

# Capital Veg News

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL VEGETARIAN ASSOCIATION

June 2008/July 2008

## Great results from NCVA running team

By Pamela Eadie

It was a gloriously sunny weekend as the NCVA's running team members pounded the pavement and raced their way to some fantastic results at the Ottawa Race Weekend on May 24-25.

Donning NCVA t-shirts, Isabelle LeBlanc, Laila Sikking, and Wayne Sawtell participated in the 5K, all achieving good times in their first ChampionChip timed races. Todd Switzer ran his first 10K race in 49:07, with Jill Pyle and Kevin Matthews coming in not too long after. Tom Roberts cracked the overall top 100 in the 10K out of more than 7,000 runners, with a time of 38:31.

Mark Seebaran was the first NCVA half marathoner to cross the finish line, in 1:27:32 (117th out of more than 8,000 runners). Rob Thomas finished his first half marathon in 1:39:21. Melanie Manny, Carol Anne Owen, Pamela Eadie and Joanne Charlebois also completed the race, with Melanie, Carol Anne and Joanne achieving personal bests.

Rounding things out, veteran marathoner Louise Rachlis finished her 16th marathon, and budding triathlete Vincent



Most of the NCVA's running team members (L-R): Mark Seebaran, Louise Rachlis, Jo Charlebois, Todd Switzer, Carol Anne Owen, Laila Sikking, Isabelle LeBlanc, Wayne Sawtell, Kevin Matthews, Melanie Manny, and Pamela Eadie. Hidden behind people: Vincent Guihan and Tom Roberts.

Guihan raced the 2K.

(All results can be found online at [www.sportstats.ca](http://www.sportstats.ca), just enter each competitor's name.)

"I was really proud running along

wearing the 'carrot shirt.' I even found myself holding my arms back so spectators could see the logo better!" says Carol Anne Owen, who was also a spectator for some of

Continued on page 2

3

Veg Q&A

5

Cookbook Review:  
Veganomicon

7

Vegan in Brazil

8

Veg Snacks

For your health

## Maintaining muscle mass on whole foods

By Brendan Brazier

In today's hectic, fast-paced world, we are inundated with nutrient-lacking foods. Consumed mostly for convenience sake, processed and refined foods have led us to a decline in health and have elevated medical costs. Having to consume more of them to "fill up" due to their absence of usable nutrients, yet high sugar and calorie counts, we have become an obese, energy-depleted society.

Back a few years ago in my more conventional-thinking days, I would try to gauge my caloric intake requirements based on my activity level and body weight. Eating about 8,000 calories on heavy training days, as determined by my calculations, I would usually need a rest day soon after. I realize now, a large part

of my need for the extra rest day was not just to recover from the energy expended during training, but primarily from the energy expended digesting all that food!

At the time I would eat lots of starchy, high carbohydrate foods such as conventional pasta and bread. Roasted nuts, usually in the form of peanut butter, would also be a large part of my high-calorie yet low-nutrient diet. As these are hard for the body to digest and assimilate and have little to offer in terms of nutrients, I was actually robbing myself of energy with every bite.

By consuming more easily assimilated foods, you can conserve a large amount of energy. There are two main reasons for this:

Continued on page 3

## Message from the President



NCVA President, Pamela Eadie

Sometimes no matter how hard you try, things just don't work out.

That is the case with the NCVA's planned Veg Fest '08, for which we have made the difficult decision to postpone until the spring.

Coordinating a festival of that type is a huge undertaking, one which most other vegetarian associations hire somebody to do. The NCVA does not have that kind of money, so it instead relies on the efforts of volunteers.

Several committed volunteers put a significant amount of effort into contacting potential vendors and logistical planning, but more volunteers were needed and unfortunately, did not materialize. Complicating matters was a Toronto health show that is occurring the same September weekend we wanted to hold our festival. A number of companies we approached said they'd like to participate, but were already committed to the Toronto show. After six weeks and a phenomenal effort of blanketing potential vendors with information packages, we lacked the numbers needed to feel secure that the festival would pay for itself.

An official new date has not been decided on yet, but the board of directors is looking into May or June 2009. We're hoping to put on some smaller events in the summer and fall, and secure a strong volunteer base. But we can only do this with help from supporters. Volunteering with the NCVA is an excellent way to get in at the ground level of an organization, and put your mark on its direction. For students and recent grads it's a possible opportunity to add skills and experience to your resume. For anyone, it's a way to help promote the vegetarian and vegan lifestyle in Ottawa. Another way to do that is to contribute to Capital Veg News.

