A Vegetarian Traveler in Southern Italy and Rome

By Susan Asanovic, R.D.

Apulia is a vegetarian paradise. Its produce is famous throughout Italy and most of the country's pasta wheat is grown here. Apulia's residents generally follow a healthy diet based on greens, legumes, whole grains, handmade pastas, full flavored olive oil, fruit, rustic breads, and rough red wine. Cycling through this less traveled area of Italy's boot on the Adriatic Sea at harvest time, we observed a countryside densely planted with peppers, tomatoes, chard, beans, and vineyards. Apulia is a poor area, but rich in ancient, bountiful olive trees. More oil is produced here than any other region in Italy. Agriculture is the main industry, and, naturally, the local cooks excel at all kinds of vegetable preparations. Some caveats for the vegetarian are in order, however; don't expect to find tofu, meat analogs, or cheese. Soups are usually meat- or fish-based, unless you specify brodo vegetale. Yes, there are plenty of legumes, but you need to inquire if che la carne dentro (is there meat in it)? Risotto and pastas are often prepared with meat stocks; you have to specify senza carne. Cheese is easy to spot and can be omitted. Try to read labels on the packaged snacks; some are made with lard and/or eggs. Bakeries offer many varieties of bread, some of which contain bacon or sausage. However, many rustic breads are offered that are 100 percent whole grain and vegan. Pugliese foccacia is light and thick due to the incorporation of cooked potatoes. Apulia is one of the last areas where bakers still use spelt flour, an ancient wheat appreciated by some Americans for its nutty flavor and low allergenicity.

I enjoyed one memorable dinner with a private cooking lesson by the chef, who revealed secrets of early pasta art: orecchiette (harder than it looks); thin handmade, not extruded, macaroni called friciddi; and panzerotti (deep fried calzone) filled with fresh tomatoes, capers, and typically cheese. Orecchiette with olive oil, garlic, and rapini is one of Apulia's famous specialties. Another is fava puré of wild chicory), as is lentils cooked with small pasta. Mushroom fanatics can feast on nutty, eggless semolina pasta with fresh, meaty porcini. Baskets of wild mushrooms are often part of a restaurant's decor, as well as an important part of the cuisine. Whenever I requested a special vegetable plate, it arrived piled with fresh, very flavorful, local vegetables and potatoes.

The first days of my trip were spent cycling up and down rural roads, which in turn encouraged a voracious appetite. However, bakeries offer foccace with simple, flavorful vegetable toppings, or you can buy a custom-made vegetarian sandwich. It's easy to order when you know how to say senza formaggio (without cheese).

When the pizzerias are open, the only cheeseless option is the marinara; just ask for extra vegetables. In every trattoria or restaurant, the antipasti were piled high, featuring infinite variations on pickled, marinated, or grilled vegetables, mini pizzas, and bruschetta (thick slices of toasted bread). On the down side, these were often almost intolerably salty. I was also surprised to find the cuisine overall quite mild; our Florence-based friends told us that in the north food was even more bland. A side order of pepperoncini helped sate my craving for heat.

At every dinner there were great baskets of crudites containing crunchy celery, fennel, cucumbers, and carrots. Dessert usually consisted of boiled chestnuts, walnuts in the shell, and perfectly ripe fruits including fichi d' India (fresh cactus pears), which grew wild along our cycling route. Fresh dates and figs, local grapes and passion fruits, as well as sweet/ tart green-skinned tangerines, were offered for dessert, too.

Outstanding vegetable revelations included delectable baby artichokes and a variety of tomatoes similar to very large cherry tomatoes.
The addictive grilled eggplant was sliced ultra-thin and seemed partially dried before grilling, which intensified its flavor without making it tough. This was served with chopped garlic and local olive oil.

Rome proved more difficult for me. The restaurants were less accommodating, but the same general strategies worked. At Il Capellaio Matto, the menu is mostly vegetarian, based on pasta and rice. The Jewish quarter is also a great place for vegetarians to dine. For further information on where to dine in Italy, you may want to contact the Societa Vegetariana Italiana, Via de Piatti, 3-20113, Milano, Italy.

In Rome the food contained more herbs and spices and always a lot of garlic. When artichokes are in season, they are enjoyed with passion and are prepared in every conceivable way. For vegetarians, the simpler the better, such as the famous Carciofi alla Romana, where the artichokes are simmered with olive oil, mint, and garlic. You can also sample Carciofi alla Guidia (Artichokes Jewish-style), where they are roasted in a deep pot of olive oil until crisp and brown, and they open up like roses.

