fact an equal part of the ecosystem which humans depend on.

Singapore has already given up a large portion of its original tropical rainforest to build Singaporeans a better home - causing the extinction of many species that once used to live alongside with us in the process.

Following Your Conscience

Now that you feel a tinge of guilt, you ought to do your part in protecting whatever nature spots we have left in the form of fragmented forestland, mangroves and swamps.

This remaining precious land is home to many species, some of which are unique only to Singapore. Whilst going green is, on one hand, what we have been told - saving water, switching to fans instead of air-conditioners, reducing the use of paper and plastic bags, and changing our light bulbs to energy saving ones, on the other hand it is also to do our part in protecting and conserving the biodiversity that we have as a nation. These plants and animals are born and bred here and can be said to be 'Singaporeans' too.

Take Action Now!

There are many ways to care for our flora and fauna directly such as actively participating in mangrove and beach clean-ups which are organised by various environmental groups such as *Toddycats*, the *Nature Society*, and *International Coastal Clean-up Singapore*.

Additionally, as the future lies in the hands of the children today, education and sparking interest among the young in areas of biology and biodiversity will shape Singapore towards being the nature loving society of tomorrow.

Last but definitely not least, one can also provide resources and support to the organisations that help to preserve and con-



serve our environment. Singapore is indeed very fortunate to have governmental organisations such as the *National Environment Agency* and the *National Parks Board* that do their part in protecting the environment and conserving nature in Singapore.

And even with all the nature enthusiasts chipping in, there are still many more 'positions' that are open to help protect Singapore and the Earth, and they require almost no other criteria than the passion to preserve Nature's creations.

I thus hope to see many of you sending your resume in for such positions soon.



AsialsGreen.com
your green resource guide

This article first appeared on

The Meatless Meet Up

By Ng Shwu Huey

A young entrepreneur passionate for dance and Chinese history.

A costume designer who used to work with Universal Studios and Disneyland.

An international school teacher with a penchant for fielding tough questions.

Where would one find such a wondrous hodgepodge of humanity? Why, at the *Singapore Vegetarian Meetup* gatherings, of course! The latest get-together was held on 10th November at *Café Salvation* – one place where mouth-watering dishes live up to the establishment's name.

Located along Syed Alwi Road, *Café Salvation* played host to a 29-strong crowd of diverse personalities, a colourful tapestry of individuals bound by one thing in common – a love for vegetarian food!

The evening began innocuously enough, with Meetup newbies shuffling gingerly around the room, shyly introducing themselves. The regulars demonstrated more flair – mingling with casual ease, exchanging “It’s been a while’s” and “So nice to see you again’s”.

It did not take long for the group to start get-

ting into the swing of things and the room began to hum with activity in no time. Warm smiles quickly melted the ice, encouraging conversation to flow and soon the friendly banter began to build both camaraderie and appetites.

No Meet-Up Without Great Food

The delectable buffet spread saw new friends chattering over plates of delicious pita, pasta and pesto. The *Spinach Soup* was worthy of Popeye’s praise, the *Hummus with Pita* accorded the highest honour to the humble chick-pea, and the *Aubergine Caviar Crostini* simply robbed you of any reason to remember how real caviar tastes.

Meanwhile, the *Rosemary Potatoes* were positively a flavourful delight while the *Pasta Putanesca* had all the spiciness, tanginess and robustness to turn you as scarlet in the face as when you first discover the literal translation of its name.

And surely, nobody could forget the crunchy offering of *Tostaditas* served with roast corn salsa that gave a new meaning to ‘¡Ay, caramba!’. For dessert, there were the *Semolina Brulee*, which disappeared even more quickly than the group’s initial shyness, and the aptly-named *Heavenly Chocolate Brownies*.

Photos by Neil Madhvani



Photos by Lee Sui-Lynn, Michelle

An Audience With Vegetarian Luminaries

It wasn’t just the buffet spread that provided food for thought though – midway into the evening idle chat made way for serious discussion when Dr George Jacobs, President of the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)*, introduced the three visiting guests – leaders within the world vegetarian movement in their own right.

They were **Mr John Davis**, *Head of the International Vegetarian Union*, **Mr Shankar Narayan**, *Head of the Indian Vegan Society*, and last but not least, **Mr Hiren Kara**, *Director for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA) India*.

All three gentlemen graced the attentive crowd with a few words, sharing news on upcoming events and elaborating on the causes championed by their organisations. They also tackled challenging questions from the floor and even participated in a small debate on zoos.

