

Capital Veg News

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL VEGETARIAN ASSOCIATION

August/September 2007 issue 2

NCVA launches monthly vegan potlucks

By Pamela Eadie

Nearly 30 people turned out for the first official National Capital Vegetarian Association potluck, which meant lots of great food and conversation.

The impressive spread included a wide range of delectable vegan dishes, including a cake almost too beautiful to eat, several raw food dishes, stuffed bell peppers, Indian cuisine, and a massive basket of wild blueberries.

"We're so thrilled by the turnout, it's really great that so many people participated even on such short notice," says co-organizer Vanessa Holm. "And the food was fabulous."

Future potlucks will also have an educational component, as per the NCVA's mandate to educate and inform people about the health benefits of a vegetarian diet.

The potluck was held at the Jack Purcell Recreation Centre in downtown Ottawa, just



Photo: Pamela Eadie

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Some of the participants at the first NCVA potluck, held at the Jack Purcell recreation centre.

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For your health

The facts about vitamin and mineral supplements

By Brendan Brazier

Q: I heard that vitamin and mineral supplements boost energy, therefore athletic performance. Is this true? Is more better?

A: If you have recently looked through any sport or fitness magazine you will have undoubtedly noticed ads making claims such as "improves performance by 20 per cent." Even many articles that carry more credibility often make such claims. Does that mean the vitamin and mineral supplements actually improve athletic performance? Yes and no — mostly no.

If you actually take the time to

carefully read many of the studies cited you will notice that they were performed on people who had a deficiency in the vitamin or mineral that was tested.

This is a key factor. A person who has extremely low levels of any kind of essential nutrient will not perform at their potential. Obviously, when supplemented with the lacking nutrient, the person will improve performance as a direct result.

Can we then conclude that supplementation of that vitamin or

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Message from the Executive Director



Photo: Al ain Chan

As a small, grassroots organization trying to establish itself, the NCVA faces many of the same struggles as other small groups, including raising funds, getting publicity, and finding volunteers. Another challenge is connecting with the very people who would be most likely to support the association, who can help it to grow and succeed.

In August the NCVA took what I believe is a significant step towards reaching out to our potential members when we hosted our first official monthly potluck event. Plans for it came together quickly, and there was little time to promote it, but nearly 30 people of all ages came out to participate.

This response shows there is a definite thirst for this type of event in the National Capital Region. I am very pleased that the NCVA is taking a leading role in organizing this sort of community-building exercise. So many cultural and societal traditions revolve around food, which in many cases results in vegetarians and vegans being excluded in some way. It's wonderful to be creating a new tradition, and building a stronger vegetarian community locally.

I warmly welcome anyone who's interested to come out sometime. But participating in the potlucks isn't the only way to get involved with the NCVA. We very much need your support in other tangible ways. Consider becoming a member- we need numbers to ensure our voice is heard. Or, perhaps offer your time as a volunteer. There are many things we'd like to attempt to do as an association, but we lack the volunteer power to make them happen.

We want to build a strong vegetarian community in Ottawa, but we need your help. Please contact me at m.faul@ncva.ca if you're interested in being part of the process.

At the Supermarket

By Vaalea D.

Starlite Cuisine Crispy Rolled Tacos and Soy Taquitos, as seen at Herb & Spice and Hartman's: I first tried the chicken style taquitos which has a great flavoured filling (not chunky) rolled in a corn shell. I really liked it and was afraid of wasting my money on other flavours because unfortunately this product comes at a price. Eventually I also tried the garlic chicken style rolled taco which I decided tasted even better than the taquito. At some point I tried some of the other flavours when the chicken I liked wasn't available, but I found them too spicy for my taste. The beef style did not wow me like the chicken. They received Peta's 2005 1st place in "Beyond the Bun" of the Golden Bun Awards.

I was very happy to find out that the So Good soy frozen cones I had been eyeing on the company website, were now available in Ottawa... well, Kanata. I don't know about any other stores, but the Real Canadian Super Store on Eagleson was carrying vanilla, but only vanilla. I love the layer of chocolate between the ice cream and the waffle cone. Compared to the cones sold at convenience store, I think the price is alright. Other great soy scream treats to beat the heat include So Delicious Fudge Bar and Vanilla Bar (vanilla dipped in chocolate) and they also carry chocolate coated "ice cream" sandwiches.



Agave Nectar is nothing new, but it is good to bring it up for those unfamiliar with it. Although to me it has a slight resemblance to corn syrup, it makes a great honey alternative and can also be used to replace other sweeteners. I like it on my cooked carrots with some cinnamon. It's available locally at natural food stores, and even some Loblaws stores have started carrying it.