Please consider getting involved. We're all busy and have lots of things going on in our lives, but volunteering for something you believe in is something worth making time for. The NCVA cannot reach its potential without help. Please e-mail me with questions, comments, or expressions of interest at [ncva.avcn@gmail.com](mailto:ncva.avcn@gmail.com).



Standing (L-R): Mark Seebaran, Jo Charlebois, Carol Anne Owen, Isabelle LeBlanc, Melanie Manny, Louise Rachlis, Pamela Eadie. Front (L-R): Todd Switzer, Tom Roberts, Vincent Guihan, Wayne Sawtell, Kevin Matthews, Laila Sikking.

### Running team from page 1

the other races. "I was really excited too to see a carrot shirt coming in at 38 minutes in the 10K," she added in reference to Tom Roberts' finish.

The NCVA entered an unofficial running team to raise awareness of the association, and to debunk the idea that vegetarians and vegans cannot be successful athletes.

"I thought it would be a great opportunity to show the public that people can not only survive, but thrive on plant-based diets," says Todd Switzer, NCVA running team captain.

Team member Tom Roberts joined the team for that very reason. "People often have the misconception that it's harder to meet energy and nutritional requirements from a vegetarian or vegan diet, including with respect to athletic pursuits. There's no basis for that idea if one is somewhat informed," he says.

The running team was sponsored by VEGA ([www.myvega.ca](http://www.myvega.ca)), nutritional products which are formulated by vegan ironman triathlete and ultramarathoner Brendan Brazier. The VEGA line of products includes a whole foods meal replacement drink mix, energy bars, and an antioxidant

EFA oil blend.

Team members wore technical t-shirts bearing the VEGA logo, as well as the NCVA logo and the message "Plant Powered!"

Kevin Matthews, who began distance running long before becoming a vegetarian, says it made him realize how food affects his mood, endurance, and every aspect of how he feels. "My second marathon and every one since has been fully plant-powered, and I'm glad I pay so much attention now to how to eat healthy, and how to eat for performance," he says. "I joined the team because I really believe that a city running on plant-based foods will be healthier in the long term."

Isabelle LeBlanc, who only recently moved to Ottawa, heard about the running team and felt compelled to join it to increase awareness of the benefits of plant based lifestyles.

Joanne Charlebois ran in support of the rights of non-human animals. "I'm running for animal rights because sentient beings should not be exploited. Go vegan! It's easier than you might think, and so rewarding knowing you're not participating in animal slavery," she says.

## NCVA News

### Upcoming Potlucks July 19, August 9, Sept. 13, October 11

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 \$2 for non-members to cover facility rental.

Visit our Web site, [www.ncva.ca](http://www.ncva.ca) for up-to-date event listings

Everyone is welcome, but please ensure that the dish you bring is free of animal products- that includes any animal flesh, eggs, dairy/cheese, honey, etc.

### NCVA Member Discounts

The following retailers have offered NCVA members a 10% discount on purchases, with the presentation of an NCVA membership card:

- Karma Wear
- Kardish Bulk Foods
- End Hits

## Veg Q & A

**Q:** How do I make sure that I get enough iron if I don't eat meat?

**A:** It's a myth that eating animal flesh provides the "best" source of iron, and vegetarians do not in fact suffer from iron deficiency and the resulting health problems (such as anemia) at a higher rate than non-vegetarians. There are also plenty of other reasons to see plant-based iron as the better source of iron.

Iron is an important mineral present in the hemoglobin in our blood, helping to transport oxygen throughout the body. It is also stored in the liver, spleen, and bone marrow. The recommended daily intake for adults is 8 mg per day for men, and 18 mg per day for menstruating women. Not enough iron can cause anemia and result in symptoms like fatigue, weakened immune system, and inability to concentrate.

It's true that animal-based (heme) iron is more easily absorbed than plant-based (non-heme) iron - but heme iron is absorbed rapidly and continues to be absorbed and stored in the body whether more is needed or not, whereas non-heme iron is absorbed more slowly, since it must be broken down first, which allows the body to stop processing and storing it when no more is needed.

Iron stores therefore tend to be higher in those who consume animal flesh, however higher iron stores beyond the body's basic need are not a desirable thing. Higher iron stores are in fact associated with greater risk of serious diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Anemia in infants is also associated with cow's milk and cow's milk formulas, since cow's milk is low in iron and also inhibits iron absorption from other foods due to its calcium and phosphate content. Mild to moderate dairy allergies often go unnoticed and cause intestinal bleeding which contributes to a loss of iron and development of anemia in babies.