Mr Hiren also arrested the attention of animal

Visit <http://www.meetup.com/singapore-vegetarian> to register for the next exciting outing!

Mr Hiren Kara

Mr John Davis

Mr Shankar Narayan

lovers who have a weakness for *Baywatch* by revealing that Pamela Anderson (who is vegetarian, by the way) will be visiting India in December for PeTA India’s 10th anniversary celebration!

The evening progressed further with everyone trading more laughs and, eventually, phone numbers. Towards the end of the night faces became more than just names as the seeds of new friendships were sown.

And despite having delighted in a hearty meal, the evening at *Café Salvation* certainly left many of us ‘hungry’ for the next Meetup gathering.

The Singapore Vegetarian Meetup Group

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Joe Goh
email me

Asst. Organizers:
George Jacobs, Michelle Lee,
Neil Madhvani

Welcome Singapore Vegetarian Food Lovers!

Location Singapore, Singapore	Meetups 32 so far	
Members 482 Vegetarian Food Lovers	Rating ★★★★★	
Meetup topics Vegetarian , Vegan , Dining Out , Raw Food	Founded August 30, 2007	
Suggested min. donation \$2.00 a year (US\$)		
Why: Meetup.com website fees, which charges the organiser US\$144 per year.		

You don't have to be vegetarian to join the group or attend our meetings, but it certainly helps if you have interest in the subject and enjoy eating vegetarian food. :-)

Join us and meet new friends and acquaintances, share recipes, great new places to eat - all while having a delicious vegetarian meal!

We try to meet on the first and third week of every month, and most of the meetings are on Saturdays.

Meetups on the first week of the month are our foodie meets, where the main

The Myth about Cholesterol

By Halimah

Often suffering from ill repute, cholesterol actually provides several essential functions for our physical health. Apart from providing the much-needed rigidity to all cell membranes, cholesterol is also the basic raw material in producing major hormones such as testosterone, estrogen and progesterone - without which we would have no sex life!

So why the concern?

Though not exactly a fat, cholesterol is still classified as a *lipid* (a group of fat or fat-like substances) which cannot be dissolved in blood. Instead, 2 lipoproteins - *low-density lipoprotein* (LDL) and *high-density lipoprotein* (HDL) - are produced by the liver to transport cholesterol to and from the cells.

The problem arises when too much LDL cholesterol circulates in the blood, and over time this can accumulate in the walls of arteries that lead to the heart and brain. Such accumulated cholesterol will eventually form plaque - a thick, hard deposit - which ends up clogging the arteries leading to potentially fatal health issues such as stroke and heart attack.

Whilst consuming saturated fats found in animal-derived foods causes high LDL cholesterol levels, there is still cause for concern for vegetarians and vegans alike

Watching What you Eat

Though research appears unanimous that a vegan or vegetarian diet helps to lower cholesterol levels, it is not necessarily true that vegans or vegetarians will consequently have optimal cholesterol levels.



Photo courtesy of TopNews.in

No doubt, vegetarians who consume high-fat desserts and dishes laden with eggs and dairy need to be vigilant on elevated LDL cholesterol levels, but vegans too have to be mindful about their sugar consumption. Research indicates that a high intake of refined sugar increases LDL cholesterol and blood triglyceride (blood fat) whilst decreasing HDL cholesterol. Also, food ingredients usually used in Asian cooking such as coconut oil, coconut milk and palm oil are all high in saturated fats as well.

Genetics

Vegetarians and vegans can suffer from high LDL cholesterol if they have a family history of this as research suggests that cholesterol levels may be hereditary and may even be resistant to exercise and diet.

In the more extreme cases, medication is unavoidable in combating LDL cholesterol and sometimes can be a symptom of *hypothyroidism*, which often goes undiagnosed.

Lifestyle

High stress has also been linked to increased LDL cholesterol levels with eroding HDL cholesterol levels, and chronic stress can cause long-term damage such as heart disease. On a positive note though, research shows that HDL cholesterol levels can be maintained through active steps in coping with stress.

Thus, although vegans and vegetarians are less likely to suffer from high cholesterol due to their diet, it is pertinent to note that we must continue to actively maintain a healthy and active lifestyle nonetheless.

Gokul Vegetarian Restaurant
19 Upper Dickinson Road
Tel: 63967769

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

A well air-conditioned eatery nestled in the midst of Little India's frantic side streets and which doesn't charge GST or for service, *Gokul Vegetarian Restaurant* is the place to go for Indian food - you can pick anything from its extensive menu and almost without exception what you get will be scrumptious!

