

2009

December

V Alaska S Vegetarian Society

The Heart of Veganism

by Delisa Renideo

Vegan. What does that mean? For many people, it refers to a vegan diet, which just means a diet that is comprised only of plants. I often use the term “plant-based diet” which is more descriptive to many than the term “vegan diet.”

There is a broader context for the word vegan, however, and I find it particularly meaningful at this time of year. During the holiday season, regardless of one’s religious beliefs or affiliations, there is a focus on love and peace. We send and receive cards with the word PEACE printed boldly, we sing songs about peace, and there tends to be a generosity of spirit felt by many that isn’t as strong the rest of the year. All three of these: peace, love, and generosity of spirit, could be said to characterize the essence of the vegan philosophy.

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Even people who have never considered eating a vegan diet are likely to agree with the essence of veganism: to do as much good as possible and as little harm as possible. This is a core message in many

spiritual traditions. We all know about the Golden Rule, which exists in some form in every religion and culture. We are taught to be kind, to honor life, and to love each other.



The reason people who seek to live the vegan philosophy don’t eat animals is because of the harm it does. It isn’t kind or loving to cause harm to oneself by eating foods that undermine our health; it isn’t kind or loving to cause suffering to animals, and it isn’t kind or loving to our planet to support animal agriculture, which degrades the soil, water, and air and uses enormous amounts of the earth’s resources. In addition, eating animal products contributes to world hunger by using resources to feed animals, which are then eaten by the world’s more affluent populations, rather than using those resources to feed hungry people. Many people are unaware of the harm that is done by animal agriculture and unwittingly contribute to huge amounts of suffering and See **Heart of Veganism**, continued on page 7

Nutrition Nuggets – Turmeric: Close to a Panacea?

by Gurubandhu.

When most people think of turmeric, they think of curry powder, which is actually a masala, or a mixture of spices. Turmeric is the spice that turns it yellow. However, most people probably think mustard powder is what gives yellow mustard its amber hue. Actually, it is the turmeric added to the mustard that colors the condiment.

Throughout the ages, turmeric has had many medicinal uses. It is one of the most powerful antioxidants known in herbology, primarily because it contains a phyto-chemical known as curcumin.

One common use is for the skin. In India, when someone gets cut they turn first to turmeric. It is reputed to help clean and heal the wound because of its anti-bacterial properties. It also helps with eczema and acne. One can make a paste and leave it on awhile and then rinse off.

Turmeric also helps heal the “inside skin,” the mucus membranes. This includes digestive or eliminative problems. Dr Sharon McKenna and her team found that curcumin started to kill cancer cells in the esophagus within 24 hours of its use. Other clinical studies have shown that turmeric aids in reducing other types of tumors. The lungs are noted for their mucus membranes

and people have been helped with turmeric easing lung congestion. The sinuses will benefit also. Add some salt and a pinch of turmeric to some water. Tilt your head, and gently pour the water in one nostril, letting it drain out the opposite nostril. Do the same to the other side and continue twice more on each side to open up the higher passages.

The yellow herb has shown much promise in chronic diseases. Arthritis strikes many people. Since turmeric is in the ginger family, it is anti-inflammatory. People take it internally and make a poultice to put on aching joints.

There is no single panacea. However, turmeric is about as close to a panacea as any supplement can get. My teacher always told

us to add turmeric to water in a ratio of 12 parts water to 1 part turmeric. Cook this for 8 minutes until it makes a paste, then store the paste in a refrigerator. Recent studies from UCLA have shown that when just giving the powder to Alzheimer’s patients, none of the curcumin was digested. The researchers found it worked best when heated in oil. Indian people start out most meal-making by sauteing a masala of turmeric, onions, garlic and ginger in oil. Try it and you will enjoy the taste and good health.



Turmeric is reputed to help clean and heal wounds because of its anti-bacterial properties.

