

Capital Veg News

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL VEGETARIAN ASSOCIATION

In this edition...

For many, winter is a time to stay indoors and create warming comfort foods. In this issue we offer you both recipes for warmth, and food for thought.

Enjoy!

The NCVA team

In partnership with:



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President's Message by Pamela Eadie

The NCVA unveiled its official blog VegOttawa in mid-November, and it already has dozens of relevant and entertaining posts.

The blog, www.vegottawa.wordpress.com, is updated several times weekly and will cover everything related to the veg lifestyle in Ottawa. Recipes, restaurant reviews, product reviews, event updates and summaries, commentary and news will all be featured regularly.

Several people have commented to me that they'd had a similar idea: to create a blog that would encompass all of the great veg treasures we have in Ottawa. The NCVA blog brings all of these potential blogs together in one place, making it a must-read. VegOttawa has several regular bloggers, as well as occasional guest appearances by others. We welcome guest submissions (e-mail me at ncva.avcn@gmail.com if you'd like to write one).

This is just one more way for the NCVA to communicate with its members, vegetarians and vegans, and veg-interested people in the community. It's already emerging as an invaluable resource, and a community-building tool. It offers an immediacy and frequency that we just can't attain with the newsletter, or our monthly e-mail updates.

Don't miss it: www.vegottawa.wordpress.com

Is Ethiopian food the best vegetarian food you've *never* had? Quite possibly!

by Shaun Desjardins

We Ottawans are a fortunate bunch. No, not because we're the shawarma capital of North America. We're fortunate because we have not one, not two but FOUR Ethiopian restaurants in town. And guess what? They're all great!

My infatuation with Ethiopian cuisine started about a year ago when I was bored with my usual rotation of restaurants and wanted to try something different. My wife Amanda and I were meeting another couple for a sit-down meal in the market area and our friends being the good sports they are agreed to try out Ethiopian food with us at the East African Restaurant on Rideau Street. The rest, as they say, is history.

So you may ask, "Shaun—aka Ottawa's self proclaimed Ethiopian cuisine expert—what's so great about Ethiopian food and what's the best Ethiopian restaurant in town?"

And I'd probably respond, "Well, fictitious person asking questions, the answers aren't as complex as the flavour of perfectly balanced berbere, a staple spice blend in Ethiopian cooking. The reasons why I think Ethiopian cuisine is great are:

1. LOTS OF VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN OPTIONS

Ethiopians traditionally eat vegetarian more than 200 days a year which means that Ethiopian restaurants will have an abundance of vegetarian and vegan dishes.

2. A VARIETY OF FLAVOURS

East African cuisine also caters to the palates of spicy food lovers as well as those who don't fancy needing a fire extinguisher table side. For example mesir wat (my favourite) is a red lentil stew made up of red lentils, onion, garlic, ginger and berbere spice is a delicious and SPICY stew while kik alicha (Amanda's favourite) is a mild yellow split pea stew with some garlic, ginger and turmeric in there.

3. GREAT FOR SHARING

The wats are served on a large slightly sour crêpe type bread called injera which is placed in the centre of the table.

4. INEXPENSIVE AND EASY TO MAKE AT HOME

Ethiopian stews or wats as they are known are generally pretty easy to make at home and are SUPER easy on the wallet to boot! I buy my injera from either East African Restaurant or Habesha as it's quite difficult and time consuming to make at home.

5. HEALTHY AND NUTRITIOUS

This is some seriously healthful food! Since these dishes are usually comprised of beans, lentils or legumes and spices you're getting a bunch of fibre and complex carbs and that ever so important macro nutrient for vegetarians, protein.

6. FEWER DISHES TO CLEAN

When eating Ethiopian cuisine you break off a piece of injera and "scoop" up the stews or wats as they are known. Also, everyone eats from the same dish. No utensils and one plate mean fewer dishes to clean!