More generally, in humans of all ages the milk of cows (or goats, etc.) and its products interfere with iron absorption. Studies have shown about a 50 to 60 per cent reduction in absorption with the addition of a "modest" amount of dairy to a meal. This is just one more addition to a long list of sound ethical and human health reasons to avoid consuming these products of animal exploitation.

A typical vegan diet will contain many iron rich foods: leafy green vegetables such



as kale and collards, legumes such as beans and lentils, whole grains and whole grain flours, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, molasses.

Some of these foods, such as spinach, do have

lower iron absorption rates because they also contain compounds like oxalates which interfere with iron absorption. Phytates, contained in varying levels in legumes, grains, certain vegetables and nuts, also interfere with absorption. However, foods high in these compounds also tend to be proportionally higher in iron (many plant foods contain a significantly higher amount of iron per calorie than animal flesh, in fact), so that a decent total amount of iron will still be obtained from a diet based on these foods.

Iron absorption can also be maximized by consuming iron-rich foods along with foods high in vitamin C (such as orange juice or many other fruits and vegetables). Soaking beans before cooking, toasting nuts and seeds, and sprouting grains also help to reduce the effect of phytate on iron absorption. Tannic acid in tea and coffee, as well as calcium supplements or foods fortified with high amounts of calcium, may also interfere with iron absorption, so it helps to consume these items between meals rather than at the same time as iron-rich foods.

In short, it's easy to get enough plant-based non-heme iron, and those who do not consume iron from animal sources are no more likely to develop an iron deficiency than those who do. With plant-based iron, you also avoid the health risks associated with high iron stores in the body. Getting dietary iron is no reason to exploit and kill animals, quite the contrary in fact!

*Editor's note: Dark chocolate is very high in iron, which is how I justify my copious intake! Just make sure it's fair trade and organic. ~ Pamela*

For your health from page 1

- Nutrient-rich easily digested foods can be assimilated with less expenditure.
- When more nutrient-rich foods are present in the diet, the body does not have to eat as much as if it were fed "average" foods.

As a direct result, not as much needs to be eaten and therefore digested. This is a huge net energy gain, to be spent as you please. If the body is left to decide, it will likely choose improved immune function and quickened restoration of cells damaged by stress — essentially, "anti-aging" activities.

Once I realized the value in nutrient density, assimilation, and absorption of food, I began eating in terms of net gain with no adherence to calorie consumption guidelines. Instead, I focused on consuming nutrient dense, easily assimilated foods. As a result my recovery rate has significantly improved. I no longer need an extra day to recover from eating copious amounts of conventional food. Enhanced by simple means of increased efficacy, my body now pools its retained energy resources to recover more quickly from muscle damage associated with training. Today, I consume about 30 per cent fewer calories than I did just two years ago yet have more energy through conservation, as opposed to consumption.

Instead of feasting on common refined foods, I now consume whole foods almost exclusively. Raw, alkalizing, enzyme intact, living foods have become the foundation of my diet. Switching my main carbohydrate source away from refined starches to whole fruits and vegetables was my starting point. In doing so, the majority of my energy needs, obtained from primarily carbohydrate, were now being met by a wide variety of fruit and whole grains.

Raw nuts and seeds, with an emphasis on hemp and flax as well as legumes supply me with protein and essential fatty acids. The majority of vitamins and minerals I require come from fresh, raw vegetables—dark leafy green in particular.

You can more easily maintain hydration by consuming whole foods raw instead of eating them dried, processed, and cooked.

Specifically, foods that offer a superior net gain are:

- alkaline forming, high in chlorophyll
- rich in enzymes, raw and alive
- rich in pre and probiotics
- best consumed in liquid form

By implementing some of these suggestions, you can not only maintain strength and lean muscle tissue on a vegan diet, but you can also increase both significantly.

*Brendan Brazier is a Canadian vegan Ironman triathlete and ultramarathoner, and the formulator of VEGA nutritional products ([www.myvega.com](http://www.myvega.com)).*

## Recipe Corner

By Vanessa Holm

A few weeks ago, my boyfriend and I returned from an amazing vacation in Cuba. The trip was everything we had wanted it to be – relaxing, warm and close to nature. While staying at the beautiful, solar-powered Club Amigo Marea del Portilla resort, we realized just how vegetarian-friendly travel in Cuba can be.

