

# Capital Veg News

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL VEGETARIAN ASSOCIATION

Feb 2008/Mar 2008

## *Energy in bar form:* NCVA taste testers give their picks

By Pamela Eadie

It was on a cold January evening that the NCVA taste test crew once again descended upon an Ottawa Bridgehead coffee shop, this time to taste test vegan energy bars to give Capital Veg News readers their top picks.

Fresh faces Valerie Doucette, Mark Greenan, Corrie Rabbe and Katie Gibbs joined previous taste testers Camille Labchuk and Diana McGlinchey for the undertaking. Six full stomachs and 17 energy bars later, they reached their conclusions.

It may be hard to believe, but when you factor in all the different brands and flavours, there are far more than 17 different kinds of vegan energy bars—perhaps closer to 100. The NCVA taste test is a great cross section of what's available, but by no means complete. Visit one of Ottawa's great natural food stores to see what's available.

We have divided the bars into two



Photo: Pamela Eadie

The NCVA taste test crew: L-R Mark Greenan, Camille Labchuk, Valerie Doucette, Katie Gibbs, Diana McGlinchey and Corrie Rabbe.

groupings: Meal Replacement (bars that are fortified and/or offer significant amounts of a number of RDAs), and Just for Snacking (reviews for these will be in the next issue of Capital Veg News.)

### Clif Bar - Maple Nut

Most of the NCVA taste testers didn't know about this new flavour of Clif bar. At 240 calories it offers 10 grams of protein.

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*For your health*

## Essential supplements for the active adult vegetarian

By Elizabeth Wolynsky, RHN

As health conscious vegetarians, we do our best to eat a varied, balanced diet to supply us with all the nutrients we need to function at optimal performance. However, there are many contributing factors such as environmental pollutants, stress (both mental and physical), and sluggish digestion that can deplete our bodies of certain key nutrients. Stocking your cupboard and fridge with a few essential products can help to ensure that you are replacing these nutrients on a daily basis.

1. A good quality, high-potency multivitamin/mineral formula is a

great "insurance policy" that should be taken daily. This should be regarded as an investment into your health and while frugality is something I can relate to, a multivitamin is not something you want to skip on. Criteria to look for when choosing a multivitamin are dosage, bioavailability, and manufacturing processes. Your multivitamin should contain a high-potency B vitamin complex (25-50mg each), minerals that have been "chelated" (bound to hydrolyzed vegetable protein) for better absorption, and the supplement

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## Chocolate taste test from page 1

"It's delicious," said Katie immediately upon savouring her first bite. Camille commented that the taste was subtle, and Corrie noted that it's like something she'd eat for dessert.

### Clif Bar - Peanut Toffee Buzz

Several of the taste testers admitted that this was one of their favorite energy bars before the taste test. "It seems like a dessert bar," said Diana. Katie felt it had a bit of an aftertaste, but was otherwise delicious. Corrie thought the presentation (icing drizzled on top) made it visually appealing as well as tasty. 250 calories, 11 grams of protein.

### Nature's Path Optimum - Peanut Butter

Most of the taste testers agreed that this bar was a little on the dry side, except Mark. "I like it. I think it's chewy, and I like the taste," he said.

Valerie felt it was too sweet, and not peanut buttery enough. Camille said it reminded her of a baked good, and didn't think it was too sweet.

230 calories, 7 grams of protein.

### Enjoy Life - Caramel Apple

The taste testers generally liked the flavour of this bar, but the texture took a bit of getting used to. This bar nut and gluten-free, and unlike most other gluten-free bars, is like a baked good, rather than fruit and date based.

"I don't usually like gluten-free stuff, but I like this," said Camille. Valerie said it reminded her of a breakfast bar, and Diana had praise for its "bold flavour."

### VEGA Whole Food Energy Bar - Chocolate

This date-based bar is crammed full of nutrients and healthful ingredients, but was not the most popular amongst the taste testers. It offers 10 grams of protein with 240 calories.

Katie said she appreciates the health benefits of the VEGA bar, but noted it had a more earthy flavour than the other bars. Corrie commented that it's a great option for athletes.