I've had delicious food at all four of Ottawa's Ethiopian restaurants. However, a special mention goes to East African Restaurant as they offer a 10 per cent discount to all NCVA members and they have an \$8.99 vegan lunch buffet from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. (seven days a week) .

"Great Shaun," you might say, "I'm sold on trying this supposedly scrumptious cuisine from eastern horn of the great continent of Africa but....What do I do next?"

Here's what you do:

1. Pick one of Ottawa's four Ethiopian restaurants: *East African Restaurant* (NCVA Members receive a 10% discount), 376 Rideau Street, *The Horn of Africa*, 364 Rideau Street, *Habesha*, 574 Rideau, or *Blue Nile Restaurant*, 577 Gladstone Avenue.
2. Get some friends to come along with you. Remember, Ethiopian food is great for sharing!
3. Order the vegetarian combination plate (which is vegan) and enjoy!
4. Send the NCVA an email to thank us for introducing you to some of the most flavourful, healthful and just plain tasty food you've ever had.

Shaun's tried and true make at home Ethiopian recipes:

Mesir Wat

- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 to 2 cloves of garlic, crushed or finely minced
- 2 tsp. ginger, peeled and minced or grated
- 2 to 3 TB vegetable oil
- 3 TB berbere spice mix
- 2 cups red lentils, rinsed
- 4 cups, water or broth
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Place the onion, garlic and ginger in a food processor or blender and puree. Add a little water if necessary.

Heat the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium flame. Add berbere and stir rapidly to color the oil and cook spices through, about 30 seconds.

Add the onion puree and sauté until the excess moisture evaporates and the onion loses its raw aroma, about five to 10 minutes. Do not burn.

Add lentils and water to the saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer, uncovered, until lentils are cooked through and fall apart, about 30 to 40 minutes. Add water if necessary to keep the lentils from drying out.

Stir in salt and pepper to taste and serve.

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Kik Alichu

- Three cups water plus two tablespoons (divided)
- 1 cup dried yellow split peas
- 2 TB olive oil
- 1/2 small onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- One 1-inch-long piece fresh ginger, peeled, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp. ground turmeric
- 1 tsp. salt

Place three cups of the water and the peas in large saucepan. Heat over high heat to boiling. Reduce heat to medium; cook until almost tender, about 40 minutes.

Heat olive oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat; cook onion until translucent, about five minutes. Add garlic, ginger and turmeric; cook one minute.

Add remaining two tablespoons of water; cover. Cook on low heat for three minutes. Add mixture to cooked peas; stir in salt. Simmer until peas are very soft, about 30 minutes. Taste; adjust seasonings.

Silver medal at Gold Medal Plates just ZenKitchen's latest accomplishment

by Pamela Eadie

Since opening in June 2009, ZenKitchen has quickly established itself as not just one of the hottest vegan spots around, but one of the hottest tables in all of Ottawa.

It's not only the delicious food that is noteworthy, but also the way that Chef Caroline Ishii has contributed to bringing vegan cuisine to a mainstream audience. Its tables are filled primarily by omnivores; ZenKitchen has certainly done its part to reduce the number of animals being consumed in Ottawa.

"All the attention from the media is great: it helps bring in new customers, and that means more people accepting animal-free cuisine as part of their everyday diet," says Chef Caroline. "We're really surprised when someone says that we're food celebrities or whatever. We see ourselves as a couple of naive restaurateurs doing our best to offer tasty food, to keep to our environmental, vegan and health values, and to make ends meet."

They recently received a boost when Chef Caroline was invited to participate in the annual "Gold Medal Plates" competition in Ottawa on Nov. 16. Gold Medal Plates features the premier chefs in eight Canadian cities, paired with Canadian Olympic and Paralympic athletes, in a competition to crown a gold, silver and bronze medal culinary team. Chef Caroline was one of the first female chefs ever to be invited to participate in the competition. She was also the first vegan cuisine chef.