My personal must-have is the *Chicken Tandoori* (above) priced at \$7 - the mock chicken is overwhelmingly succulent and the taste of the tandoori is exceptional throughout, with only the lack of a sliced lemon on the side being what prevents this dish from being completely faultless.

The *Gokul's Specials* priced at \$6 per dish are all masterfully concocted curries, and

in particular, the *Butter Chicken Masala* and *Chicken Kurma* are both palatably creamy, and intricately spiced without any of these elements being too overpowering.

Overall, while the service is fast and efficient - the employees so eager to help anyone looking a little bemused by the menu, the most important of all is that the food is just simply unbeatable!

Gokul Vegetarian Restaurant is open from Monday through Saturday from 11:00am to 10:00pm and from 11:00am to 4:00pm every Sunday



on the menu.

I was extremely curious to try the *Palak Bemisal* (left) priced at \$9.50, which is a different take on the classic *Palak Paneer*. However, while the *Palak* (spinach) was wonderfully flavoured, I didn't find the three-layered *Paneer* too appealing.

The *naan*'s are virtually flawless though - soft-yet-chewy, fluffy and skillfully charred.

The GST and service charge do tend to weigh down the bill slightly but both are probably justified overall.

Raj Vegetarian Restaurant is open from Sunday through Thursday from 11:00am to 10:30pm and from 11:00am to 11:00pm on Fridays and Saturdays

One of the real heavyweights of Indian vegetarian food in Singapore, *Raj Vegetarian Restaurant* has a detailed menu with beautifully elegant interior design. In particular, it should be credited for its enormous selection of *dosai*'s that are on offer.

Although it is clearly one of the more upmarket Indian eateries, one can actually say the price is very reasonable - the *South Indian Thali* (below) is only \$6.50 and stacked with many components, making it probably the best value dish



Raj Prime Vegetarian Restaurant
76 Syed Alwi Road
Tel: 62971716

By Halimah

Crunching up to Celery



Thought to be of Mediterranean origin, celery as we know it today has an intriguing and regal past - archaeological remains indicate that ancient Egyptians used garlands made of wild celery to adorn *Tutankhamen*'s tomb.

However, it is also suggested that cultivated celery made its appearance in Greece where it derived its name from the Greek word 'selinon'. Due to its strong smell and colours, celery was associated with death cults and the Greeks made garlands from celery to adorn the dead as well.

Nutritional Benefit

Celery can be considered 'super food' and provides many nutritional benefits such as Vitamins K and C, and minerals such as potassium, folate, iron and calcium. Celery is a good source of dietary fibre too and is touted to retain much of its nutrients even when cooked.

Being high in Vitamin C, celery may very well aid in reducing common cold symptoms and support the immune system, and since the vitamin is also associated with reducing inflammatory conditions, celery has been linked with easing rheumatism, arthritis and asthma.

As celery is low in calorie and high in fibre, it

has been said to help with weight loss - the fibre found in celery is apparently so difficult to digest that it burns more calories in the process! Furthermore, this particular fibre acts as a natural laxative and helps maintain healthy bowel movement as well.

Celery also contains *coumarin*, a compound that helps to lower blood pressure and tone the vascular system, and more importantly, stops free radicals from affecting cells and hence prevents potential cell mutation and cancer.

Selection & Storage

When choosing celery, avoid those that are bruised or discoloured; it should look crisp and be pale or bright green in colour. Also, celery should be relatively tight and compact without any stalks splaying out.

Occasionally, celery can be susceptible to a condition called 'blackheart' which is caused by insects - to check for this, separate the stalks and look for brown or black discoloration on the inner stalks.

Celery can be refrigerated for up to 2 weeks and should be kept in a plastic bag or wrapped in a damp cloth. Freezing celery, however, is not recommended as it may cause it to wilt and should be generally avoided unless called for by a recipe.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION

By Edmond Chua

More than 300 hundred people turned up at Hong Lim Park here in Singapore on the morning of 24th October to mark *International Day of Climate Action* - just one of over 5,000 activities that were organised in tandem across more than 170 countries around the world.

The aim was to bring attention to the urgency needed in bringing down the atmospheric carbon dioxide volume from its current 390 parts per million (ppm) to 350ppm, which is the highest possible concentration before climate change becomes irreversible.

With the crucial *Copenhagen Climate Change Conference* in December fast approaching, a handful of dedicated people in Singapore

came together to organise this event as part of the global effort to raise public awareness of this dire need to reverse the high volume of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHG) that are being pumped needlessly into the atmosphere.