## TOP OVERALL PICKS

### (Meal replacement)

1. CLIF MAPLE NUT- 9/10
2. NATURE'S PATH BLUEBERRY- 8/10
3. CLIF PEANUT BUTTER TOFFEE- 8/10

### Luna - Carmel Nut Brownie

This bar is another dessert-like bar that offers nine grams of protein in 190 calories. "This is so good, it's a dessert," said Diana.

Corrie and Mark felt that this bar was too sweet. Camille said it's about the closest thing to a vegan candy bar. Katie commented that the texture was a bit dry.

### Veganique - Mixed Berry & Apple

This bar received positive comments, but taste testers were puzzled as to why its price is significantly higher than many of the other bars.

The bar contains 240 calories, with 11 grams of protein.

"I really like the berry taste," said Mark. "I like it a lot," added Katie. Valerie said she really likes the natural fruit flavour:

### Nature's Path Optimum- Blueberry Flax & Soy

It was unanimous that this incarnation of Nature's Path energy bars is superior to the peanut butter bar tried earlier in the sampling.

"This is delicious. I'd definitely eat this for breakfast," said Katie, who admitted she doesn't eat a lot of energy bars.

"It's a bit dry, but it tastes so good the dryness is forgiven," said Camille. Mark added, "It has a pleasing taste." 200 calories, 6 grams of protein.

### Final thoughts

Camille admitted that she hadn't tried most of the energy bars up for testing before that evening. "I was pleasantly surprised by the Maple Nut Clif bar," she said, adding she'd definitely recommend them to non-vegans.

Camille's pick: Clif Maple Nut



Photo: Valerie Doucette

Mark had only one concluding thought as he struggled to digest samples of 17 different energy bars: "I'm not going to have dates for a while."

Mark's pick: Veganique

Valerie said the experience showed her that she prefers lighter, simpler bars over heavy bars. "The few ingredients the better," she said.

Valerie's pick: Clif Maple Nut

Diana was surprised by how hit and miss energy bars can be; even if one type of bar is delicious, another flavour of the same brand could be nearly inedible to the same palate. She hasn't tried a Clif bar she doesn't like though.

Diana's pick: A tie between Nature's Path Blueberry and Clif Maple Nut

Katie is another proponent of the concept of the fewer ingredients the better. However, she said she'd recommend the Clif Maple Nut and Nature's Path blueberry bars to anyone looking for a filling and tasty "Meal replacement."

Katie's Pick: Clif Maple Nut

Corrie was in agreement with Katie's comments, and prefers simple compilations of nuts, seeds, and sweet binders.

Corrie's pick: Clif Peanut Butter Toffee

## Potluck update

NCVA potlucks are a great way to meet new friends, and enjoy delicious vegan food.

Each person should bring a VEGAN dish (with ingredient list) that serves between 10-12, as well as your own plate, cutlery, and beverage. Also, please bring a serving utensil for your dish.

Admission is \$1 for NCVA members, and \$2 for non-members to cover facility rental. Potlucks are held at Jack Purcell Recreation Centre, which is on Jack Purcell Lane (Elgin at Lewis Streets in downtown Ottawa). They start at 6:30 pm.

**Please note:** Everyone is welcome, but please ensure that the dish you bring is free of animal products- that includes any flesh, eggs, dairy/cheese, honey, etc. If you have any questions about this or require recipe suggestions, please e-mail Pamela at [ncva.avcn@gmail.com](mailto:ncva.avcn@gmail.com).

### Upcoming potlucks:

- February 9
- March 8
- April 12
- May 10



## Message from the President



NCVA President, Pamela Eadie

## A Veg Food Fest for Ottawa

I was contacted recently through facebook by a vegan in Boston who was involved with launching Boston's vegetarian food festival back in the mid-1990s. He wanted to know why a city the size and prominence of Ottawa does not yet have its own vegetarian extravaganza.

While nothing is for certain yet, I'm pleased to report that things are looking positive regarding the possibility of a NCVA vegetarian food fest this fall.

After a few months of setbacks, several people have come forward to offer their support in organizing the event. We've located a venue and chosen a time (September 14). Now we need to make it happen.

An event of this kind requires a tremendous amount of effort and commitment from volunteers. It also requires sponsors, vendors, speakers, and of course, money (purchasing an NCVA membership helps greatly on this front). But the trade off is the attention it could bring to the vegetarian lifestyle, the sense of community it will foster, and the pride of knowing we are playing a part in making Ottawa a place where it is easy to be a vegetarian or vegan. That can only mean good things for the health of our population, the planet, and the animals.