"I am incredibly proud and honoured to be one of the first women chefs invited to the Ottawa competition and the first vegetarian/vegan chef invited in the history of the competition in Canada. I've learned that commercial kitchens are pretty much a man's domain, but I think it's that very femininity and passion that makes my food stand out," she says.

And not only did she participate, she won them over, taking the event's silver medal, in an event that typically favours heavy usage of cream and animal bodies.

The dish? Start with a little kale, sautéed and seasoned with a plum-kombu vinaigrette. On top of that sits a polenta cake, crispy outside and creamy inside. The polenta is topped with a thin disk of red pepper aspic. Add a teaspoon of fermented nut cheese, bruléed with a torch, and then place a "cigar" of more nut cheese wrapped in fried and smoked yuba (the skin that forms when cooking soya milk). A chile-mushroom sauce is swirled from the base of the polenta across the plate, and sautéed exotic mushrooms from Le Coprin are added to it. Three dots of spicy passila chili sauce finish the plate.



The ingredients – nut cheese, yuba, vegan aspic – all offered something new to most of the judges, and there was a range of textures, from crispy to chewy to creamy, tastes and colours. The chili sauce and aspic were bright red elements against the yellow polenta and brown mushrooms.

It's easy to hope that this could represent a change in thinking amongst Ottawa diners. "The judging wasn't about which ingredients were used, but the totality of the dish itself – presentation, flavour and texture. And that's what we see every day at ZenKitchen – omnivorous diners who come to our restaurant because they like the food, not because of what we do or don't serve," Chef Caroline says. "I believe it expresses a sophistication and progressiveness in Ottawa's food scene – the willingness to see beyond the ingredients and believe that good food is good food."

'Tis the Season for Soup

by Pamela Eadie

All summer long, soup is the enemy. It's hot, it's hearty, and it's the last thing I want to eat when it's 30C. But now that winter has arrived, the soup's on nearly every night.

Currently, my favourite soup to make is one I just made up: kale and white bean. It of course has lots of garlic as well, some tomato, and I even throw some nutritional yeast in. It's the total package. Kale is about the healthiest thing ever, and the other ingredients aren't too shabby either. Everyone at my house loves it. It's also super good to send in someone's lunch the next day. The best part: it's really easy to make, and uses simple ingredients.

Kale and white bean soup

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 1 onion, finely minced
- A bunch of garlic, also finely minced
- 1 tomato, chopped up
- 6 cups vegetable stock
- 2 to 3 cups of shredded kale
- 1 can of white beans
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast
- 1/2 tsp. onion powder
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder

A generous amount of pepper

Directions:

Sauté the onion in some olive oil. Throw in the garlic and tomato. Add veg stock, and the rest of the ingredients. Simmer for about 20 minutes.

Eat, with crackers or without.



NCVA Launches restaurant outreach program

Led by volunteer extraordinaire Erin O'Sullivan, the NCVA has launched a restaurant outreach program that seeks to inform and educate non-veg restauranters about veganism, and assist them with developing vegan-friendly items for their menus.

The information package that is being distributed contains helpful tips as well as a guide to common animal ingredients and where to find vegan substitutes. These are also available online for general use. The NCVA is also inviting business owners to contact us any time for recipe ideas, or information on vegan products.

In an introduction letter to business owners, the NCVA explains that being vegan-friendly is good for business. As the number of vegans increases, so does the likelihood of any dining group containing at least one vegan. Since no one likes going to dinner with someone who isn't going to eat anything, the non-vegans in the group will often let the vegan pick the restaurant. They will often choose a "regular" restaurant, so long as it has vegan options.

So what does being vegan-friendly mean? Being vegan-friendly is about ensuring that vegans a) have at least one entrée option; and b) that vegan options are clearly labelled

as such. In such a vegan-friendly establishment, vegans can be confident that they will not make everyone (including themselves) uncomfortable by a) not eating or by eating only salad; or b) having to engage in a lengthy discussion with the server and chef about what they can and cannot eat.