I remember reading with envy as people online spoke about their "Tings." I thought the only way that I could get my hands on them was by mail order. I was wrong. Baked Tings are now available at various local health food stores. The texture resembles cheetos-they have a hard crunch. The topping flavour is nutritional yeast for a somewhat cheesy taste. It is very easy to eat the whole bag in a short amount of time.

News BITES

By Vaalea D.

Maybe Ottawa needs to copy Paris' Velib' service. I guess it won't work in all four seasons, but with 10,600 bikes at 750 stations, you have the flexibility of grabbing a bike at one station, and leaving it at another. They have even been replacing roads with bike paths. The service is just as convenient to use for Parisians as it is for tourists, as passes can be bought per year, per week or per day with extra fees if the bike is not returned to a station within half an hour as to keep bikes available for other users.

Finally things are getting serious with hybrid public transport in Ottawa. By 2010 we will have a number of diesel/electric on the road, but we are well behind Gatineau's STO which already has two in service. Regular busses are about \$450,000 so the hybrids \$650,000 has to be proved attractive. But in 2008 Ottawa is getting three double decker buses.

Hooray for Bluesfest which for the past two years has been handing out biodegradable beer cups. Further their volunteer's meals were on biodegradable plates, and their generators run on biodiesel, and their wine glasses were sold at a cost to encourage reusing them.

The Dutch city The Hague plans to heat 4,000 homes and a number of industrial buildings using geothermal energy after discovering 75C water at 2,200 meters under the city.

Canadian born T.O.F.U magazine was launched in May. They mention Ottawa but list no locations. You can find out more about this quarterly here <http://www.twentertainment.ca/tofu/>

And back to Ottawa, Irene's Pub on Bank Street in the Glebe will coming out with a vegan friendly menu. Ask for it in August.

off Elgin Street. Future potlucks will also be held at this location, including the next one, which is scheduled for Sept. 15. It will follow the Simply Raw raw food festival. Visit NCVA's Web site at www.ncva.ca for updates on upcoming potlucks.

Each person should bring a VEGAN dish (with ingredient list) that serves between 10-12, and a serving utensil, as well as your own plate, cutlery, and beverage. Admission is \$1 for NCVA members, and \$2 for non-members to cover facility rental.

Enterprising Ottawa vegetarians and vegans have been holding potlucks in their living rooms for the past year, but are happy to move to a larger venue that can attract more people. For example, in mid-July an all-dessert vegan potluck was held at one vegan's home.

If you have any questions about the potlucks, or wish to RSVP, please e-mail pamela_bjcu@yahoo.ca.



Food from the August 11 event.



Some of the participants at an all-vegan all-dessert potluck held in July.

Veg Q & A

What's the story on fish?

By Joanne Charlebois

Q: I hear a lot about fatty fish these days. Should I be including some in my diet?

A: Whether your main concern is for your health, for animals, or for the environment, there is no good reason to eat fish.

Often, eating fatty fish such as salmon is promoted as "the" way to get essential fatty acids (EFAs) such as omega-3s into one's diet. What is frequently overlooked is that eating animals is not the only source of dietary omega 3s - flax seeds, hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, and walnuts, for example, are all good sources of omega 3 fats.

Using flax seed oil or hemp seed oil (for dressing salads and the like rather than for cooking, as heating the oil too much damages the EFAs) or ground whole flax seeds or hemp seeds (sprinkled on salads or other dishes, or added to smoothies, muffin batter, etc), in the amount of about one or two tablespoons a day, is probably the simplest and healthiest way to ensure that you are getting your omega-3s.

Research has suggested that there are, very rarely, some people whose bodies cannot convert omega 3s into DHA, which is the form that the body requires in its functioning. Sometimes this is given as a reason for people to eat fatty fish since fishes' bodies contain plenty of already-formed DHA. However, most people can convert omega 3s to DHA, and at any rate there are completely vegan DHA supplements available; the DHA in these supplements is derived from the same source that the fish originally got it from: sea algae. For more information on omega-3s and DHA, see <http://www.vegsource.com/talk/campbell/mess/ages/254.html> where Dr. Rick Dina discusses the issue.

In addition to being able to get omega 3s and DHA from non-animal sources, these non-animal sources are preferable because animal products are detrimental to human health.

Animal protein and animal fat are implicated in many "diseases of affluence" that plague those who eat a Western animal-heavy diet in particular, as is the absence of fibre in animal products (see The China Study by T. Colin Campbell, a large epidemiological study showing that any level of animal product consumption is a health risk). Not to mention that fish flesh, especially that of fatty fish, often contains high levels of toxins like mercury (since the toxins accumulate in the fat stores of the animal). Eating these items also displaces healthier foods from the diet that we would be able to include if we avoided the animal products.