We will need support to make this happen throughout the entire planning process, and on the actual day of the event. Corrie Rabbe is our Food Fest organizer, and would love to hear from you. If you'd like to get involved with this on the ground level and be a part of making this a reality, please contact her at [c\\_rabbe@hotmail.com](mailto:c_rabbe@hotmail.com)

And as always, I'd love to hear from you about anything pertaining to vegetarianism in the Capital. E-mail me at [ncva.avcn@gmail.com](mailto:ncva.avcn@gmail.com).

# Kyle Den Bak: No will power required

By Pamela Eadie

People who encounter Kyle Den Bak at the gym are often surprised to learn he's vegan. Years of bodybuilding have given the 26-year-old an impressive physique, which goes against a gym culture that dictates you have to eat animal products—and lots of them—to gain muscle mass.

"I use it as an opportunity. I have their attention. There's something to be said about being a happy, healthy vegan to help promote the cause," he says.

Not only has veganism not hurt his gains, it has improved them, he says. Being vegan is also helping him to post solid gains in his latest fitness pursuit, running. He currently runs 90 kilometers a week, and expects to peak at 120 km/week during his marathon training. His goal for 2008 is to qualify for the prestigious Boston Marathon.

Kyle, who was introduced to animal rights literature in a university class, says he was initially concerned that going vegan would affect his bodybuilding, but realized he was being selfish. Four and a half years later, having discovered veganism to be a help, not a hindrance, he can't imagine being any other way.

"I just want to live my life as authentically and compassionately as possible," he says.

"Most people think it takes a lot of will power to do it. It's about worldview. Once you see animal exploitation, it ceases to be food. I know it's wrong to hurt another being... I don't have to will myself not to do it."

While he has a degree in teaching, Kyle has worked as a cook at The Green Door Vegetarian Restaurant for the past two and a half years, and is working towards becoming certified as a personal trainer. He is excited about parlaying his love of fitness into a career where he can also promote the benefits of a plant-based diet.

"Part of my motivation is to let people know it doesn't limit you in any way. You have more energy and recover quicker," he says.

The benefits of veganism don't just come in the form of athletic gains, however. For Kyle, it's a crucial part of creating a just society for everyone; as he puts it, all forms of oppression are linked.

"As a society, we think we're pretty progressive, but as long as those roots of oppression still exist, who knows what it can lead to," he says. "We don't have to settle for the way it has always been. There's a viable way of living that's more peaceful in every way."



Kyle Den Bak

## Don't Eat This Book: Fast Food and the Supersizing of America

**Author: Morgan Spurlock**  
**Publication Info: Penguin Books, 2005**

*Reviewed by Diana McGlinchey*

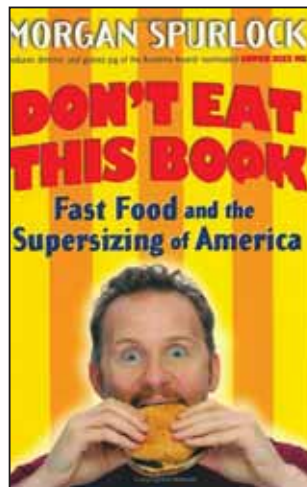
More than one million animals are eaten each hour in the United States. This fact glares at the reader, depressing and intriguing, from its position on the list of other such informative tidbits that make up the dust jacket of Morgan Spurlock's *Don't Eat This Book*. It seemed almost too ridiculous to believe - so when a friend held this book in front of me, I had to know more.

Handing a book such as this with a fact such as the one listed above to a fact-loving, debate-initiating vegan such as myself can be a recipe for disaster. I spent the next two days completely engrossed, spouting off disturbing, frustrating quote after quote to anyone within ear shot.

The book is full of them. Did you know there's a guy in Boston with a McCheeseburger from 1991 that is still identifiable? Or that there is a children's hospital in Texas that performs children's tummy tucks in one wing while reaping profit from a McDonald's in the lobby?

But the book isn't all McDonald's-bashing and obesity statistics. Spurlock takes a critical look at what's happening across North America - in schools, in hospitals, and at home - with respect to marketing, product placement, and political affiliations and the food industry. And just when the reader feels an overwhelming sense of doom and gloom, Spurlock comes back with concrete examples of communities and schools that were able to reclaim their space and their waists from the throws of our supersized world.