The following are recreations of several wonderful dishes I sampled in this region of Italy.

**POLENTA DI CECI**  
(Serves 4)

Enjoy this garbanzo polenta.

- 2-1/2 cups cold water
- 1-1/2 cups garbanzo flour (available in some natural foods stores)
- 1/2-1 teaspoon salt
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon olive paste (optional -- found in Italian and gourmet shops)
- 1/4 cup sun dried tomatoes, chopped (optional)

Put all the ingredients except 1 Tablespoon olive oil in a blender and whiz until smooth. Transfer mixture to a heavy non-stick saucepan. Heat gently to a low boil and cook over low heat, stirring, for 20 minutes. Add a little bit more water if the mixture becomes too thick. Remove from heat. Turn mixture out onto a piece of oiled wax paper and flatten until about 1/2-inch thick. Chill. When ready to serve, preheat an oven broiler. Cut squares of polenta and place on an oiled cookie sheet. Brush liberally with remaining oil and grill until firm, crisp, and golden. Top with sauce of choice, such as a simple fresh tomato sauce.

Total Calories Per Serving: 194  
Fat: 8 grams

**CARCIOFI ALLA ROMANA**  
(Serves 4)

I present the classic method here. Personally I like to add some dry white wine to the cooking liquid.

- 32 baby artichokes (8 per person)
- Lemon juice
- 8 large cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- Handful of fresh mint
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil

Trim artichokes into a conical shape, removing all tough leaves and the choke if any. Rub artichokes all over with lemon juice. Spread apart the leaves slightly and place garlic and mint leaves in between. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Place artichokes in a deep wide saucepan. Cover with water and add olive oil. Simmer uncovered until almost tender (about 25 minutes), turn over and continue cooking until done. Place upright on a serving plate and reduce cooking liquid until slightly thick. Pour this sauce over the artichokes. Serve this dish hot or cold.

Total Calories Per Serving: 158  
Fat: 7 grams

**FAVA PURE CICORIELLE**  
(Serves 4)

Enjoy fava bean puree with wild chicory. I use a mixture of curly chicory, dandelion greens, and a small amount of watercress to approximate the wild chicory found in Apulia.

- 1/2 pound dried, peeled mini fava beans (or 3 cups canned mini favas found in Middle Eastern grocery stores and some Italian delis)
- 2 ribs celery, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
4 cloves minced garlic
1 pound torn greens, rinsed

If using dried favas, soak them for 8 hours and then blanch in a large quantity of boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain blanched or canned fava beans, add water to cover, celery, and onion. Cook until soft. Drain and puree in a food processor. Season to taste and add 1 Tablespoon olive oil.

Heat 1 Tablespoon olive oil and sauté garlic until soft. Add greens with only the water clinging to them. Steam 5 minutes or until just tender. Mound the puree on a warm platter and spoon the greens over it. Serve warm.

Total Calories Per Serving: 283
Fat: 8 grams

Susan Asanovic is a registered dietitian residing in Wilton, Connecticut.

**McDougall**ing in Manzanita

By Sue Meislahn

Two years ago we held a buffet supper for friends and neighbors. We ordered a tray of meats and cheeses and had an alcoholic punch as well as fruit and vegetable salads, breads, fruit juices, and herbal tea. What was left over? The meat, cheese, and the punch. No one seemed interested in these “traditional” forms of food and drink. Why was this?

It seems like everyone in Manzanita (Oregon) is “McDougall.” The doctor is recommending it to more and more people, although they may have initially been to see him/her for different reasons. There is no doubt about it: The McDougall Program is a way to a healthier, happier, more productive lifestyle. My husband and I are classic examples.

In the summer of 1993, my husband Ed and I retired and moved from the metropolitan Portland, Oregon, area to the small coastal community of Manzanita. We were both in need of a change in lifestyle. Although we were in generally good health, there were several things we sensed needed correcting, not the least of which was being overweight.

One day in September Ed went to see the local physician in Wheeler, Oregon. He had a concern about Ed's high blood pressure and his history of diverticulitis. When he got home that day he told me "Dr. Harry" had suggested he try The McDougall Plan and scheduled him for a follow-up visit in a few weeks. Ed's blood pressure was 174/105 at that time.

I knew building a new habit would work much better if we both went on the program together, and I intended to help my husband -- after all, wouldn't I also benefit?

Scanning the book, The McDougall Program, I zeroed in on the basic concepts. It has been known for years there is a sensible way to eat and exercise; yet most people, out of habit and laziness, choose not to follow it. McDougall reiterates all the reasons his program provides a way to lose weight and feel great, reduce cholesterol, lower blood pressure, decrease or eliminate the need for medication, and in some cases, avoid costly and unnecessary surgery.