Although the vacation was a spontaneous result of an insanely inexpensive travel deal found on the internet, we did have a couple days to plan for the trip. While neither my partner nor I had been to a resort, and had some doubts about the over consumption that some all-inclusives promote, we thought we would try this one out. Since the vacation was extremely last minute (less than a week to plan), we had little to worry about in terms of what to bring, and thought that packing light would be the way to go.

However, one of our major concerns was the food options that might be available to us. Marea del Portilla is located in a remote, non-touristy part of south eastern Cuba. We knew the spot was isolated, away from any large towns, and quite small in relation to other resorts. Since both my boyfriend and I are vegan, we hoped that there would be some vegan food available to us.

What we were offered in terms of vegan food far exceeded our expectations. As mentioned, the resort was far away from any major centres in Cuba, and therefore, a lot of the menu was home-made each day. The resort grew its own bananas, mangoes and coconuts, and various vegetables and fruits, that were always offered in abundance. Numerous types of bread were made fresh daily, and there was often a selection of rice, beans, vegetable stews, pasta, vegetarian pasta sauce, plantains and mixed salads. In addition, there were fresh jams, spreads, and fruit juices.

One of the most memorable meals we had was a picnic alongside a waterfall, that was prepared by a local Cuban woman. In under an hour, she prepared vegetable rice, fried plantains, yucca, a mixed vegetable salad, and delicious salsa, all on

# Being Vegan in Cuba



the top of a fire. The resort also had a restaurant that included types of vegetarian soup, salad, pasta and pizza that could easily be made vegan. By no means was it a struggle to find delicious food to eat!

Although there were always lots of delicious treats, main dishes, and beverages, one thing that the resort did not have was soy milk. My boyfriend and I guessed this might be the case, and ended up purchasing and packing a few tetra pack bundles of soy milk before we left. These were convenient to take to breakfast for coffee and tea, and to add to cereal. On occasion, we passed a few of these to the bartenders so they would be able to make vegan Brown Cows.

During the last night of our trip, a few travellers we had met were discussing the first 'Canadian' meals they would have when returning home, which included talk of a big plate of nachos and a meal at Burger King. On the other hand, my boyfriend and I enjoyed the Cuban food so much that we've been having cravings for the food that we ate while on vacation. Although it doesn't quite capture the relaxed essence of vacation, there are a few Cuban dishes I've tried to recreate.

### Fried Plantains

Before I tried this dish in Cuba, my mom told me about a friend at work that sometimes makes this treat. She described how it's made, which is quite easy. Although I didn't have a chance to try making fried plantains before I went away, I got to taste quite a few of them in Cuba.

#### Ingredients:

2 Green Plantains

1/4 tsp ground turmeric

1 1/4 tsp salt

Vegetable oil for frying (1-2 inches in bottom of pan)

#### Directions:

- Peel the plantains with a knife, and slice into the thinnest rounds possible
- Soak in ice water for 30 minutes, drain, and pat dry
- In a bowl, combine the turmeric, salt, and 2 Tbsp warm water
- Heat the oil in a pan that's suitable for deep frying, and when hot, place the plantain slices in the oil in a single layer
- As soon as the slices are placed in the oil, dip fingertips into the turmeric solution and sprinkle over the slices
- Fry the wafer for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes, turning once, until crisp
- Remove with a slotted utensil and drain on a paper-towel lined plate
- Sprinkle with additional salt if desired.

### Simple Cuban Rice and Beans

#### Ingredients:

7 1/2 cups water

1/2 cup coconut milk (optional, instead, you can use 1/2 cup soy milk or water)

4 cups brown rice

2 cans beans – your choice, rinsed

1 onion, diced

1 green pepper

1 Tbsp olive oil

2 dashes black pepper

Sea salt to taste

Cayenne pepper or diced hot peppers to taste

#### Directions:

- Bring the water to a boil and add all of the ingredients
- Reduce heat and simmer for 50 minutes, or until the rice is cooked and the water is evaporated
- Season to taste.

## Cookbook Review

Reviewed by Elizabeth Wolynsky, RHN

Dreena Burton's cookbooks (The Everyday Vegan and Vive Le Vegan!) are a must-have for any vegan's library, and her third installment does not disappoint.