The event started off with an aerial photograph of the number '350' which was formed by participants positioning themselves (left). The mass formation was then captured on film (left) from a boom lift raised 12m and also from a hotel room in Furama Hotel.

This successful formation was then followed by another that read 'BE VEG GO GREEN' which was formed by another group of participants lying on the ground.



Photos courtesy of Vegetarian Society (Singapore)



This second formation (above & right) was to bring attention to the recent finding by Goodland and Anhang that livestock and their byproducts actually account for at least 32.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide per year, or 51% of annual worldwide GHG emissions - alarmingly, much more than the 18% reported in *Livestock's Long Shadow* by the UN's *Food and Agriculture Organization* (FAO) in 2006.

Although a serious message, some healthy fun was still to be had and a walkathon of sorts ensued from Hong Lim Park to the Singapore Management University (SMU) campus which lasted about half an hour.



Over at SMU, an information fair (left) coordinated by the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)* - VSS, *Environmental Challenge Organisation* (ECO), and *Animal Concerns Research and Education*



Society (ACRES) saw both participants and some members of the public finding out what they could do to curb climate change.

Those interested were even encouraged to make a pledge (below) to take some form of

proactive action on their part and almost all were more than happy to oblige.



Of course no major event is complete without a delicious spread, and wholesome vegan cuisine was provided courtesy of *Loving Hut* to all present. And although the hearty meal was followed by a casual lucky draw, each and every participant was a winner in this successful event.

Finally, to cap a meaningful day, a spectacular human tidal wave was formed at Lasalle College of the Arts by people dressed in blue - to demonstrate the possible global flooding that could accompany global warming.



Vegetarian Paradise in Phuket

By Halimah

Facing the warm, turquoise waters of the Andaman Sea, the island south of Thailand popularly known as Phuket is a favourite tourist destination for both Asians and Westerners alike. Nearly the size of Singapore (but shaped differently), Phuket is well-endowed with natural terrain and offers visitors a wide range of options from lounging on its white sandy beaches to hiking up forested hills.

Phuket, however, is also gaining popularity for another reason - the annual *Phuket Vegetarian Festival* held during the ninth lunar month of the Chinese calendar is fast becoming a must-see event. This year, the festival lasting nine days started on the 18th of October and we made it our goal to savour this unique experience.

The *Phuket Vegetarian Festival*, dates back to 1825 when a travelling opera troupe from China was struck by a mysterious ailment. Legend has it that the observing of a vegetarian diet in honour of two emperor gods eventually cured the troupe, arousing the curiosity of locals who wanted to know how the illness was alleviated.

The suggestion that a vegetarian diet together with ritualistic ceremonies was the panacea that was widely accepted by the local residents who since then have been celebrating the festival on

the ninth lunar month.

First Impressions

Armed with this information and in anticipation of delectable Thai vegetarian fare, we were in Phuket within one and a half hours of leaving Singapore by flight. After being accosted for taxi and tour services at the airport - as happens at any holiday destination - we finally managed to rent a *Toyota Vios* for our inbound travel purposes.

We soon found that Phuket roads are not for the inexperienced with many winding and undulating roads that require a confident driver to manoeuvre.

As we had already been briefed by our well-meaning friends to look out for the all-important yellow and red flags which indicate food establishments that only serve vegetarian food, we soon observed a concentration of such flags within the vicinity of Phuket Town.

Unfortunately, this started to dissipate as we moved away from the town towards Kata Beach where we had booked our hotel, and suitable eateries for us became a rarity. This was not what we were expecting but since we were mobile enough, were not too bothered.

Subsequently, a chat with the locals confirmed that, normally, there are precious few outlets serving purely vegetarian cuisine outside of Phuket Town and even within the town, only *Ranong Road* was well-known for housing vegetarian outlets. During the vegetarian festival though, many non-vegetarian establishments turn vegetarian to cater to the needs of the locals and again, *Ranong Road* takes central predominance during this period.

Ranong Road = Vegetarian Central

We were therefore swift to visit *Ranong Road* (below) of course and sure enough, we were greeted by a long, almost-endless street of vendors selling delectable morsels ranging from yam fritters to



fried noodles, to spring rolls - and all at pocket-change prices.

We were more than happy to empty our pockets as our stomachs filled up, but were also curious to learn more about the bizarre (and gory) rituals of the *Phuket Vegetarian Festival* that we had heard so much about.