John McDougall's wife, Mary, creates the recipes recommended to individuals following the McDougall diet. Spurred on by her recipes, I went to the grocery store, for the Program called for a totally different group of foods than we were accustomed to eating. I gained an education when I began to read all labels carefully and to study contents in packaged and canned foods.

We began the new style of meal preparation the first week of October, 1993. There were moments in the beginning when I wondered if I would spend the rest of my life cutting up raw vegetables. However, the rewards far exceeded the extra bit of time and effort.

Along with the new foods, we had to change our habit of the five o'clock cocktail every evening; we were accustomed to having one or two stiff martinis before dinner. This was surprisingly easy to accomplish. Realizing it wasn't so much the alcohol we needed as the time to relax and talk after a hard day's work, we simply substituted the liquor with soda or fruit juices -- even plain ice water worked. We still took the time to enjoy our talking and relaxing, but without the added calories and the sluggish feeling in the mornings.

We began to walk together, every morning, rain or shine. We bought a dog, a Siberian Husky, so we would have an added incentive. We invested in some rain gear and waterproof boots for those typically rainy Oregon coast days. We began with one mile, then two, and worked up to four miles a day.

The results were amazing:

- We were both sleeping better -- Ed even stopped snoring, which he had done for 30 years!
- By the time we had been McDougalling for 12 days, we had each lost about 7 pounds. But this was only the beginning. After 6 months of sticking to it, we had each lost about 15 pounds.
- Ed's blood pressure had dropped to 155/88. He called the doctor, who decreased his blood pressure medication by one-half. Within a month he was off medication entirely. My blood pressure went from 155/85 to 112/70.
Prior to going on the McDougall Plan, Ed was often constipated and I had suffered frequent gastric "attacks" of diarrhea and abdominal pain. Within a week, all symptoms of digestive tract problems had disappeared.

Because we were on a better exercise and eating regime, we found we were getting more things accomplished. Instead of sleeping in and then eating a big, fat-filled meal, we were getting up the same time each day, exercising, then eating, then having much more time to do the necessary household chores, as well as finding time to participate in volunteer work, local committees, and for me, time to write. What a reward!

When Ed went back to "Dr. Harry" a few weeks later, the lab results were drastically improved from the first visit. All tests were within "normal" range, including cholesterol, blood pressure, glucose, triglycerides, and uric acid.

At this writing, a little over a year later, Ed has lost a total of 30 pounds and I have lost 25 pounds. We presently walk 4 miles before breakfast and it takes about one hour, so our speed is about 15 minutes per mile. We have found a new level of enthusiasm and energy. We look forward to our daily walks and the general sense of well-being we have created.

There's an added bonus my daughter pointed out when she came to visit for a week: Because there are no greasy pots and pans in preparing meat-free meals, there is much less time spent cleaning up after meals, and a less messy, smelly kitchen.

When we tell friends and relatives about this amazing change in our lives, they invariably ask "What can you eat?" We tell them there are many tasty attractive dishes that do not contain animal fats, among other things. This made my sister and my daughters happy, since they are animal rights' activists. Not only that, but on this program you can eat as much as you want so you never feel hungry. It's not the quantity of food, but the quality of the food that's put into the body that causes all the problems.

The McDougall Program consists of a 12-day plan for eating all the right kinds of food: High in complex carbohydrates, lots of lentils, beans, rice, vegetables, grains and fruits -- some of what we consider unfamiliar, but which can be found in most large grocery stores. As luck would have it, in Manzanita, Dr. Harry's sister, Pat, runs the local grocery and is usually stocked up with many foods suitable for us "McDougallers." The food part of the McDougall Program consists of a low sodium, low sugar eating plan: No dairy products including cheese, no meat, no alcoholic beverages -- in other words, very low fat and essentially vegetarian. For the program to be effective, there must be a regular program of exercise along with the change in diet. In our case, this meant going from playing golf twice a month to vigorous exercise every day.

Although the most dramatic results of "McDougalling" are recognized in the first 12 days, ideally the goal is to keep "McDougalling" for life. We're proof that a change in lifestyle is beneficial.

Sue Meislahn resides in Nehalem, Oregon.

[Editor's Note: The purpose of running this article is to demonstrate how one couple became vegetarian and how it changed their lifestyle. Readers may want to purchase one or both volumes of The McDougall Health-Supporting Cookbook. The books cost $11 each (including postage) and can be purchased through our catalog on page 33 of this issue of Vegetarian Journal. The recipes in both these books are vegan, and most are easy to prepare. Speak to your health provider about which diet is best for you.]