Spurlock's writing, much like his related (but not identical) film "Supersize Me", tends to draw on sensationalizing the issue to keep the reader's attention. His style of covering a broad range of topics limits the depth in which he can explore each one, and this left me wanting to know more about what has led to many of the current situations he talks



about. This book provides good grounds to begin research, especially given his extensive list of sources, but the sensationalization might deter readers who are looking for more academic reading material.

Spurlock's focus on the fast-food industry may seem less appealing to a vegetarian or vegan who hasn't set foot in a McDonald's in years (I've actually never even eaten a McDonald's burger), but his section about the industry's infiltration of our schools

makes for good discussion of what our future will look like if we remain oblivious to the fast food world around us.

Despite Spurlock's American-centric examples, this book is a hilarious investigation that will appeal to anyone interested in the politics and statistics of the food industry and its effects on the supersizing of America.

## Veg Q & A

**By Joanne Charlebois**

**Q: I just found out that I'm intolerant of both soy and gluten. Is it still possible for me to be vegan?**

**A:** You most definitely can still be vegan even if you can't eat soy or gluten. There are plenty of other sources for key nutrients.

In the case of soy, some people seem to have an impression that if you don't eat animal flesh, then you MUST eat tofu or other soy products in order to get protein. This is simply not true, however. Even vegetables contain a fair percentage of protein per calorie; most vegetables are just so low in calories that it would be hard to get enough protein or calories in general from only vegetables.

The point is, though, that almost all foods contain protein, and so if we consume enough calories for our body by eating a good variety of different plant foods throughout the day we will get all the protein we need. Most people do not need more than five to 10 per cent of calories to come from protein (note that human breast milk is five per cent protein, and infancy is the time in life that we are growing the fastest). There is no need to consume "complete proteins" or

to combine foods in the same meal in order to create "complete proteins" as was believed in the 1970s. The key is to eat a variety of plant foods over the course of the day.

Some people also tend to rely on soy milk since it is fortified with nutrients such as vitamin B12 and vitamin D. But there are plenty of other fortified non-dairy milks to choose from, such as rice milk or hemp milk, for those who drink soy milk for this reason. And instead of vegan margarine (Earth Balance contains soy), try using organic canola or olive oil and a dash of salt on your baked potato, gluten-free toast, etc.

The need to avoid gluten is somewhat more inconvenient, since even more prepared foods and common grains such as wheat, spelt, oats, barley and rye contain gluten, but this restriction does not preclude veganism either. There are still many more grains and other plant foods that you can eat. For example, rice, quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, wild rice, corn, millet, teff, job's tears (a gluten-free grain similar to barley) are some of the grains and grain-like seeds that you can still eat. Manioc couscous (manioc is a root) can be found in ethnic food stores (such as Grace Foods on Bank St.) and can replace regular couscous. Rice pasta, quinoa pasta, and buckwheat pasta can replace the usual wheat pasta.

Beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds such as hemp and flax are good sources of nutrients,

and be sure to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, preferably including two servings of leafy greens a day (of course, that goes for everyone, gluten/soy intolerant or not). To replace flour in thickening stews and in baking, there are alternatives such as chickpea flour, potato starch, arrowroot, taro flour, quinoa flour, rice flour, cornstarch, xanthan gum, which are used in different recipes for gluten-free flour mixes. Health food stores and most large supermarkets also carry gluten-free breads and prepared foods, some of which are also vegan (the downside is that they tend to be expensive).

The book *Food Allergy Survival Guide* by Vesanto Melina, Jo Stepaniak, and Dina Aronson is an invaluable resource for anyone with food allergies or intolerances, or who suspects they may have a food sensitivity. In addition to information about allergies, intolerances and sensitivities (written by registered dietitians), it contains many recipes (including flour mixes for baking), and they are all vegan. Also [www.vitalita.com/cookbooks.html](http://www.vitalita.com/cookbooks.html) offers a free downloadable gluten-free vegan cookbook.