After receiving numerous requests for more recipes through her blog (www.vivelevegan.blogspot.com), Dreena decided it was time to publish another

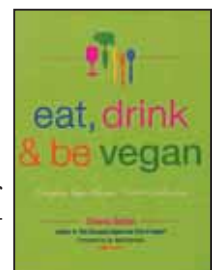
# Eat, Drink & Be Vegan

cookbook. The recipes in this book are much more sophisticated this time around, using more exotic and nutritious ingredients and providing more exciting ethnic fare.

Featuring an entire section dedicated to hummus and helpful tips on grain and bean cooking and how to stock a vegan kitchen, Eat, Drink & Be Vegan is useful for first-time chefs and experienced chefs alike. Highlights include the "Cocoa-Coconut Chili"

(perfect option for those getting bored with traditional chili) and the healthy, energy packed "Super-Charge Me! Cookies."

Essential reading for the adventurous, health-minded vegan and their families.



Arsenal Pul p Press

# Cookbook Review

Reviewed by Tanya Hanham

# Veganomicon



Veganomicon. What ideas does that title conjure? How about mega, epic, or legendary...okay, maybe I'm getting carried away here. But the name of this book is apropos; this is the cookbook that all current and aspiring vegans should have.

Veganomicon is a follow-up to best selling authors Isa Chandra Moskowitz and Terry Hope Romero's smash hit *Vegan with a Vengeance* (VwaV). (They also co-wrote the drool-worthy *Vegan Cupcakes Take Over the World*.) I thought nothing could top VwaV until I found *Veganomicon*.

With over 250 recipes, *V'con* (as it is affectionately called on the author's popular website forum [thepostpunkkitchen.com](http://thepostpunkkitchen.com)) is full of tantalizing appetizers, soups, salads, main courses, and desserts. Isa and Terry

deem this cookbook an "old-fashioned, all purpose cookbook" with recipes mostly made up with ingredients you can find at the supermarket. I'd have to agree with that description.

I've made more than 20 recipes from this book and have been more than happy with all of them. Notable favourites in the (talent heavy) soup section are Porcini Wild Rice Soup and Spicy Peanut and Eggplant Soup. The Eggplant-Potato Moussaka was something you'd expect from an upscale restaurant with thin sliced roasted vegetables topped with the amazing, tangy pine nut cream sauce. Other great mains I've made are Baked Pumpkin Ziti and Seitanic Red and White Bean Jambalaya. Comfort food at its best.

But what about dessert? I know that's what you're all waiting for. Friends went nuts over the ice-cream sandwiches I made from

the Chewy Chocolate Raspberry cookies and raspberry ice-cream. Jelly donut cupcakes were a delight with their copycat flavour to the real deal without the trip to Tim's.

Above is a shot of the Roasted Fennel and Hazelnut Salad with Shallot Dressing. The dressing includes roasted shallots giving it a sweet note and tarragon lending a licorice flavour which paired nicely with the roasted fennel. Topped with toasted hazelnuts and tart cranberries, this salad was substantial enough for a satisfying lunch.

HEALTHY  
ORGANIC  
FRESH

the table  
[www.thetablerestaurant.com](http://www.thetablerestaurant.com)

Wild Oat  
BAKERY  
ORGANIC  
FAIRTRADE  
VEGETARIAN CAFE

817 Bank St (at Fourth)  
(613) 232-6232

Westboro YOGA Studio  
vinyasa flow and hot flow for all levels  
quality instruction & flexible schedule  
Start Anytime 1<sup>st</sup> class \$5  
[www.core-elation.com](http://www.core-elation.com)

100% Raw Vegan

- crackers
- energy bars
- burgers
- puddings
- cookies
- sprouted trail mix

certified organic & free of any kind of additive, artificial coloring or preservatives

[www.bio-sphere.ca](http://www.bio-sphere.ca)

Vegetarian Foods  
Organic Food & Produce  
Vitamins & Herbs  
Natural Body Care  
Gluten & Peanut-Free Products  
Professional Staff  
Open 7 Days a Week

**rainbowfoods**  
natural foods  
Ottawa's Complete Health Food Store

[www.rainbowfoods.net](http://www.rainbowfoods.net) (613) 726-9200  
1487 Richmond Rd. at Carling

Made with vegetable & grain ingredients  
A good source of protein  
Meatless | Low fat  
Cholesterol free

Canadian Grand Prix Winner  
New Products Award,  
Produce Category

[itsallgoodfoods.com](http://itsallgoodfoods.com)

# Special Feature Page: Living With Omnivores

## Surviving meal preparation with omnivores

By Devon Begg

Cooking dinner can seem daunting for any new vegetarian, but it is especially true if the rest of the household eats meat. The transition from flesh eating to vegetarian is easier if the rest of the household follows suit, but it is likely that not all family members will be willing to make such a change. The main person cooking the meals each night is often faced with the task of accommodating two different diets, and if they're an omnivore they may be resistant to doing so.