### Book Reviews

**FOODS FROM MOTHER EARTH: A BASIC COOK BOOK FOR YOUNG VEGETARIANS**

By Maura D. Shaw and Sydna Altschuler Byrne

There are not many books geared specifically towards teenage vegetarians. A new cookbook called Foods From Mother Earth is meant for this population.

This cookbook offers nearly 100 ovo-lacto vegetarian recipes including Carrot and Pasta Soup, Tortilla Casserole, Vegetable Stew, Falafel Pizzas, Apple Pie, and more. Several vegan recipes are included. Most of the recipes are simple and commonplace; others are a bit more creative.


**SELL WHAT YOU SOW!**

By Eric Gibson

Many Vegetarian Journal readers plant a garden in their yard each year. Others own a farm and grow food on a larger scale. Sell What You Sow! is a growers' guide to successful produce marketing.

Information provided includes how to determine your market, as well as marketing at farmers markets, roadside stands, in pick-your-own set-ups, and through subscription farming or mail order. Suggestions are offered on how to sell your produce to restaurants and other retail outlets. Promotion techniques are also shared. This book is good for serious growers, as well as those interested in selling produce on a small scale.

Sell What You Sow! (ISBN 0-9632814-0-2) is published by New World Publishing, 3701 Clair Drive, Carmichael, CA 95608; (916) 944-
FOODWORK: JOBS IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY...AND HOW TO GET THEM  
By Barbara Sims-Bell

Many Vegetarian Journal readers already work in the food industry in places such as natural foods stores, hospitals, restaurants, university cafeterias, product manufacturing companies, etc. Others are interested in obtaining a job where they can utilize their vegetarian culinary skills.

"Foodwork: Jobs in the Food Industry...And How to Get Them" is a terrific reference book for anyone searching for a career in the food industry. This book does not have a vegetarian/natural foods slant; however, the information is relevant to anyone looking for a job in this profession.

Chapter 1 profiles individuals doing different types of work in this field, including a pastry chef, corporate caterer, executive chef, test kitchen supervisor, bread baker, food stylist, and restaurant chef. This chapter alone would give readers a lot of new ideas on how they could promote vegetarian/vegan cooking skills.

Chapter 2 covers the topic of managing a business and also provides examples such as a hospital food service manager, a cooking school director, and a restaurant manager.

Chapter 3 discusses marketing and selling techniques. Included are interviews of a produce broker and mail order catalog director.

Chapter 4 introduces writing, editing, and photography jobs in the food industry. Finally, chapter 5 covers the areas of teaching and training in the food industry.

This book also includes a list of food-related organizations and a terrific bibliography.

"Foodworks: Jobs in the Food Industry...And How to Get Them" (ISBN 0-911655-48-4) is published by Advocacy Press and can be purchased from them for $23.95 (including postage) by calling (800) 676-2011 or by sending a check to PO Box 236, Santa Barbara, CA 93102. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

LOUISE'S LEAVES  
By Louise Frazier

Louise's Leaves starts with the month of May and offers information on seasonal/locally grown produce. Week by week it provides suggestions on how to prepare newly grown crops. Although written from the northeast, the book would be useful anywhere.

Louise's Leaves (ISBN 0-938250-50-7) is published by Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, PO Box 550, Kimberton, PA 19442; (800) 516-7797.

ALL HEAVEN IN A RAGE  
Edited by Laura A. Moretti

Laura A. Moretti is the founder and editor of The Animals' Voice Magazine. All Heaven in a Rage consists of essays, commentaries, and poetry on the eating of animals. Topics covered in this book include transport of livestock, slaughterhouses, and treatment of all animals consumed by humans including cows, pigs, poultry, lambs, and fish.

This book offers creative writing pieces, which should be read and discussed in high schools today. Only then will children learn the truth about food production.


ANIMAL RIGHTS: A REFERENCE HANDBOOK  
By Clifford J. Sherry

This new hard-covered book attempts to present unbiased information on various topics related to animal rights including animal research, animal rights litigation, laws on animal rights, organizations, and print resources (books, etc.) and non-print resources (computer simulation programs, databases, electronic bulletin boards, videotapes, etc.) on subjects including animal fighting, circuses, horse racing, hunting and fishing, pets, entertainment, zoos, rodeos, and aquariums. Other issues covered include farm animals, fur farming and trapping, and vegetarianism.