Thus early the next morning, all dressed in white (one of the 10 rules of the festival) we joined the crowds of people waiting eagerly for the procession to begin. Firecrackers were liberally thrown onto the roads by the bystanders to excite the already enthusiastic crowd and soon the procession began with entranced *Mah Song*, devotees whose bodies the Gods enter during the festival, walking along with their cheeks skewered with various ob-

jects ranging from swords to chains.

Some even had unusual items like long beans, garden shears and bicycle handlebars protruding through the cheeks and we also saw others carrying statues of the gods and blessing the believers.

Sacred Ritual or Tourism Gimmick?

Other than these morning processions from selected temple to temple, over the 9 days various other rituals such as fire-walking, bathing in hot oil and climbing bladed ladders are carried out by the *Mah Song*. Though there is much blood and gore involved, the festival is a great attraction for both locals and tourists.

In fact, the sanctity of the religious festival has been somewhat diluted and we were slightly disappointed to see a few *Mah Song* stopping to pose for photographs with tourists and locals whilst supposedly in a trance. Similarly, some locals also shared with us that the religious significance of the festival has diminished greatly and it is largely dominated by teenagers (and adults) partaking in the rituals simply as an opportunity to attract attention.

Thus it seems Phuket is a naturalistic paradise whose charm is slowly being eroded away as it turns into an over-hyped holiday destination. Nevertheless, the *Phuket Vegetarian Festival* itself continues to be the only few events in the world that is definitely a must-visit - for now.



Vegetarian Travel Tips for Phuket

Vegetarian food - without eggs and the '5 pungent spices' - is referred to as 'Jae' (or 'Jay') in Thai and the character looks like the number '17'



When observing street processions, be modestly attired, preferably in white, and wear covered shoes as exploding firecrackers are the norm!

Be wary of rampant touting and do your homework on prices and locations BEFORE heading to Phuket.

Outside of the festive period, vegetarian food is extremely limited to certain places like Ranong Road with almost no eatery available outside of the town.



Our pick is a quiet family-run business located 15 minutes away from Kata Beach by car. The newly-opened restaurant is being run as a form of community service to the vegetarians in the vicinity.

Booniyom Vegetarian Restaurant

7/2 Chaota Road,
Hayak Chalong
open daily from 6:30am to 8:30pm

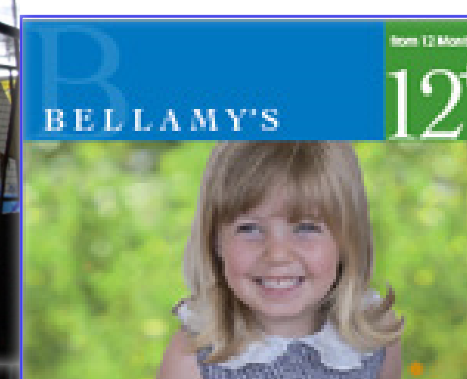


<http://www.orgran.com>

The Orgran Gluten Free Bread Mix is a convenient and versatile bread mix which has revolutionised the way gluten free bread tastes. Suitable for vegans, this bread mix does not contain dairy products or cane sugar and does not require the use of eggs to produce a full crusty loaf that can be sliced, frozen, toasted and enjoyed in the same way as ordinary wheat-based bread. Now, you can not only bake bread in a jiffy but also cater to your palate by adding sultanas, dried fruit, nuts or grains.

Orgran Gluten Free Bread Mix retails at \$6.95 for a 450g box and is available at major supermarkets.

Running out of ideas on what to feed your growing baby? Well, Bellamy's Organic Veggie Macaroni is especially made for babies aged 12 months and older! Made from the finest organic whole grain wheat and organic vegetables, this pasta is sure to appeal to the fussiest eater. It also contains wholesome organic tomato, spinach and beetroot without any undesirable seasoning or additives.



Bellamy's Organic Veggie Macaroni retails at \$8.25 per 175g box and is available at major supermarkets.