My Vegan Story

by Patty Cates

When I think about my switch to a vegan diet, I am filled with gratitude and joy. I'm grateful to know how to eat in a way that is truly health supporting, and joyful that I feel so great and am having such fun with it! It has truly changed my life.

I began eating a vegan diet on August 5, 2009, after attending my first class in the [Food for Life Nutrition and Cooking Class series](#). I attended the classes with my daughter, and at the end of the first class, she turned to me and said, "I'm going to do it!" I responded, "Me too!"

My decision to eat a plant-based diet came after years of trying different ways of eating. For a time, I even tried the Atkins diet. I wasn't really overweight, but I wanted to weigh less than I did. I didn't feel very well eating that way so I switched to a vegetarian diet for about 8 years. I definitely felt better after that change, but I didn't really have enough nutritional knowledge to choose a healthy vegetarian diet. I ate mostly breads and pasta and very few fruits and veggies.

While I was vegetarian, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Fortunately, I found it early and was able to take care of

it with just a lumpectomy. I was surprised to get it while eating a vegetarian diet, and then read somewhere that I needed to eat fish to prevent more cancer from occurring. So I began eating fish daily for a couple of years before learning how to eat a healthy vegan diet.

I feel so grateful to have finally learned enough about nutrition to know what my body needs. Instead of focusing on weight, I now just focus on eating a healthy diet and my weight just takes care of itself!

I feel so much better in many ways since switching to a whole-foods, plant-based diet rich in vegetables and fruits. I can think more clearly and have much more energy. Even when I have

a rough day, I can handle it easily. I feel like I can face anything! I sleep much better and find I don't need as much sleep as I used to. I lost seven pounds in the first three weeks, and besides the actual weight loss, I just feel lighter -- more expansive -- inside. I guess I can best describe it as being on a natural high.

I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in my 20's. Over the years, my hands would hurt sporadically and I've noticed
See [My Vegan Story](#), continued on page 6



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Recipe of the Month - Holiday Roast

(This is a wonderful replacement for a holiday turkey.)

A favorite from the kitchen of Delisa Renideo

Roast:

5 blocks organic tofu, Chinese style (firm)
 3 Tbsp. vegetarian chicken-flavored broth powder (from store, or see recipe below)
 3 tsp. each: sage, thyme
 1 1/2 tsp. black pepper



Basting mixture:

1/4 cup toasted sesame seed oil (or other oil of your choice)
 1/4 to 1/3 cup soy sauce
 2 tablespoons miso
 2 tablespoons orange juice
 1 teaspoon mustard of choice

Making the Roast:

- The night before cooking the roast, mash the 5 pounds of tofu, being sure to break up all chunks.
- Mix in seasonings.
- Line a large colander with cheesecloth.
- Put tofu mixture into colander, and bring ends of cheesecloth over top of tofu.
- Cover with a plate that fits inside the colander.
- Place a 5 pound weight on top of plate and let it sit in the refrigerator several hours or overnight.
- A lot of liquid will be pressed out of the tofu, so you will want to put the colander

into a large bowl or dishpan to catch liquid.

Stuffing:

(or use your favorite vegan stuffing recipe)

- 4 cups whole wheat cubes
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 – 4 cloves minced garlic
- 1 1/2 cups chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (I use walnuts)
- 1 Tbsp. sage
- 1 – 2 tsp. thyme
- 1 tsp. rosemary
- 1 tsp. celery seed

Making the Stuffing:

- Sauté onion, garlic, celery, and mushrooms
- Add to bread, raisins, and nuts.
- Add herbs to taste.
- If it needs more salt, you can add soy sauce, Bragg Liquid Aminos, or chicken-flavored broth powder.
- If mixture is too dry, add small amount of water.
- Taste and adjust seasonings to suit you.