Local or national vegetarian organizations are not listed in this book. Once again, they are not considered animal rights groups. This is ironic since the book does devote a lot of space to consumption of animals for food.

Vegetarian Journal readers, like animal rights activists, have various views on the topic of animal rights. Some of you will enjoy this book; others will probably find it to be biased in some areas and not up to date. Nevertheless, the book is an excellent reference tool and would help anyone interested in the topic of animal rights.

VICTOR, THE VEGETARIAN
By Radha Vignola and Illustrated by Julia Bauer

It is often difficult to find story books for children (ages 3-7) with a vegetarian theme. Victor the Vegetarian is a terrific book about a boy who becomes vegetarian after he learns that two newborn lambs will be sent to slaughter.

Victor decides to hide the lambs from his parents so they cannot be killed. Victor and the lambs stay in the woods for some time until both become quite hungry. The lambs begin to cry and Victor’s parents finally hear their cries and find the boy and lambs. Victor then tells his parents that he has decided to become a vegetarian.

Victor the Vegetarian (ISBN 0-9640394-2-7) is available from AVIVA!, PO Box 1471, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. Send $9.00 per book. Reviewed by Debra Wasserman.

Nutrition Hotline: Questions from Our Members
by Reed Mangels, Ph.D., R.D.

QUESTION: Is it possible to eat too little fat? I consume at least 2000-2500 calories per day and so it's not a question of not eating enough food. My fat intake is probably around 10 grams a day. K.B., NM

ANSWER: The only true requirement for fat is for the essential fatty acids, linoleic acid and linolenic acid. These fats are required for proper functioning of the immune system, for healthy skin and hair, and for synthesis of prostaglandins.

The requirement for linoleic acid is met by having 1 to 2 percent of dietary calories as linoleic acid. For a 2000-2500-calorie diet, this would mean 2 to 5.5 grams of linoleic acid. A person eating 2000 calories could meet linoleic acid requirements with 1 teaspoon of safflower oil or 2 teaspoons of corn oil. Linoleic acid requirements for a 2000 calorie diet could also be met by 3 cups cooked brown rice or oatmeal, 2 ounces tofu or tempeh, 1 Tablespoon nut butter, 1-3 Tablespoons nuts, or 1/3 cup cooked soybeans. Other grains, dried beans, and vegetables contain smaller amounts of linoleic acid.

No quantitative recommendations have been made for linolenic acid but amounts required are probably 10 to 25% that of linoleic acid. This is equivalent to about 2 Tablespoons walnuts or less than 1/2 teaspoon of flaxseed oil.

It is extremely unlikely that a 2000-2011 calorie diet would have only 10 grams of fat. Small amounts of fat are found in most foods including whole grains, legumes, and vegetables. An individual who is having difficulty gaining or maintaining weight may choose to eat a slightly larger amount of dietary fat. In your case this does not seem to be an issue.

Only a very small amount of total calories need to come from fats in adults. In contrast, the American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend any fat restriction for children under 2 years and recommends that total fat be about 30% of calories for children over 2 years old. Fat provides a concentrated source of calories which children often need for growth.

Readers are encouraged to send in questions for our nutrition hotline column. Please note that we may be unable to answer all questions. Questions may be mailed to Vegetarian Journal, PO Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203 or sent via electronic mail to bobbi@vrg.org. If sent by email, please use the Subject: Nutrition Hotline.

Scientific Updates: A Review of Recent Scientific Papers Related to Vegetarianism
By Reed Mangels, Ph.D., R.D.

ANOTHER REASON TO EAT YOUR VEGETABLES

Have you ever heard of age-related macular degeneration? Probably not, unless you, a relative, or a friend have it. Macular degeneration affects more than 10 million Americans and is the leading cause of irreversible blindness among persons older than 65 years. Currently, there is no effective treatment for macular degeneration, and little information is available on its prevention. An exciting recent study suggests that eating dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, collard greens, and kale could reduce risk of macular degeneration.

Joanne Seddon, M.D., and co-investigators examined more than 350 older adults with macular degeneration. Their diets were compared with those of 520 adults without macular degeneration. The most promising results were those related to the carotenoids. (Carotenoids are substances like beta-carotene which are found in foods.) Those subjects with the highest intakes of dietary carotenoids had a 43% lower risk for macular degeneration compared with those with the lowest intakes of carotenoids. When specific carotenoids were examined, two carotenoids, lutein and zeaxanthin, were most strongly associated with reduced risk of macular degeneration. Until recently, it was not possible separately to analyze lutein and zeaxanthin; so they are usually listed together in food composition tables.