<http://www.bellamysorganic.com.au>



Talk Shop



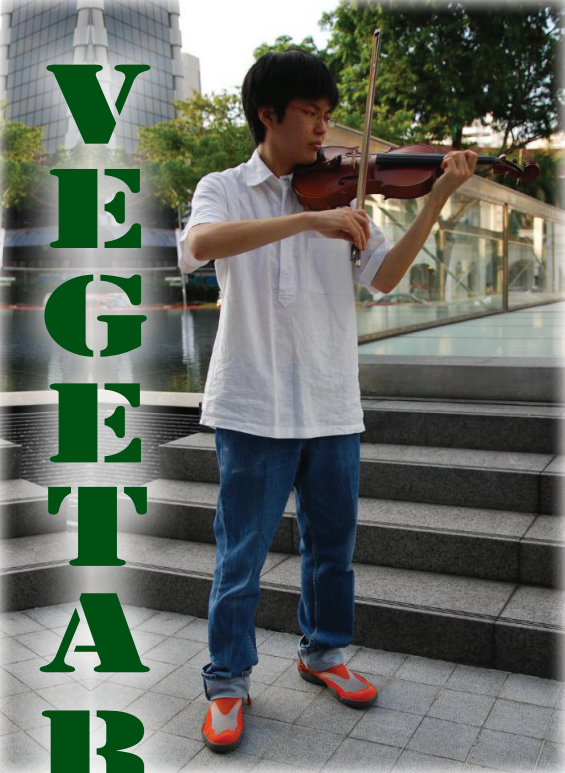
Finding delicious yet healthy snacks for children is always a struggle for parents. Florida's Natural Au'some Fruit Juice Nuggets made from 66% real fruit and juice is therefore a superior choice for children. Completely fat and gluten free, this snack is also made without artificial colours and gelatine. These nuggets come in orange, strawberry and blueberry flavours and are individually packed to ensure maximum freshness and for easy storage in your child's lunchbox!

Florida's Natural Au'some Fruit Juice Nuggets retails at \$5.30 per 113.4g box and is available at major supermarkets.

<http://www.floridasnatural.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@vegvice.com



Shawn Lau is a man with a mission, with a passion for vegetarianism and environmental protection that would put people twice his age to shame.

Whilst currently reading Law at the *Singapore Management University (SMU)*, he is actively involved in community work and plays the violin for the SMU String Ensemble as well.

Since young, Shawn could never reconcile the unnecessary cruelty that comes out of killing an animal for food. The nagging feeling that this was just not right was eventually put to rest when he chanced upon a book on vegetarianism and realised that eating meat was not for him.

In addition, learning about the health issues related to meat-eating was another impetus to turn vegetarian, and 8 years on, Shawn continues to be a vegetarian motivated now by ethics (much) more than the health concerns.

Shawn was fortunate to have a family that was supportive of his decision and he is pleased to reveal that his family has since turned vegetarian - without any convincing on his part! However, he admits his only challenge is in finding vegetarian food when he is out with friends and feels that the *Vegetarian Society (Singapore)* - VSS's food directory is a useful resource to that end.

Shawn Lau, 22 Student

And whenever Shawn feels the rare temptation for non-vegetarian food he reminds himself of the fundamental reasons he became vegetarian in the first place and finds this approach very effective with minimum effort.

Apart from studying, Shawn has also been volunteering with the VSS since 2004. Starting off by organising the *'Raffles Junior College Vegetarian Week'* with the help of the VSS, today he serves as a volunteer coordinator which sees him assisting in organising road-shows and other events for the society, and says that meeting like-minded people helps to 'recharge his batteries' and inspires him to work harder for the cause.

He is also the founder of *'Another Inconvenient Truth Task Force'*, an informal group set up under the National Environment Agency's *Youth Environment Envoy Programme*. Taking inspiration from the documentary film by former American vice president Al-Gore, Shawn argues that many environmentalists (including Al-Gore himself) overlook the impact of meat consumption on the environment.

He thus aims to encourage the reduction of meat in the diet of the general public by suggesting abstinence one day a week or just eating less meat overall. Shawn has not only set up a facebook group for this purpose entitled *'Meatout For 1 Day A Week, Singapore'* but has also been giving talks in schools and government institutions since 2008.

Shawn advises those considering vegetarianism to transition slowly and instead of making a complete switch in diet, suggests starting off with one day and slowly increasing the number of days as this will be an easier way to adapt to the lifestyle change. He believes that a drastic change might not be sustainable over the long term and may unnecessarily lead to 'failed vegetarians'.



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

Brown rice. It's good for you, but it takes a while to get used to it.

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

World peace, really!

3) What misconception about vegetarianism gets your goat?

That vegetarians are all religious wackos.

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

'The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life and Our World' by John Robbins

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

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead, American cultural anthropologist

With the festive season around the corner, the inevitable questions and scrutiny from well meaning family and friends await many vegetarians and vegans. Thus *Living Among Meat Eaters* by Carol Adams provides an enlightened yet practical approach to dealing with such awkward social situations that arise from discussions on vegetarianism.