As far as concern for animals goes, this is a no-brainer - fish are sentient creatures who feel pain and who suffer greatly when they are treated as natural resources, as mere tools to be exploited for profit simply because people like the taste of their flesh, or because they are misled to believe that we need to eat animal flesh to be optimally healthy.

Since this is far from the case, then if we care at all about the interests of animals such as fish, we should not treat them like just another commodity to be bought, sold, and consumed, violating their most basic interests in continuing their own lives and in being free from pain for the rather trivial reason that we enjoy the taste. As those who avoid animal products can attest, our taste buds do change and we lose any desire to eat these products after a short time on a plant-based diet, anyway.

Concerns about the environment also caution against eating fish. Industrial fishing methods often result in an extremely high proportion of by-catch (animals of non-target species who are caught in the nets unintentionally, and whose dead bodies are usually thrown back into the sea), and some industrial methods like bottom-trawling can destroy natural ocean-life habitats such as reefs.

Overfishing, a common concern especially when these industrial fishing methods are used, is extremely harmful to the biodiversity of the oceans. Fish farming is also very problematic, as the farmed fish have been bred and genetically modified by humans to have specific traits that make them able to survive and grow larger in cramped fish farm conditions; these animals are not as robust as wild fish. Some of these farmed fish escape into lakes or oceans and breed with wild fish, weakening the wild fish species' gene pool and thus threatening the ecosystems' species diversity as well. Fish farm pollution (from fish excrement, uneaten feed, and toxic chemicals such as antibiotics, disinfectants, and pesticides like those used to treat sea lice) are also harmful to the marine environment.

Why Raw?

By Natasha Kyssa

The raw food craze has taken off and many celebrities such as Woody Harrelson, Demi Moore, Alicia Silverstone and model Carol Alt are no longer cooking their food, but eating it raw.

The raw diet is different from the typical vegetarian and vegan diets, which include cooked, processed or otherwise refined foods. Eating raw (vegan) means consuming uncooked fruits, vegetables, sea vegetables, soaked and sprouted nuts, seeds, grains and legumes. These foods contain the

most nutrition as they are rich in vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, antioxidants, chlorophyll and oxygen. They also are high in enzymes which assist your body to digest food and absorb nutrients. Enzymes are needed for every chemical reaction that takes place in the human body. They play an important role in energy production and the repair of tissues, cells and organs

Studies show that when cooking above 115 degrees F valuable nutritional substances are altered: vitamins and minerals diminish, proteins undergo detrimental molecular changes, oxygen is lost, free radicals are produced, and vital enzymes are destroyed thereby forcing the body to use its own limited enzyme reserve. Low enzyme activity has been found to contribute to chronic conditions such as allergies, skin disorders, diabetes and cancer. It also results in weight gain, digestive disorders, lethargy, inflammation, loss of skin elasticity and premature aging.

When eating a diet high in raw fruits and vegetables, your body is able to focus its resources on cleansing and strengthening the immune system. These nutrient-rich foods increase energy, assist healing, rebuild healthy tissue and invigorate the entire body.

Health benefits of eating a raw diet include increased energy levels, improved digestion, weight loss, youthful skin, increased vitality, and reduction in inflammation.

The Canadian Cancer Society is encouraging the public to eat more fruits and vegetables to help reduce the risk of cancer. A predominantly raw food lifestyle can make positive changes in your life and is an excellent approach to preventative health care. It is a



wise investment in one's health and future. It also reduces our carbon footprint on the environment and can have a greater effect on reducing emissions than any other global warming campaigns such as public transport or low-energy light bulbs. "The answer is for people to move toward a plant-based diet if they're serious about global warming," says Justin Kerswell, spokesman for British animal rights group, Viva!

While most of us may find it too difficult to go completely raw, we can all benefit by introducing more raw foods where possible. By simply cutting back on some unhealthy habits and adding fresh produce into your diet, you will notice a difference in the way that you feel. The more raw, unprocessed and organically grown foods you eat, the better you will feel.

Although shifting from a conventional diet to an uncooked vegan diet can be challenging socially, it can also be fun. Raw restaurants are popping up across the globe (including Viva in Montreal, Live Health Café in Toronto, and WOW in Guelph) and carnivores and vegetarians alike pursue this cuisine for the taste experience. Creative dishes such as "Live it Up" Lasagne, Dehydrated Pizza, Pad Thai, Chocolate Cheesecake and Key Lime Pie are but a few items featured on the menus.