For dessert, check out the "gluten freedom cupcakes" recipe in Isa Chandra Moskowitz and Terry Hope Romero's *Vegan Cupcakes Take Over the World!*

**Have a question? E-mail it to [ncva.avcn@gmail.com](mailto:ncva.avcn@gmail.com)**



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# Save the planet with your knife and fork

By Camille Labchuk

By now most of us have opened our eyes to the dangers of climate change, which many argue is the greatest threat planet Earth has ever faced. Polar icecaps are melting at alarming rates, while weather patterns are becoming increasingly severe and animal habitat is disappearing. Couple these realities with our rapidly increasing population, and we see that humanity is in for big trouble if we don't find a way to very quickly reduce our carbon emissions.

While some governments are acting decisively to reduce carbon emissions, others lag far behind and leave citizens wondering what individual steps they can take in the absence of political will. Most of us know that curbing climate catastrophe will require sacrifice and encouragingly, many of us are prepared to drive our cars less, take the bus more, switch to efficient light bulbs and turn down the heat a degree or two in the winter.

In the battle against climate change, most see oil companies and car makers as the primary villains, but what many of us don't realize is that farming animals for our consumption produces an estimated 17 to 30 per cent of our global emissions, compared to only about 13 per cent from the transport sector and even less from other industries. While we urgently need to reduce emissions from all sectors, policy makers have consistently ignored the substantial role of diet in climate change. But a growing body of research indicates that many of our climate woes could be mitigated if we all adopted plant-based diets.

Carbon emissions produced by animal agriculture come from several sources. Most of these come from livestock, which naturally produce the greenhouse gas methane during digestion, released by flatulence and via manure. Another large chunk of emissions is released indirectly when fossil fuels are burned to make fertilizers used to grow feed like corn and barley. Manufacturing these chemicals and pesticides requires massive energy inputs, and thus carbon emissions.

A substantial amount of carbon is released by land used for animal agriculture. Because large amounts of grain are needed to feed the animals, deforestation – we've all heard of Brazilian rainforest clear cuts – continues at an alarming rate as more land is needed to grow grain and house the livestock that consume it. Forests hold carbon, and clear cutting trees releases their stored carbon into the atmosphere. Land use change promoted by the meat industry further destroys the balance of carbon in the soil, releasing additional gases into the atmosphere.

Animals are transported by vehicle to the



slaughterhouse and their carcasses must then be processed, refrigerated and shipped around the globe before being consumed by people, wasting additional energy.

Eating meat is an inherently inefficient way to consume calories. It's simply more efficient to use land to grow food directly for people, rather than feeding it first to animals before eating them ourselves. An enormous amount of grain and other resources are diverted to feed the animals we eat. For instance, Cornell's Dr. David Pimentel (a professor of ecology and agricultural science at Cornell University with more than 500 scientific articles and 20 books to his credit) calculates that producing one kilogram of beef requires 145 times more energy than one kilogram of apples. It requires about 10 kilograms of grain to produce a single kilogram of beef, about four kilograms of grain for one kilogram of pork, and two kilograms of grain for one kilogram of chicken

For example, to get roughly the same amount of calories from potatoes as you do from a pound of beef, you would need 4.15 pounds of potatoes. That means it takes 249 gallons of water for 4.15 pounds potatoes versus 12,009 gallons for the pound of beef to get the same number of calories from the two foods. It takes nearly 50 times more water to produce a calorie from beef as it does from potatoes.

For an idea of how this translates into energy consumption, we need look no further than a new Japanese study that shows producing just one kilogram of beef releases more carbon emissions than driving a car for a whopping three hours while leaving on every light in your home!

Worldwide, about two billion people, mostly in developed countries, live primarily on a meat-based diet, while the other four billion exist on a plant-based diet. Globally, the demand for meat has increased substantially over the past decades, from about 130 million tonnes in the 1970s to 230 million tones in recent years. The UN Food

and Agriculture Administration forecasts a further 60 per cent increase in demand, mostly from developing countries with growing economies. Likewise, the IPCC predicts animal-related emissions will become an even larger piece of the carbon pie as diets shift and demand for meat increases. To meet the growing global appetite for meat, animals will undoubtedly be reared even more intensively and cheaply.

Meat production depends heavily on fossil fuel, and because peak oil is undoubtedly upon us, eating meat is clearly unsustainable. Eventually, we will not likely have adequate energy inputs to continue to produce meat as we currently do. The realities of climate change – floods, droughts and altered weather patterns – will further impact food supplies in the future and will add new challenges to growing food.