For those new to vegetarianism, it's scary to imagine hours spent in the kitchen every night, preparing two completely separate meals, pots and pans stacked precariously high in the sink, and silent (or not so silent) cursing, all because one person no longer eats meat.

Fortunately, it does not have to be that way. Cooking for both omnivores and vegetarians can be simple and yield delicious results. It only takes an extra 10 minutes or less.

Meals are an excellent opportunity to get others to try vegetarian and vegan dishes that they might not otherwise make themselves or order in a restaurant. Dishes like lasagna, shepherd's pie, and chili can all be made vegan and still offer omnivores the taste and texture of their familiar favorites.

Food outreach and gentle persuasion have resulted in many omnivores reducing, or even completely cutting meat from their diet.

But sometimes nothing will change their minds, and you have to find a way to cope. The following tips can serve as guidelines for ensuring you aren't left eating iceberg lettuce salad, whether you are the new vegetarian in your household or someone else is.

### Single-step changes to standard recipes

Many classic dishes that contain meat are easy to convert to a vegetarian meal, and take little time to do. Both omnivores and the vegetarians can help with the meal preparation to save even more time. Here are some examples:

- Homemade pizza can be prepared as usual, then each person takes care of their own toppings.
- Tacos and burritos use the same toppings and tortilla shell. Let everyone fill their own taco or burrito.
- Stir-fries can be prepared entirely vegetarian or vegan and, if desired, the meat eater can cook their own meat.
- Pasta is incredibly versatile. Prepare as vegetarian or vegan and omnivores can add meat to their plates if they insist.



### When meat is the centrepiece

There may be situations where meat is the centre of attention at the table and there are no readily available vegetarian substitutes. In this situation, side dishes become extra important. With a side dish (or two, or three!) of vegetables and grains, most of the dinner can be shared. All that needs replacing is a meatless source of protein, which can be virtually anything. A veggie burger, or lentil salad, or baked beans are just a few ideas.

If you are a student and your parents or guardians prepare meals every night, this is a situation where it is most useful for you to help in the kitchen. It may be helpful to even prepare a meatless dish ahead of time and refrigerate. Your own centrepiece can then be reheated a few minutes before the rest of dinner is ready.

## Restaurant Review

By Sarah Turnbull

I'm vegan and my partner is an omnivore, so I'm always on the look out for restaurants that will accommodate me. And this means going beyond – way beyond – the old stand-in, salad, and the blank, uncomprehending stares of wait staff when informed of my diet. So when my partner and I moved to Ottawa recently, I was happy to have stumbled across The Branch Restaurant, located in Kemptville, about 60 kilometres south of Ottawa.

The Branch is housed in a character building in the 'old' part of town. The menu changes often, as it's based on organic and locally sourced foods.

Because the menu changes often, it is very short, and at first glance, has little in the way of vegan fare. Vegetarians have more selection, with one of the two daily soups being vegetarian (and occasionally vegan), in addition to menu items with cheese and smoked tofu. But the friendly and helpful servers thoroughly understand what 'vegan'

## The Branch Restaurant, Kemptville, Ontario

means and the chef is happy to 'veganize' the menu items. Before opening The Branch, Chef Bruce Enloe worked at Millennium, the upscale vegan restaurant in San Francisco.

The first time I went to The Branch I had a tasty vegan version of jambalaya, loaded with fresh veggies and tempeh, as my main and a crisp, mixed green salad with oil-free berry dressing to start. On my most recent visit a few weeks ago, we opted out of appetizers and went straight to the mains. I had their vegan version of lemongrass coconut curry on brown rice, with smoked tofu and tons of seasonal veggies, including fiddleheads. It's definitely a westernized curry, but it was delicious. The only problem was the lack of spice – I had asked for moderate (3/5 on the scale), but the dish lacked any heat.