There is a growing community in Ottawa that meet on the last Friday of every month for a potluck dinner organized by SimplyRaw - a great opportunity to socialize, share ideas and recipes, and experience some truly delicious food. Food that's healthy for you and the environment. For more information see www.simplyraw.ca.

Going green? Look at your plate

What often goes unmentioned in discussions about climate change is the environmental impact of the food we put on our plates.

A report published by the United Nations FAO reveals the livestock sector generates more greenhouse gas emissions as measured in CO₂ equivalent- 18 per cent - than transport.

Emissions from land use and land use change generate 65 per cent of human-related nitrous oxide, mostly from manure, which has 296 times the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of CO₂.

It accounts for 37 per cent of all human-induced methane (23 times as warming as CO₂), which is largely produced by the digestive system of ruminants, and 64 per cent of ammonia, which contributes significantly to acid rain.

The report also notes that livestock use 30 per cent of the earth's entire land surface, mostly permanent pasture, and 33 per cent of the global arable land is used to produce feed for livestock. In Latin America 70 per cent of former forests in the Amazon have been turned over to grazing.

In other words, the standard North American animal product oriented diet is an enormous contributor to greenhouse gas emissions; according to the report, bigger than any other individual factor. Going green starts with what you eat.

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The official newsletter of the NCVA

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Meet an NCVA board member: Kevin Matthews



By Pamela Eadie

NCVA board member Kevin Matthews is a man of many talents.

Not only is he a poet, he writes, designs, performs, and is a dedicated distance runner. Kevin is also a vegetarian of more than four years.

"I don't want to support the industrial livestock industry. I'm trying to use my food budget to encourage local producers and small-scale agriculture as much as I can, and I refuse to contribute to the pollution, bad labour conditions, and over-consumption that are part of industrial livestock operations," Kevin says.

Kevin says his vegetarian diet is part of his whole body approach to health and well being. "I can hardly imagine being vegetarian and not being active, or conversely being active and not vegetarian. For me the two are intrinsic to each other; I'm doing both ultimately because I think they're parts of a natural way to remain fit and healthy," he explains.

Fit and healthy are good words to describe Kevin; in May he ran his fifth marathon, his fourth as a vegetarian. His friends and family have been supportive of him being a vegetarian athlete, and that he's probably learned more about sport nutrition because of his vegetarianism than he would have ever learned if he was a meat eater.

"You should learn about what your body does during a workout, and what it needs to recover, biochemically," he advises.

During the 18 weeks leading up to a marathon, Kevin runs three to six days a week with long runs on Sunday, and shorter speed runs are in the morning before work. During the 18-week training program, he runs nearly 1,000 km.

"I'm not competitive about performance. I do it because of the role it has in the balancing of my lifestyle, and because of the beauty of running itself. It's almost like a spiritual discipline for me," he says.

Ottawa's Only Raw Food Festival is Simply Wonderful!

2nd Annual SimplyRaw Food Festival takes place on September 15, 2007



Following the success of Ottawa's first raw food festival last year, the 2nd annual SimplyRaw Festival will take place on Saturday Sept 15, 2007 from 10 am-5p m in the Glebe's Central Park located at Bank & Clemow.

Sponsored by The Table Vegetarian Restaurant, this year's full day event is hosted by Adrian Harewood host of CBC Radio's "All in a Day", and will feature a series of seminars, food demos and talks throughout the day; a pie contest dedicated to uncooked vegan fare; a host of exhibitors, live music, games and activities for kids, and plenty of excellent food.

Come out under the big tent, rain or shine, for this free community event. The full schedule for the day is:

10 am - 5 pm	Exhibitor Booths Open
10 am - 11 am	Patricia McAllister Smith, food-prep demo
11 am - 12 pm	Brendan Brazier, sport performance
12 pm - 2pm	Pie Contest Judging with Adrian Harewood
1 pm - 2 pm	Yoga with Core-Elation
2 pm - 3 pm	Angela Stokes, raw weight loss & health
3 pm - 4 pm	Matt Monarch, raw basics
4 pm - 5 pm	Dorit, food-prep demo
5 pm	Pie Contest Awards with Adrian Harewood

For more details about the 2007 SimplyRaw Festival, or to enter the pie contest please see www.simplyraw.ca/festival07

Visit us online at www.ncva.ca

Cool summer treats

By Vanessa Holm

It seems as if so many summer celebrations revolve around food. While this is the perfect opportunity to try out new salad and barbecue recipes, the hot weather makes me less inclined to bake decadent sweet treats. However, dairy-free sorbets, ice creams, and shakes are quick, delicious and easily customizable. Try making the recipes below, or adapt them to your own tastes by substituting different fruit.