Dark green leafy vegetables are especially good sources of lutein. Subjects with the lowest risk of developing macular degeneration ate an average of 5757 micrograms of lutein/zeaxanthin daily. This is the equivalent of about 1/4 cup or less of cooked kale, collard greens, or spinach. Table 1 provides amounts of lutein/zeaxanthin in commonly eaten foods and can be used to assess your intake of these carotenoids. The investigators examined specific foods and found that eating spinach or collard greens (1/2 cup 5 or more times per
Use of vitamin supplements (vitamin A, vitamin C, or vitamin E) was not associated with reduced risk of macular degeneration. The authors recommend increasing the consumption of dark green, leafy vegetables to reduce risk of developing macular degeneration.

Table 1: Lutein and/or Zeaxanthin in foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving</th>
<th>mcg</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup cooked kale</td>
<td>14,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup cooked collard greens</td>
<td>13,855</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2 cup cooked spinach</td>
<td>11,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup cooked Swiss chard</td>
<td>9,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2 cup cooked mustard greens</td>
<td>7,425</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 cup chopped red pepper</td>
<td>6,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 cup raw spinach</td>
<td>5,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup cooked beet greens</td>
<td>5,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup cooked okra</td>
<td>5,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup romaine lettuce</td>
<td>3,192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*mcg=microgram (1/1,000,000th of a gram)

References:


VEGETARIAN WOMEN AT LOWER RISK OF EATING DISORDERS AND DISTURBANCES OF OVULATION

It is not uncommon for women with eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa to follow vegetarian diets. Is a vegetarian diet associated with increased risk of eating disorders? Apparently not, based on results of studies by Dr. Susan I. Barr and co-workers.

Dr. Barr studied 23 vegetarians (8 vegans and 15 lacto-vegetarians) and 22 nonvegetarians. Subjects were 20- to 40-year-old Canadian women. The subjects' degree of dietary restraint (conscious limitation of food intake), menstrual cycles, and the nutrient content of their diets were compared.

Although vegetarians were leaner than non-vegetarians, they had lower restraint scores (were less likely to limit their food intake or to eat less than they wanted to in order to prevent weight gain). This suggests that vegetarians are not at increased risk for eating disorders. The authors theorize that previous studies reporting frequent use of vegetarian diets by women with eating disorders may be because individuals with eating disorders choose to follow vegetarian diets as a way to lose weight. The vegetarian diet does not cause anorexia nervosa; it is simply a consequence of the eating disorder.

Associations between vegetarianism and amenorrhea (absence of menstrual periods) have been reported. Dr. Barr wanted to find out if vegetarian diets lead to less noticeable menstrual disorders such as anovulation (failure to ovulate) and shorter parts of one phase of the menstrual cycle. These subclinical disturbances have been associated with loss of bone, which could lead to osteoporosis.

Vegetarian women were found to have fewer subclinical menstrual disturbances than non-vegetarian women who included meat in their diets three or more times per week. The authors theorize that vegetarians are less stressed about over-eating than are nonvegetarians. Stress can lead to menstrual disturbances.

The researchers also asked subjects why they followed vegetarian diets. Health was the most common reason (70%), followed by moral concerns, especially animal rights (57%), and environmental concerns (30%).

Nutrient intakes of the women studied were close to current recommendations. The exceptions were zinc and vitamin B12 in both lacto-vegetarians and vegans, with vitamin B12 intakes especially low in vegans. Calcium intake of vegans was also lower than recommendations.

References:


Veggie Bits: Products, Places and Events of Interest

THE ANNAPURNA INN: VEGETARIAN BED AND BREAKFAST AND RETREAT ENTER

Perched on the northeastern tip of the Olympic Peninsula is the brightly colored Victorian seaport of Port Townsend, Washington. It's
hard to imagine a more pleasant vacation spot. Views of the bay and its cliff-rimmed islands to the north and of the majestic Olympic peaks to the southwest make the town a scenic treasure. Not surprisingly, for a vacation spot that is home to so many gorgeous Victorian buildings, Port Townsend offers a wide choice of charming bed and breakfasts. For vegetarians or anyone who likes to include good health in their vacation plans, none can beat The Annapurna Inn.

Built in the 1880’s, this cozy bungalow-style inn offers two suites and two other rooms. It also houses a massage room, sauna/steambath facility, and a seminar room that doubles as a yoga studio. The house is surrounded by charming gardens planted with organic vegetables, flowers, and herbs.