The dessert menu doesn't hold much promise for vegans at first glance. That's why it's necessary to consult your server. I was advised that while nothing on the dessert menu was vegan, the kitchen had vegan

chocolate cake on hand and would happily put together a special dessert for me. I was happily, ocolate cake was layered between fresh, sliced strawberries and vanilla soy ice cream. It was divine. The presentation was so nice the folks at the table beside us asked to take a photo of the dessert!

The time and effort put forth by the chef and servers to ensure I have a good, vegan meal is one of the main reasons why I like The Branch. The servers are phenomenal – super friendly and attentive. The food is healthy and I like the fact that it's organic and seasonally focused. Appetizers range from \$5-\$7, while veggie mains are around \$20. One prohibitive aspect of the restaurant is the distance from Ottawa. While I would like to see actual vegan items on the menu, I appreciate the willingness of The Branch to accommodate vegan and vegetarian diets.

15 Clothier Street East  
Kemptville, Ontario  
613 258 3737

# Brazilian adventures in veganism

By Camille Labchuk

Staying away from animal products in Canada is as easy as vegan pie these days. With an abundance of veg-friendly restaurants to choose from and supermarket shelves stocked with veg products, most of us don't give it a second thought.

Traveling as a vegan, however, requires a certain amount of planning. Encountering unfamiliar foods and unrecognizable ingredients is daunting enough for omnivores, let alone those of us who avoid animal products. But with the help of Google, any vegan can make the most of traveling abroad by scoping out food options in advance. With an upcoming work trip to



Brazil scheduled, I decided to get to work on the web. The initial search results didn't look terribly promising:

"Brazil can be a difficult for vegetarians."

"Vegetarianism is not common in Brazil."

"Most Brazilians are not used to vegetarians."

"Some seemingly vegetarian meals may turn out to include unwanted ingredients."

So it was with a lot of excitement and a wee bit of trepidation that I packed my bags (full of Clif and Lara bars) and, armed with a Portuguese phrasebook, hopped on the plane to Brazil with fellow NCVA member Katie Gibbs.

Our conference was in São Paulo, but our first top was the Pantanal – the world's largest wetlands region and an ecotourism hotspot. Food mishaps along the way were limited to the unfortunate convenience store purchase of a bag of chips that, while seemingly vegan, turned out to be artificially bacon-flavoured – yuck! (Tip: avoid anything labeled presunto, which is pork. This one wasn't in the phrasebook.)

Although we chose this particular eco-tour ranch because of its reputed vegetarian offerings, we weren't expecting to be wowed. But the food far surpassed all expectations and the three square buffet meals per day were enough to satisfy any vegan. The salads, fruits, beans, rice and

vegetables were one of the highpoints of our trip and I hope someday to learn the secret to making my own beans taste so good.

After the Pantanal, next stop was São Paulo for the conference. Our hotel's breakfast buffet was filled with fruit and we had some lunch-time luck on day one with a por kilo (pay-by-weight) buffet restaurant, but the true culinary highlight of São Paulo came on day two. The ever-prepared Katie had sought out veg-friendly restaurants in São Paulo on the HappyCow.net Web site, and after combing the list, we were elated to discover a vegan ice cream parlour just blocks away from our hotel. We found the charming street-front store without problems and were thrilled to see the help-yourself por kilo ice cream bar with waffle dishes, soja (soy) options, and a plethora of toppings, including hot chocolate sauce, caramel, nuts and sprinkles. The only tough part was choosing between peanut butter, chocolate, banana, vanilla-chocolate chunk, cashew, acai berry, kiwi and so on... a veritable vegan ice cream paradise!

After seeking out one vegetarian restaurant that was listed on Happy Cow and finding it to have shut down, we lucked out with another and enjoyed a delicious meal of flax seed, tomato and pumpkin ravioli at a charming place called Fulo, reputedly São Paulo's best vegetarian joint.

Rio's reputation as a beach-all-day, party-all-night city rang true, but a word from the wise: don't stay in the famed Copacabana neighbourhood. Its heyday was in the 70s and it has since gone down hill. But more importantly, it lacked vegan food in a big way! It was in Rio that we hit the food low-point of the trip. After spending a considerable amount of time navigating public transit and embarking on a 20 minute hike, we arrived with sore feet to an address promising a vegan restaurant only to find it dark and boarded up.

The next day looked up as we learned to take advantage of Rio's juice bars. With a bar on every corner, they offered every kind of tropical fruit I can name and quite a few others (acerola, anyone?) that were previously unknown but always delicious. I mostly stuck to fresh mango juice. On Rio's world renowned beaches, we were delighted to discover vendors hawking watermelons and other vegan treats. We wrapped up our final night in the city by venturing into Ipanema, a tourist hotspot, and



found an Italian restaurant that agreed to veganize some pasta dishes and served delicious bruschetta.