Vanilla Soy Shake

Makes one large or two small servings

I love making these because they're healthy and sweet. In fact, I often buy a bunch of bananas, let them get really ripe, and pop them in the freezer so I have frozen bananas on hand to make this recipe. For a more ice-creamy flavour, try increasing the sweetener and vanilla flavouring.

*1 large, ripe, frozen banana
about 1/4 cup soy milk
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp sweetener
2-3 ice cubes*

Blend the above in a blender or food processor and serve.

Peach Sorbet

Makes about six cups

I really enjoy making sorbet because it's always different depending on the fruit I have on hand. While this recipe calls for peaches, try using any fruit combinations.

*1 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp cornstarch
2 cups water
2 cups pureed peaches*

Mix the sugar, cornstarch and water in a large saucepan over low heat, then boil until thick (about 10 minutes). Let this mixture cool completely. Combine this syrup mixture with the pureed peaches, mix, and place in a plastic container. Freeze until solid (about eight hours). Once the mixture is frozen, remove it from the freezer, cut it into small pieces, and blend it in a food processor for about two minutes. Return the mixture to the freezer and refreeze for about six hours.

Raspberry Ice Cream

Makes about four cups

This recipe is great because it uses cashews to create a rich and creamy texture. As long as the proportions of liquid and sweetener are kept relatively the same, an endless number of other flavours are easy to make.

*1 1/2 cups cashew pieces
1 1/2 cups water
1 cup maple syrup
2 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp almond extract
1 cup raspberries*

In a blender, combine the cashews, water, maple syrup and extracts until very smooth. Add the raspberries and blend once more. Place in a container and freeze. Once the mixture is frozen, remove it from the

freezer, and defrost for about 20-40 minutes. Cut it into small pieces, and blend it in a food processor for about two minutes. Return the mixture to the freezer (if you want, you can add some whole raspberries here) and refreeze. Let sit five minutes outside the freezer before serving.

I'm always looking for new recipe suggestions, and would love to print one of your favourites in an upcoming issue of Capital Veg News. I would also be happy to hear your questions and comments about vegetarian cooking and baking, as well as what you thought about the recipes I've shared. Please feel free to contact me at ncvarecipecorner@hotmail.com.



Supplements continued from page 1

mineral improves performance by such and such a percentage as demonstrated in a clinical trial? Not in a "real world setting." Most often funded by manufacturers, these tests produce results that are misleading. Mind you, they are not bending the truth by reporting such gains when their product is taken, but are reporting results not typical for a healthy person who eats a sensible diet.

Have you heard this one before? "I just want to make completely sure that I'm getting all the vitamins I need, so I take large doses. My body will just excrete what it doesn't use." While this is true of water-soluble vitamins, it is not a logical approach. However, it is a common attitude, especially for athletes. Take as many supplements as you can afford "just to be safe."

As mentioned, the body does excrete the water-soluble vitamins and minerals that it doesn't need, but at what cost? It's not a high-energy cost for a healthy body to flush out unneeded vitamins, but it is still a cost. While the body is under great stress to recover from workouts, the last thing you want to do is give it another stress. Of course, the principal reason most people take an excess amount of supplements is to speed regeneration. Quite often the supplements interfere, prolonging the time to complete recovery.

Juicing, for example, is another way to pack an inordinate amount of nutrients into the body, but is that really desirable? I personally am an advocate of whole foods with nothing taken away, including the fiber, which is not the case with juicing.

I know an athlete who would drink copious amounts of carrot juice each day. Ironically, he would be the one to get sick more often than most other athletes who trained a comparable amount under similar conditions. When he routinely picked up a viral infection, it would often linger for an extended period. Believing that he was addressing the cause of illness while sick, he would make even more vegetable juice by extracting the fiber. After learning this for myself and explaining that it is actually possible to place more stress on the body by "giving it an extra job" of removing what it doesn't need, I convinced him to stop juicing. This was about a year ago; he hasn't had a viral infection since.

Of course there are always exceptions. For example, a person who eats a standard American diet, rarely seeing fresh fruit or vegetables, will benefit from supplemental vitamins and minerals and certainly will improve health by juicing. Ideally, of course, the diet should not lack nutrient rich food in the first place.

Nutrient rich foods such as nuts, seeds, legumes, fruit and vegetables are fiber rich for a reason. Once you're full, you have consumed enough vitamins and minerals. Again, an exception to the rule is if you consume primarily food grown with herbicides and pesticides. As with an excess of vitamins and minerals, the body must excrete the toxins of conventionally grown produce. Choose organic.



Brendan Brazier is a professional vegan Ironman, creator of VEGA products, author, and NCVA board member.

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

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