In short, a vegan-friendly restaurant is one where a vegan can just order off of the menu like everyone else! "You might be pleasantly surprised at how many "aspiring" or "occasional" vegans appreciate your vegan offerings. Note that vegetarians (who consume eggs and dairy) have exactly the same problem (e.g. does the soup have meat stock in it?). The NCVA is focusing on veganism because it is an inclusive concept: vegan meals will be appropriate for vegetarians as well, while opposite is not true," the NCVA's letter explains.

The NCVA will support and promote the efforts of businesses who choose to participate in the program. In addition, the NCVA will identify program participants on its website and spread news of their efforts through word of mouth, the NCVA blog, facebook and other social networking tools.

For more information, or to suggest a potential program participant, visit the NCVA's Web site at www.ncva.ca or contact Erin at erin.anne.osullivan@gmail.com



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Milk: The Perfect Food... for a calf!

by Natasha Kyssa

We've all seen the ad campaigns on television, billboards and in magazines. In fact, just about every editorial publication has an entire page dedicated to celebrities wearing the white moustache and endorsing cow's milk as the "perfect food" for humans. The dairy industry is spending billions of dollars on marketing campaigns to coerce the public into believing that "milk does a body good." This dedicated advertising campaign has been so successful that most people view milk commercials as more of a public service announcement than a shrewd attempt for corporate profit.

Milk's main selling point is calcium, and North Americans are encouraged to drink several glasses of milk every day in order to prevent osteoporosis. No wonder we are such a dairy obsessed culture! We consume the highest amount of dairy products worldwide – ingesting the creamy white stuff multiple times a day – on its own, with cereal, cookies, in coffee, milkshakes – we even warm it up in order to get a good night's sleep! But did you know that North America also has the highest incidence of osteoporosis?

The truth is, contrary to what the glossy ads proclaim, there are many studies indicating that drinking cow's milk actually

increases the risk osteoporosis. "Dairy products contain sodium and animal protein, both of which encourage calcium losses," writes Dr. Neal Barnard, MD, and President of The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. All animal products create an acidic environment in the body. Your body must neutralize this acid by leaching calcium – an alkaline mineral – from the bones. Eventually, this calcium is flushed from the body, which, over years, can result in osteoporosis. "It's time [milk] ads stop pretending there are no health risks from drinking milk," Dr. Barnard goes on to say.

What the ad campaign conveniently fails to tell us is that all dairy products (including organic milk, yogurt and kefir!) are loaded with high levels of cholesterol, and "skim" or not, saturated fat – contributing significantly to cardiovascular disease. Studies are also linking the consumption of casein – a protein present in dairy – to allergies, asthma, bloating, IBS, stomach pain, migraines, tumors, as well as breast, colon, ovarian and prostate cancers.

As if this isn't bad enough, cows are injected with artificial growth hormones and forced to produce many more times the milk than they would naturally. Hooked to electronic milking machines by their udders, the cows suffer electronic shocks, painful lesions and mastitis – a condition which can increase the amount of pus, for which the cows are given antibiotics.

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Mock Meats of Ottawa's Chinatown, Part 1

by Neil Harvey

From Yves Veggie Cuisine to Tofurky to Gardein to Sol to the offerings in the President's Choice Blue Menu line, the variety of mock meats in supermarkets has exploded in recent years. Ottawa's Chinatown is a fantastic resource for lovers of mock meats. This is the first in a series of posts to introduce readers to the treasures they can find in Chinatown and meals that can be made with them.

Our first stop: Phuoc Loi on the northeast corner of Somerset and Booth. If you're driving, you'll need to find street parking or use the pay parking lot at the southeast corner of Somerset and Lebreton. Head to the freezer section in the back right corner of the store.