All-in-all, being vegan in Brazil is challenging, but can be made easier with some advanced planning, a good supply of energy bars for those emergency moments and the most useful Portuguese words you'll ever learn: Não carne, não peixe, não leite, não ovo – no meat, no fish, no dairy, no eggs!

## Tips:

- Google and HappyCow.net are your friends. They are great tools, but make sure to call ahead to confirm address, hours and continued existence of the restaurant.
- Watch out for artificial sweeteners – aspartame and sorbitol are everywhere. They are offered with sugar at most restaurants and stores, are found in cookies, candies, soymilk – you name it.
- Bread can be found almost anywhere, so bringing along items like jars of bruschetta mix and peanut butter for when vegan food is scarce.
- A phrase book is essential if you want to eat anything other than Clif bars. You can expect to hear some English spoken in touristy areas but rarely elsewhere.
- If you are planning on travelling to a few different countries, consider buying the "Vegan Passport" online. It explains veganism and what we do and do not eat in 56 languages.

## Capital Veg News

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL VEGETARIAN ASSOCIATION

### Advertise in Capital Veg News

1 issue: \$42 +GST

6 issues: \$227 +GST

Capital Veg News is published six times per year, with 1,000 copies printed and hundreds more distributed electronically.

For more information visit [www.ncva.ca](http://www.ncva.ca)

Editor: Pamela Eadie

Designer: Erica Yasuda

# What's new in the world of veg snacks

By Pamela Eadie

## Cocoa Camino Drinking Chocolate

The search for vegan hot chocolate was a frustrating one for me. Sure, you can make up your own cocoa and sugar concoction, but who knows what the right proportions are? Not I. So I was elated when Cocoa Camino came out with their latest offering, Drinking Chocolate.

Drinking Chocolate is the most luscious, decadent hot chocolate you will ever taste. I make mine with half almond and half soy milk, but any alternative milk will do. It's dark and rich and it tastes like you're drinking melted chocolate.

Cocoa Camino products are organic, fair trade, and La Siembra Cooperative, which produces them, is based in Ottawa. You can hardly go wrong.

## Krispy Kat bars

While some vegan energy bars are tasty enough to be a candy bar, a true vegan candy bar hasn't existed in Ottawa...until now. Krispy Kat Candy Bars from Tree Huggin' Treats fills this void. The company calls them the "world's first organic candy bar."

I've tried the Toasted Almond bar a few



Cocoa Camino's Drinking Chocolate

times, and like it very much. There are also Roasted Peanut and Toasted Coconut flavours. It's hard to describe it, except to say it's chocolate coated, and has something caramel-y in the middle surrounded by toasted almonds. And they're really good. Proceed with caution.

## B.Goods cookies

B.Goods is a vegan company that doesn't make a big deal out of it. All of its cookies are vegan, many are wheat-free, and all are made from mostly organic ingredients right here in Ottawa in two mobile cookie trucks.

Flavours include Valencia Peanut Butter,

Wholewheat Chocolate Chip, Spelt Molasses Ginger, Spelt Maple Pecan, Wholewheat Double Chocolate, Wholewheat Chili Chocolate, Cinnamon Kasha, and Chocolate Mint. The Cinnamon Kasha is made from gluten-free ingredients.

I recently tried the Spelt Molasses Ginger and Double Chocolate cookies, and they are top notch. They're soft, pretty, and bursting with flavour. They can be purchased at most natural food stores in Ottawa, or large orders can be placed at 613-882-0923.

## Salba Krispy Rice Bars

One of my biggest indulgences as an omnivore was rice krispie squares. I was known to eat half the pan on the first night I made them. I was horrified when I learned about gelatin, and resigned myself to never enjoying their marshmallowy goodness ever again.

Now Salba has come out with a vegan version of the classic rice krispie treat. Each bar contains 400 mg of Omega 3 and 4g of Fibre. Every bar is vegan and wheat free. They're not the same as the ones I grew up gorging on, but they're a suitable stand-in for those times when you just can't settle for anything else. Plus, because Salba is a nutritional powerhouse they're actually sort of healthy... right?

## 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: National Capital Vegetarian Association,  
66-3260 Southgate Rd. Ottawa ON. K1V 8W9