Drawing inspiration from her personal journey on vegetarianism and from the common struggles faced by vegetarians, Adams connects with the readers with her empathetic conversational style of writing. She presents a compelling case that vegetarians gain confidence and wisdom in handling meat-eaters only when they themselves are at peace with their lifestyle choice.

Offering several useful survival tips on self-preparation and dealing with meat-eaters, Adams argues that vegetarians have to be sufficiently primed for social situations where vegetarian food is a scarcity. She also

suggests that by appearing to sacrifice their well-being for vegetarianism, they generate hostility and unhappiness.

As insightful as her book is however, Adams becomes tenuous when she puts forth

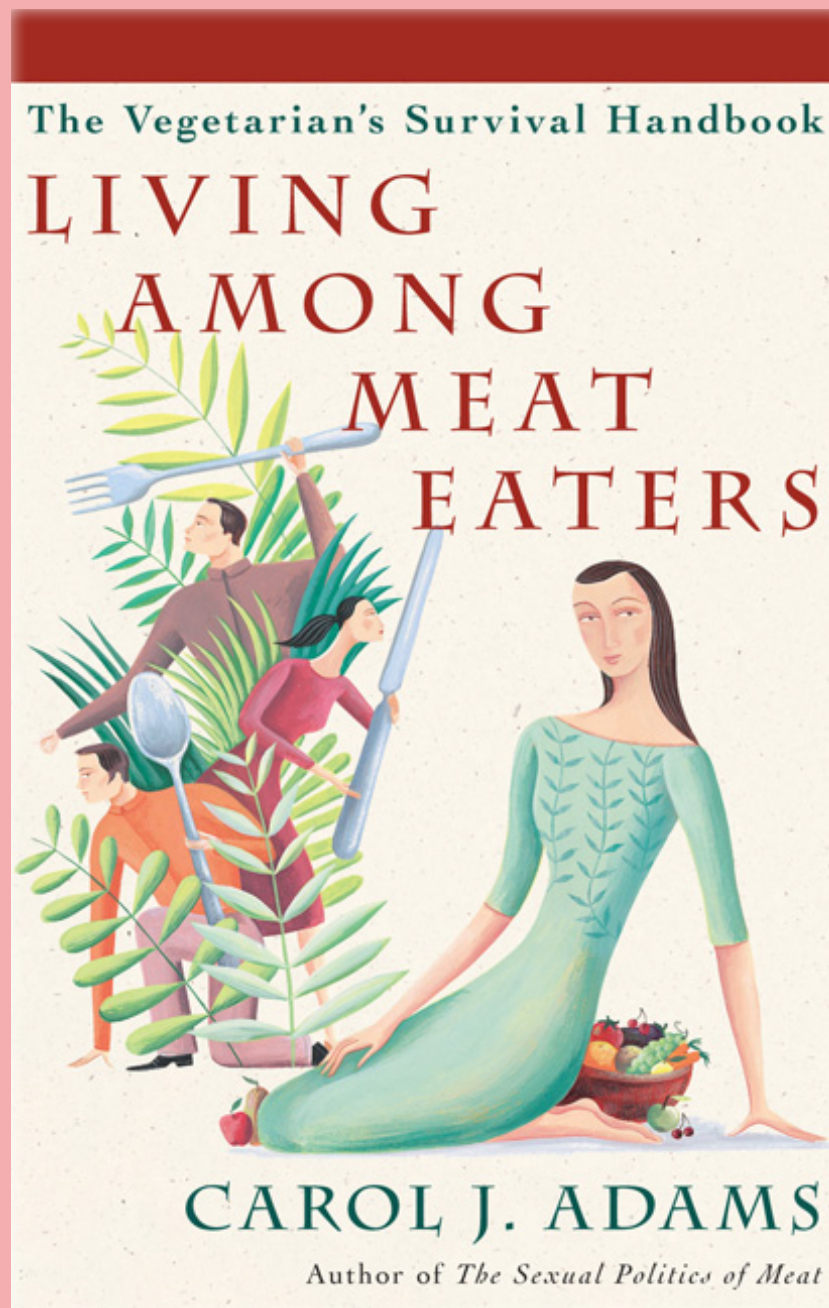
By Halimah

her own brand of armchair psychology on the antagonistic response of meat-eaters to a vegetarian lifestyle. Calling meat-eaters 'blocked vegetarians', she subscribes to the notion that their fears and personal issues stop them from being vegetarians. And at the risk of sounding imperious, she also proposes looking at each meat-eater as a potential vegetarian and to engage them at a deeper level.