It may look "grim," in the words of my big sister, but this is the best mock ham I have tried. A caution to vegans: I have seen similarly shaped mock ham that includes whey or egg — be sure to read the ingredients.

What can you do with it? A few ideas...

Slice it thinly, sear each side briefly in a hot frying pan, and put it in sandwiches.

Slice it thickly, glaze it with a mixture of maple syrup and mustard, and bake in the oven.

Cube it and add it to a tofu scramble.

Or, try this recipe for Ham & Cheese Biscuits. These biscuits proved very popular at a potluck. They will also cause any

dogs who happen to be nearby to cluster around your legs and stare at you hopefully.

- Mix 2 cups of flour, 3 tsp. of baking powder, and $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. of salt.
- Cut $\frac{3}{4}$ of a stick of Earth Balance margarine into small pieces and blend it into the flour mixture with a pastry blender or with your fingers. (A stick is equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.)
- Mix in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of diced mock ham and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of Daiya cheddar style shreds.
- Add a splash of vinegar to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of soy milk, and mix with the dry ingredients to form a dough.
- Knead the dough briefly, folding it over no more than five times. This will give the finished biscuits nice flaky layers inside.
- Flatten the dough to about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Use a sharp knife to slice it into squares.
- Bake at 450°F for 13 minutes.

I have also found the mock ham at New 168 Market on the southwest corner of Somerset and Breezehill (just west of the O-Train tracks). They're closed for renovations right now, but when they reopen they might be more convenient for those doing errands by car, as they have a small parking lot just west of the store.



Ham & Cheese Biscuits, with one pulled apart to show the flaky texture (and delicious bits of mock ham and cheese) inside.

Next instalment: vegan "wings" that are way better than the real thing.

Milk: Continued from Page 5

And where do you think these hormones, antibiotics, and pus subsequently end up? Yes — in that thick glass of milk.

So how do you get your calcium fill without consuming milk and dairy products? From the same place cows do! Yes, dark leafy greens — the vegetables mom used to make us eat: collard greens, broccoli, bok choy, and kale are all excellent sources of calcium. Sea vegetables, sesame seeds, tahini, chia, and figs are also high quality, calcium-rich foods.

Non-dairy "milk" alternatives such as soy, rice, hemp, coconut, oat and almond milks are a great way of providing the body with wholesome nutrition. Although they are much healthier options to dairy, keep in mind that they are still processed with additives, and create acid in the body. Remember, fresh is always best!

At our home, we prepare a large jug of (nut) mylk, and keep it

in the fridge to add to smoothies or cereal. Nut and seed mylks are surprisingly easy to make. They are loaded with good-for-you nutrition without the cholesterol, hormones, fat, and mucus. Plus, they're delicious too! Try the following recipe and leave the milk for the calves!

INSTANT HEMP MYLK (makes 2-3 servings)

- 4 cups water
- 1 cup hemp seed
- a few dates, or maple syrup (or a few drops of stevia)
- 1 Tbsp alcohol-free vanilla extract

Blend all of the ingredients until creamy and smooth. Refrigerate.

Natasha Kyssa is the author of The SimplyRaw Living Foods Detox Manual, as well as the founder of SimplyRaw. She has been living a raw vegan lifestyle for 20 years. www.simplyraw.ca

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Visit <http://www.ncva.ca/Home/support/> for a full list with addresses, or to become a member online!



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Jan. 15, Feb. 19, Mar. 12, and Apr. 9, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Jack Purcell Recreation Centre, Elgin at Lewis Street

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 \$3 for non-members to cover facility rental.

Please note: Everyone is welcome, whether you're vegan, vegetarian, or non-vegetarian, but please ensure that the dish you bring is free of animal products; that includes any animal flesh, eggs, dairy/cheese, honey, etc.

Potluck volunteer assistants will get to line up first for the buffet.



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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

Support a Healthier Community

The more people we reach with our message, the healthier the population in the National Capital Region

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