“Chicken” Flavored Broth Powder:

- 3 cups nutritional yeast flakes
- 2 Tbsp. onion powder
- 1 Tbsp. garlic powder
- 5 tsp. ground celery seed
- 4 Tbsp. sea salt
- 5 Tbsp. Italian herb mix

Blend all ingredients in blender until fine.
 Store in airtight container.

see ***Holiday Roast***, continued on page 5

Holiday Roast, continued from page 4:

Putting it all together

The next day or after 5-6 hours...

- After pressing, and with the tofu still in the colander, scoop out the center of the tofu, leaving a bowl of tofu about an inch thick. Put some of the removed tofu around the upper edges of the colander to make the tofu bowl deeper.
- Fill the cavity with stuffing.
- Put the tofu mixture that you scooped out over the stuffing to cover it completely, and press down firmly.
- Flip the formed, filled loaf onto an oiled cookie sheet and brush the top with the basting mixture.
- Cover with foil, but don't let the foil touch the roast, and bake at 350° for about an hour.
- After an hour, remove foil and baste again.
- Bake uncovered for about 30-45 minutes, basting 3 or 4 more times.
- Watch carefully to be sure it doesn't burn. You just want it to have a nice, brown skin on it.
- When golden brown, remove from oven and slide carefully onto serving platter.

- The pressed tofu has a dense, almost poultry-like texture, and the basting sauce gives it a wonderful flavor.
- Serve hot with mushroom gravy and all the trimmings of a holiday meal!

Cream of Mushroom Soup for Gravy:

- 3 cups water
- 1/3 cup cashews
- 2 cups fresh sliced mushrooms or 1 can mushrooms, with liquid
- 3 Tbsp arrowroot powder or cornstarch
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 1/2 tsp salt

Making the Gravy:

- If using fresh mushrooms, sauté in small amount of water.
- Blend all ingredients except the mushrooms until smooth.
- Then, either add mushrooms and puree, or leave the mushrooms in big pieces if desired.
- Cook mixture in saucepan, stirring constantly, until it thickens.
- This is very quick and easy to make, especially if you use canned mushrooms.
- Here we use the Cream of Mushroom soup as gravy, but it also makes a great base for a hearty and delicious soup.

Who to Call 

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Food for Life

Nutrition & Cooking Classes for Cancer Prevention and Survival

• *Anchorage* •

Providence Cancer Center

3851 Piper St. Bldg. U2
Room 2281 (Media Center)

Jan. 5 – Feb. 23, 2010
(with no class on January 26)
Tuesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

• *Wasilla* •

Dayspring Enrichment Center

Mile .5 Edlund Road

Jan. 6 – Feb. 24, 2010
(with no class on January 27)
Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Each class meets weekly
for 7 weeks. Cost: \$90**

**Pre-registration
is required!**

**To register, contact
Delisa at 907-373-1526 or
delisa@yestolife.info**

My Vegan Story *continued from page 3:*

lately that they haven't hurt for quite awhile. I've also noticed my skin tone is better, and I haven't experienced the skin splitting on my thumbs like it used to in the winter. My digestion is also much better.

I also just love the food! I can eat as much as I want to without gaining weight and without having that heavy, tired feeling afterwards. No more fuzzy-brained "hang-over" the next day after overeating.

My dietary changes have also helped my husband, who has diabetes. He has lost 25 pounds so far and his blood sugars have improved. He hasn't become completely vegan yet, but he is much more conscious of his food choices. My daughter, who took the class with me, is also benefiting from her vegan diet.

I feel so good about myself now, and also feel a greater reverence for my food. And I feel sad for others who are suffering with health problems who haven't yet learned what they could do to help themselves.

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**Alaska
Vegetarian Society**

Mission Statement:

To create a compassionate and sustainable world by inspiring and supporting reverence for all life and the adoption of a plant-based diet.

The Heart of Veganism, *continued from the front page:*

destruction in our world.