But apart from this controversial angle, *Living*

Among Meat Eaters is well equipped with recipes and four appendices that include useful information on surviving as a vegetarian.

Highly recommended for new vegetarians



Let's Go Japanese

By Chef Crystal with photos

Cha Soba with Sweet Miso

Sweet Miso Paste
 100g cooked Cha Soba 3/4 tablespoon miso paste
 roasted sesame seeds to garnish 1 tablespoon hot water
 nori shreds to garnish 1 tablespoon sugar
 sliced spring onion or coriander leaves 1 tablespoon sesame oil
 (optional)

Method

- 1) Miso Paste: combine all sauce ingredients in a bowl and mix well
- 2) Place the cooked Cha Soba on a serving plate and top with sweet miso paste
- 3) Sprinkle sesame seeds and garnish with spring onion or coriander leaves, and nori shreds before serving

Tip: serves one



Corn Battleship Sushi

200g rice washed and drained 400ml water
 1.5 tablespoons Japanese rice or apple cider vinegar
 teaspoon sugar 1/2 teaspoon salt
 3 sheets nori toasted and cut into 4 equal strips
 2 ears of corn with kernels removed
 2 tablespoons vegan mayonnaise or vegetarian salad cream to taste

Method

- 1) Add rice and water in rice cooker and leave to rest after cooking for 5-10 minutes
- 2) Mayo Corn: put corn kernels in heatproof serving plate and steam for 8-10 minutes,

- then remove from steamer and leave to cool before mixing well with mayonnaise
- 3) Combine vinegar, sugar, salt in bowl and stir until dissolved
- 4) Spread cooked rice using rice paddle or spoon, then stir in combined mixture and fold rice (to mix well) before dividing into 12 portions
- 5) Use wet hand to roll each portion into an oblong shape about 1-inch thick and place on plate
- 6). Wrap nori strip around each rice oblong and seal with 2 grains of rice along edge
- 7) Spoon some Mayo Corn onto all the portions and serve

Tip: serves twelve pieces 19



200g rice, washed and drained
400ml water
1.5 to 2 tablespoons Japanese rice
or apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon mirin
or 1/2 teaspoon cooking rice wine (optional)
1 teaspoon sugar or to taste
1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste



6 sheets nori
1 ripe avocado stoned, peeled and cut into 6 wedges
1 ripe mango peeled and cut into 6 wedges
Pickled sushi ginger
Roasted sesame seed (optional)

Avocado & Mango Temaki

Method

- 1) Add rice and water in rice cooker and leave to rest after cooking for 5-10 minutes
- 2) Add vinegar, mirin, sugar and salt into rice and mix well
- 3) Place some rice on nori sheet and add avocado and mango slices before folding into cone shape and topping off with sesame seeds
- 4) Repeat with remaining ingredients to make 5 more rolls
- 5) Garnish with pickled sushi ginger before serving

1 packet (10g) Konnyaku Jelly powder
200g sugar or to taste
950ml to 1,000ml water
4 teaspoons green tea powder
mixed with 30ml warm water



Method

- 1) Combine Konnyaku Jelly powder with sugar and mix well
- 2) Bring water to boil in pot and gradually stir in mixture before stirring and bringing to boil
- 3) Remove pot from heat and continue to stir until bubbles disappear
- 4) Pour green tea paste and mix well
- 5) Pour mixture into jelly mould and leave to cool before refrigerating until chilled

Macha Konnyaku Jelly (Green Tea Jelly)

1 pack silken tofu cut into quarters
1/4 fresh red chilli with seeds removed and shredded finely
2 thin slices of ginger finely grated or chopped
1 spring onion or coriander leaves to garnish
2 teaspoons sesame seed lightly toasted (optional)
1/2 teaspoon olive oil
1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon light soy sauce



Method

- 1) Place tofu on heat-proof serving plate and steam for 5 minutes
- 2) Garnish steamed tofu with ginger, spring onion, chilli and sprinkle sesame seeds
- 3) Drizzle oils, light soy sauce and serve immediately

Steamed Tofu with Ginger and Spring Onion

Vegetarian Society (Singapore)

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

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



Join VSS

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

Meanwhile, no membership is required to join our online forum that has over 4,000 users, or to subscribe to our bi-weekly newsletter!

VSS Newsletter

FORUM

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



HAVE YOUR SAY

You've read us; now tell us what you think!

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

VegVibe

Thus, please visit the **VegVibe** website at <http://vegville.com> and continue to vote for your favourite ar-

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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.

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