The Annapurna Inn, 538 Adams, Port Townsend, WA 98368, offers a multi-course vegan breakfast including various items each day such as a freshly-made peach/apple frappe, big bowls of homemade granola, soy yogurt, waffles, scrambled tofu, and fresh fruit.

A bit off the beaten track, Port Townsend is about a two-hour drive from Seattle. A one-night stay in The Annapurna Inn with a full vegan breakfast costs between $60 and $85. For reservations or more information call (800) 868-ANNA or (360) 385-2011.

[Editor's Note: Thanks to Virginia Messina, M.P.H., R.D., for sending us this piece. For information on other vacation spots offering vegetarian meals, readers may want to purchase Vegetarian Journal’s Guide to Natural Foods Restaurants in the U.S. and Canada. This book includes vacation spots such as this one. Call, write or email the VRG for information.]

VEGETARIAN GUIDE FOR SOUTH JERSEY/PHILADELPHIA AREA

The Vegetarian Society of South Jersey, PO Box 272, Marlton, NJ 08053, has released a vegetarian dining guide for the South Jersey (Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester Counties), Jersey Shore, and the Greater Philadelphia areas. It is available by sending a large self-addressed stamped envelope.

GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDIO OWNED BY VEGAN/ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

There is a growing concern among grass-roots activists that we support each other not only as activists, but also as business partners. To further that ideal, Digital Ink presents itself as a company which can both provide quality design and layout, and maintain sensitivity to the issues that you are promoting. The company can accommodate needs ranging from business cards to textbooks, and uses a variety of printers able to produce top-quality photos, brochures, magazines, posters, and T-shirts in any quantity. For more information contact Eric P. Moss, Digital Ink, 645 N. 33rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68503; or call (402) 474-3169.

THE CHOW! CLUB HANDS-ON HANDBOOK

The Chow! Club Hands-On Handbook was created by Kids Against Junk Food, a national organization of nutrition-conscious children and teenagers. The group strives to improve youth eating habits with educational efforts and campaigns for better laws and corporate practices. It is a project of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a non-profit nutrition-advocacy organization.

This handbook offers 25 fun, food-related activities for kids and teens. Teachers, parents, and teens can use the publication to learn how to start local Chow! Clubs in schools, neighborhoods, and community organizations. The handbook can also be used by teachers to supplement nutrition education. Activities help youths understand the importance of a healthful diet and the links between food and the world around them. For example, children are encouraged to visit an organic farm, hold a healthy foods tasting party, collect and donate nutritious foods for the needy, form a committee to make school lunches healthier, conduct a survey of junk-food ads on television, and much more.

Although the handbook is not completely vegetarian, readers will find many great ideas appropriate for vegetarian children. To order the CHOW! HandsOn Handbook, send $3.00 to CSPI/CHOW!, 1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20009.

YOGA TRIP PLANNED IN PORTUGAL

Enjoy three hours of yoga per day, delicious macrobiotic/vegetarian cuisine, accommodations in an exquisitely restored farmhouse, a nearby oceanside beach, hiking, sightseeing, and much more while traveling in Portugal during September 1995. For more information call (617) 497-0218.

VEGETARIAN BBQ BASH IN KANSAS CITY

The Vegetarians of Kansas City are sponsoring their 3rd annual BBQ bash on Sunday, July 2, 1995. The event will start at 4PM at Shawnee Mission Park. Enjoy a vegan dinner, live music, games, a vegan dessert contest, a scavenger hunt for kids, and more. For information send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Vegetarians of Kansas City, PO Box 3301, Shawnee Mission, KS 66203-0301.

SNAK POSSE COMICS ENCOURAGE HEALTHY EATING

This past year a new comic magazine called Snak Posse was launched. The posse consists of Flash Carotene (the carrot), Blush (the tomato), Banana Bolt, Silky Stalker (the celery), and Kernel (the corn). Snak stands for Super Nutritionally Active Kids. The Snak Posse mission is to promote healthy eating, which includes fruit and vegetables. The comic book also includes anti-smoking and pro-exercise messages. The target audience seems to be 7- to 10-year-olds. For more information readers can contact HCOM Inc., 3198 Quinlan Street, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598; or call (914) 962-0878. Snak Posse can be found on many newsstands, along with other comic books.
VEGAN DECADENCE

The next time you're in the mood for a vegan brownie or other baked items, you may want to turn to Frankly Natural products manufactured by Brownie Points Natural Bakers, 4901 Morena Boulevard, #403, San Diego, CA 92117. This company produces delicious wheat-free (vegan) chocolate, mocha, and carob brownies using molasses, oat flour and other ingredients. Other terrific items produced by this enterprise include peanut butter and chocolate Rice Crunchies and several cookies. Please note that not all of their products are vegan. For mail-order information call (800) 727-7229.