What about the good news? Well, the good news is that vegetarian and vegan diets are significantly less energy intensive than meat-based diets, and as a result, contribute far less to climate change. The food we eat is even more important than the cars we drive, and the easiest action you can take on climate change is to eat less, or preferably no meat, moving toward a vegan diet.

According to researchers at the University of Chicago, a plant-based diet can reduce one's personal carbon emission by more than 1.5 tonnes of carbon per year, compared to only one tonne saved by switching to a hybrid vehicle. By choosing to eat vegan, we can safeguard our future food supply, reduce our personal carbon emissions and environmental impact.

It is crucial that environmentalists and others concerned with climate change raise the importance of veganism as a tool to combat climate change. The facts make it abundantly clear that any global climate change plan that doesn't include a drastic reduction of meat and animal product consumption is a plan without teeth.

company should state that they follow the GMP (good manufacturing processes) standards set by Health Canada. There are many veg-friendly multivitamins available on the market, and most companies will state on the bottle if they are vegan.

2. While vegetarian diets are often plentiful in nuts and seeds which contain the essential fatty acids that our bodies need not only to thrive, but to survive, it can be quite difficult to convert vegetarian sources (such as flax oil) of omega-3 to its active forms of EPA and DHA. Thankfully, there are now products on the market that contain algae oil which provide a readily absorbed form of DHA with a small amount of EPA. These substances are so vital to almost every biochemical process in the body, a bottle of this stuff should occupy the refrigerator door of every vegetarian and vegan. A great product is Udo's Choice Vegetarian DHA flax oil by Flora.

3. An increased activity level calls for a good, healthy supply of complete, digestible protein, such as hemp, brown rice, or yellow pea protein. Taken either as an energy-packed breakfast shake or to aid in post-workout recovery, a good quality protein powder should always be kept on hand to ensure amino acid intake is adequate and that our individual protein requirements are met. How much protein do you need? It varies quite a bit based on age, gender and activity level (and on who you ask), but a pretty standard recommendation for an adult vegan would be about half a gram of protein for each pound of body weight. However, if you pay close attention to the signals your body is giving you, you will be able to tell if you're getting enough protein by assessing your energy levels, recovery time, immunity and mood. There is also testing that is available that can help you assess whether your amino acid levels are up to par. My current favourites are shakes made with Vega by Sequel Naturals for a complete meal replacement, or Living Harvest Hemp Protein (add some almond butter to your shake for an extra protein boost).

There is no substitute for a well-planned, balanced and varied diet, but with a few added supplements, we can ensure that we are getting the nutrients we need to perform and feel our best.

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## Recipe Corner

# A Vegan Valentine's Day



By Vanessa Holm

As much as I am a cognizant of the commercial monstrosity of Valentine's Day, I can't help but think that it's nice to have one day a year that is set aside for the celebration of love. While I try not to let the occasion entice me into buying silly Valentine's junk, I still like to give those who are close to my heart a little something.

Since Valentine's often revolves around the giving and getting of chocolate treats, it can be difficult to find vegan chocolates that are special to the day. This year, if you feel the need to give your sweetheart something special, why not try making your own vegan chocolates? The following recipes for vegan macaroons, truffles and chocolate bark are easy and sure to delight!

### Chocolate Macaroons

These macaroons are a family favourite. While there are a few different recipes floating around for these popular treats, this recipe never fails.

2 cups sugar

5 Tbsp cocoa

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 cup margarine

1/2 cup soya milk

- mix the above in a saucepan, and bring to a boil, stirring often
- boil 2 minutes, remove from heat, and stir in 1 tsp vanilla
- while this is cooking, mix 3 cups rolled oats and 1 cup coconut
- pour the cooked chocolate mixture over the oats and coconut and blend well
- drop small spoonfuls of the mixture onto waxed cookie sheets, and refrigerate until firm

### Sensational Truffles

I made these truffles over Christmas, and they were a big hit!