The vegan philosophy encompasses respect for all life. Many very compassionate people work to alleviate suffering among humans, but never think about the suffering of animals. Others work to alleviate the suffering of companion animals like dogs, cats, and horses, but forget about the suffering of animals raised and killed for food. I have certainly been there, in both categories, and see it as a process of waking up to a bigger picture. Hopefully, we will all eventually find respect and compassion in our hearts for all humans and all animals.

Veganism isn't about being perfect. It isn't possible to be perfectly harmless in this world. In order for us to survive, we all have to consume something. The philosophy of doing the most good and the least harm leads us to make choices that cause the least suffering. It is obvious to me that animals have the same capacity to feel pain and suffer I have, so it causes less harm to eat plants than animals. It also causes less harm to me to eat plants.

Sometimes people will challenge a vegan with such comments as: "What about the bugs in the grass? You hurt them when you step on them." It's true. I do cause harm to other beings by simply living my life. But to the extent that I can avoid causing harm, I choose to do so. Just because it

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isn't possible to be perfect doesn't mean it isn't worth doing our best. I feel good about choosing to do the most good I can and the least harm I can. I'm truly grateful that by making one simple choice, to eat only plants, I can contribute to a more peaceful and healthy world. This definitely helps me feel more peaceful within myself.

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

Wrapping a Present with a Cat



1. Clear large space on table.
2. Collect present from closet, remove cat from closet.
3. Retrieve wrapping paper from cupboard, remove cat from cupboard.
4. Collect tape, ribbons, scissors and labels from drawer, remove cat from drawer.
5. Lay out wrapping materials on table.
6. Remove present from shopping bag, remove cat from shopping bag.
7. Lay out paper and cut to size of present, place present in the center of paper.
8. Tear off several pieces of transparent sticky tape, carefully remove transparent sticky tape from cat.
9. Lift up edges of paper to seal in present, making corners as neat as possible.
10. Chase cat to retrieve ribbon, re-roll ribbon, salvaging as much as possible.
11. Discover cat has torn paper on present, repeat steps 7 - 9 until present is wrapped.
12. Tie ribbon and label gift. Pet cat.

October AVS Potluck Highlights



by Elaine Albertson

If you missed the October AVS potluck, we're here to tell you, you missed one of the best potlucks we've ever had! It happened to be Halloween night, so quite a few participants came in costume. Among those were Mother Earth Delisa, dressed all in green with a large hat decorated with leaves and moss, and Kevin and Nancy adorably dressed as Raggedy Ann and Andy including red mop-wigs.

Our program was "Spooky Facts About the Standard American Diet," and some of those were enough to scare the bravest of souls! If you weren't there, go to the AVS website to see the facts.

Stephanie shared her recipe for making pumpkin seed milk and not only demonstrated how to do it, but showed us how to do it without a blender lid! We all got to taste it and it was delicious.

We hope you won't miss another potluck!

Holiday Potluck and Party!



December 26, 2009, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Palmer United Protestant Church

This year we have decided to combine our end of the month potluck with a holiday party. So come, bring a dish to share, and enjoy the fun. Instead of our usual program, we'll have a Chinese auction, so bring a fun wrapped gift for the game.

AVS is a non-profit and under the umbrella of Rays of Hope, a 501(c)(3) organization. To join AVS, contact Peggy Robinson at 373-1901, or send an email to peggy@alaskaveg.org.

Upcoming Events



Friday, December 18

Deadline for articles and information for the January AVS newsletter. Call Delisa at 373-1526, or email to delisa@alaskaveg.org

Saturday, December 26

AVS potluck dinner and Holiday Party, 6:00- 8:00p.m. at the Palmer United Protestant Church. Bring a wrapped gift for the "Chinese Auction." Call 373-1526 for info or see the note at left.

Monday, December 28

Rays of Hope board of directors' monthly meeting, 9:15a.m. If you are interested in knowing more about AVS' parent organization, call Delisa at 373-1526.

Tuesday, January 5 and

Wednesday, January 6

New series of The Cancer Project nutrition and cooking classes. See page 6 for details.

Alaska
Vegetarian Society

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