FAT-FREE VEGAN BURGER

Worthington Foods' Natural Touch brand line has added a fat-free vegan burger. The Natural Touch Vegan Burger contains less than half the calories of a cooked hamburger and zero fat and cholesterol. For more information contact Worthington Foods at (614) 885-9511.

VEGAN RAINFOREST CAKES

Alaine's Rainforest Cakes make terrific gifts. This vegan product is made from whole Brazil nuts from the Amazon rainforest and all unsulphured and unsweetened dried fruit: dried apricots from Turkey, dried pineapple from Thailand, and dates, organic raisins, and organic orange peel from California. Other ingredients include whole-wheat pastry flour from Montana, juice concentrates instead of sugar, and tofu and rice milk instead of eggs and butter. Alaine's Rainforest Lite products are the same as above, without the added nuts and using organic oat flour instead of wheat flour.

Alaine's Rainforest Cakes are available in health food stores throughout California and directly from Alaine's Kitchen, 5505 Laurel Canyon Boulevard, North Hollywood, CA 91607; or by calling (800) 718-2011 or (213) 851-6994. The product is available sliced, which is terrific to carry when hiking. Five percent of proceeds is donated to the Rainforest Action Network.

PARK IVY GARDEN CAFE IN SALT LAKE CITY

The next time you travel to Salt Lake City, Utah, seriously consider visiting the Park Ivy Garden Cafe. This vegetarian restaurant offers a wide range of dishes including baked goods, salads, sandwiches, special entrees, soups, and more. Park Ivy Garden Cafe uses many Meat of the Wheat products. These are meat and chicken analogs made out of gluten. The resulting dishes are quite creative and delicious. The restaurant does not use eggs and many vegan items are offered. Park Ivy Garden Cafe is located at 878 South 900 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84102. They can be reached at (801) 328-2011.

Notes from the Scientific Department: School Meal Update

As we reported earlier, the USDA's plans to transition to a nutrient-based school menu system have been significantly delayed and changed. The USDA will now be required to offer schools the option of using a food component system (Basic Four Style) modified to conform to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in addition to the nutrient-based system. The USDA will have to incorporate this change into its proposed rules for school meals, and then another public comment period will be scheduled. Thus, fewer schools may actually opt to make the switch to the more progressive nutrient-based menu system, and the process may be delayed another year for those that do.

Regardless of the outcome of the USDA's proposed rule, The Vegetarian Resource Group intends to continue to work with the USDA, schools, food companies, and individuals to encourage healthier school meals. Currently, VRG school meals contacts around the country are collecting practical tips from food service personnel for incorporating vegetarian options into school meals. This information will be shared with other food service personnel in schools and other institutions.

[Editor's note: As we prepare to go to press, Congress is debating whether the school lunch program should be cut significantly and/or transferred to state control. Regardless of the outcome, VRG will continue to encourage healthy eating habits for children at home and in school.]

Vegetarian Resource Group Activities

VRG STAFF LEADS VEGAN COOKING CLASS AT MARYLAND STATE 4-H CONFERENCE

VRG staff members Ziona Swigart and Rosanne Silverman organized a vegan cooking class, which was presented at the Maryland State 4-H conference.

The Vegetarian Resource Group had received a phone call requesting that we offer such a course at their annual meeting. The response was good. Both children and adults participated in the session. They prepared several vegan dishes and then enjoyed the feast.

DEBRA WASSERMAN DOES TWO VEGAN COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS IN WASHINGTON STATE

VRG's Co-Director Debra Wasserman did a short vegan cooking demonstration at two Puget Consumer Co-ops in Washington State. The first was held in Everett and the second was held in Seattle.
About the Vegetarian Journal and the VRG

These articles originally appeared in the May/June 1995 issue of the Vegetarian Journal, published by:

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WHAT IS THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP?
Our health professionals, activists, and educators work with businesses and individuals to bring about healthy changes in your school, workplace, and community. Registered dietitians and physicians aid in the development of nutrition-related publications and answer member and media questions about vegetarian diets. The Vegetarian Resource Group is a non-profit organization. Financial support comes primarily from memberships, contributions, and book sales.

The contents of this article, as with all The Vegetarian Resource Group publications, is not intended to provide personal medical advice. Medical advice should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

For questions or comments on this article, please contact Bobbi Pasternak at bobbi@vrg.org. This article may be reproduced for non-commercial use intact and with credit given to The Vegetarian Resource Group.

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