225 grams (1/2 pound) semi-sweet chocolate (chips, baking squares, etc)

1 package non-dairy cream cheese

*garnishes, such as chopped nuts, coconut, sprinkles, candied sequins, coloured sugar*

- melt the chocolate in a double boiler or microwave
- beat the non-dairy cream cheese until soft, and then mix in the melted chocolate
- refrigerate until firm
- shape hardened mixture into balls, and roll in whatever garnish you wish
- or, for extra special truffles with a hard chocolate coating, dip balls into additional melted chocolate

### Cherry Chocolate Bark

Try variations of this recipe using different types of fruit and cookies

10 double chocolate, vegan sandwich cookies (read the labels of sandwich cookies at the grocery store - many are vegan)

1/2 cup candied cherries

1 package chocolate chips

- roughly chop the sandwich cookies and spread them onto a small cookie sheet
- chop the cherries into quarters, and spread them out onto the baking sheet, mixing them in with the cookies
- melt the chocolate and pour over the cookies and cherries
- refrigerate until firm, then break or cut into tiny, bite-sized pieces

# Chahaya Malaysia

By Corrie Rabbe

In Ottawa's east end resides a small restaurant in a shabby looking building with an even shabbier looking parking lot. But don't let the distance and outside appearance deter you from the gem that is Ottawa's only Malaysian restaurant. Chahaya Malaysia has been serving authentic Malaysian and Indonesian cuisine for more than 20 years. It is easily accessible by the number 2 bus and the restaurant owners have just purchased the building from a former inattentive landlord.

There is a good vegan selection and the cook is very amendable to making substitutions. Main veg dishes run from \$8-\$12. I have eaten here a zillion times and can tell you right off that the food is spicy. When the menu says hot, it is intensely hot! I love spicy food but I always ask for a milder version here.

For starters, I recommend the crispy spring rolls or the healthier Rojak Salad or Gado Gado salad. The latter two dishes feature a variety of fresh fruit and veggies accompanied with delicious dipping sauces. Either of the salads make a great appetizer and accompanied with the spring rolls a great light meal.

One absolute must have is the Soya Tofu. This dish features crisp deep-fried tofu balls covered in a savory spicy-sweet sauce that is truly addictive. It will really knock your socks off! You can accompany it with either white rice or the yummiest Malaysian rice that has raisins, nuts and fried onions in it.

We also chose the Vegetables in Coconut Sauce, which is a hot, aromatic, bold curry. The veggies were crisp and the jackfruit in the dish added a nice chewy texture. Another plate to try is the flavourful Vegetarian Vermicelli. The serving for this item is quite large and goes well with the spicier dishes, but is also great on its own, although some might find it a bit oily.

For the finale there are three vegan desert options-Lychee over ice, Rambutan over ice, and deep fried plantain. I opted for the plantain because it was cold outside but can't wait to go back to try the other desserts on a hot day. The serving of plantain is large enough for two or more and is coated and deep-fried.

It takes a bit of time to prepare the food but the quaint atmosphere, beautiful Malaysian paintings, and information on Malaysia make it pass quickly. I have read complaints online about the service being



impolite, but have never had any problems at all. It is actually the owners who serve you. They are very happy to chat with you and are extremely knowledgeable about the food. This place does fill up so you might want to call ahead for reservations. The restaurant is closed Monday and serves lunch only during the week.

Chahaya Malaysia is a unique feast to remember and is worth many return visits.

**Chahaya Malaysia**  
1690 Montreal Road  
613-742-0242

## About NCVA

The NCVA is a not-for-profit membership-based organization created to educate the public about the health benefits of a plant-based diet for the improvement of public health. Our goal is to reach as many people as possible - whether or not they are vegetarian.

### Why Join - Member benefits

**Local Discounts** The NCVA is working with local businesses to establish a member discount card

**Making Life Easier for You** We are working for you to increase the number of businesses that accommodate plant-based diets

**Take Action** Volunteer with the NCVA or run for the board of Directors

**Be Heard** With a large membership base we can act as a representative voice in the National Capital Region

**Support a Healthier Community** The more people we reach with our message, the healthier the population in the National Capital Region

### Support the NCVA

Donation:  \$20  \$50  \$100  \$\_\_\_\_\_

The NCVA does not issue membership cards, and we currently only accept cash or cheques - you can pay using credit cards online: [WWW.NCVA.CA](http://WWW.NCVA.CA)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print clearly)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact me about volunteering?  Yes  No

Please subscribe me to your newsletter  Yes  No

Mail to: 185 Pretoria Avenue, Ottawa, ON. K1S 1X1