



The Veggie Choice

A GUIDE TO BECOMING A VEGETARIAN



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Introduction

If you've eaten meat your whole life, switching to a vegetarian diet might be something that could be difficult to switch to. You might also wonder why you should even consider switching. Many people figure that they have been eating this way their whole life so why switch now?

There are many reasons that you might decide to switch to a vegetarian diet. First of all, check yourself out in the mirror. The majority of Americans are not a healthy weight and this can be the number one reason for them to switch. Also, ask yourself a few questions:

- Are you a healthy weight?
- Do you feel good most of the time?
- Do you wake up energized? Or tired and sluggish?
- How is your overall health?
- Is your blood pressure in a healthy range?
- Are your cholesterol and blood sugar levels normal?

If you find that "no" is the answer to most of these questions then you should consider what you are eating on a daily basis. If you find that you feel worse after eating, you may be wondering if food is supposed to make you feel this way.

The answer is no. Your food should nourish and feed your body. It should leave you feeling refreshed and energized. The body is a machine and it needs good fuel. The fact of the matter is that most people are overweight and obese. This is because we eat too much meat and too much fat. Problems such as high blood sugar, Type II diabetes, high cholesterol and other health related problems are caused by our diet. All of these problems can be prevented by changing your diet. This eBook will show you how to do that and the difference that eating vegetarian can do for you in a short period of time.

Chapter 1

You are What You Eat

Whatever your reasons are for becoming a vegetarian, there are four different types of vegetarians and you can choose the type that you want to be. There are many different types of vegetarians, as some people are not able to give up all animal products completely. The four types are:

Lacto Vegetarians: This diet consists of no animal products or eggs. They do eat dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt.

Ovo-Vegetarians: This diet consists of no animal or dairy, but they do eat eggs.

Lacto-Ovo Vegetarians: This diet consists of no animal products, but they do eat dairy and eggs.

Vegan: This diet consists of plant-based foods, which means that it excludes all animal products including dairy, eggs, meat and even honey.

If you haven't figured out what type of vegetarian you are going to be, it's okay. It takes time and experimentation with different recipes to figure out what you can't live without in your diet. For example, some people can't live without milk and eggs.

You Really are What You Eat

The expression "you are what you eat" has been heard numerous times and it is often used in advertisements. But, if you really think about what this means, you really start to think twice about your diet.

A good example of a person being what they eat can be seen in your blood plasma. Your blood plasma is clear liquid, but after eating a fast food hamburger your blood plasma becomes cloudy with fat and cholesterol. This is what your body absorbs after eating a high-fat hamburger.

Inversely, you also become what you don't eat. When you switch from eating a lot of meat to eating a vegetarian based diet, you lose fat. You are also less prone to various cancers and diseases. Your cholesterol can also improve. When you are lean and eating less meat products, you find that many of your health and fitness problems go away. The risk of Type II diabetes is also reduced. Blood pressure falls into normal ranges as well. When you're healthier, you also do not have to take fewer medications.

If you have a family history of high cholesterol or blood pressure, then you are particularly dependent on what you eat and it is easier for you to become what you eat.

Moving towards a vegetarian diet can reduce the incidence of numerous diseases. Vegetarians are also statistically healthier.

What Did Our Ancestors Eat?

Do you ever wonder what our ancestors ate and how far we have diverted in our eating habits? Originally, our ancestors were hunter-gatherers and were not omnivores. They did not eat animals. When you look at predators and carnivorous animals you can see that they have teeth designed to rip and tear. Their teeth are not designed for chewing. Animals that are designed for chewing like herbivores have flat teeth that are designed to breakdown food.

Humans evolved from creatures that were vegetarian. The digestive systems were not designed for eating and digesting meat. Eating meat is a fairly recent development in human history. It is believed that humans began to eat meat because they couldn't find the natural foods they were used to eating. They might have assumed that eating meat would help to sustain their meat.

Initially, we were similar to creatures that evolved from animals like herbivore apes. These apes looked similar to man and walked upright with their arms and hands. They naturally foraged for food and ate roots, berries, fruits and nuts. They also lived moment to moment constantly foraging for food. Hunting requires thought and eating meat required fire. Until fire was discovered, man primarily ate vegetables and fruits. Vegetarian eating is a natural form of eating and much healthier.

Why Did Humans Start Eating Meat?

Necessity is the mother of invention and prehistoric men who lived in frozen areas ate anything that they could to survive. The prehistoric man had to eat meat in order to survive. This would be the first time that they had ever eaten meat. This changed the way people would eat and health forever.

The first meat that was eaten would have been cooked by fire that was natural started by natural forest fires. Without fire, they could have possibly eaten raw meat as well. The digestive system most likely rebelled to eating the raw meat, but as they became adjusted meat became a part of their regular diets.

You may have heard of people who have lived vegetarian lives for a long period of time and then became violently ill afterwards. This is similar to what prehistoric men would have gone through. Biologists will tell you that we are not really designed to digest meat, but that we have adapted to it over time.

The Tradition of Eating Meat

As man developed, they began eating more and more meat. This led to whole families eating meat as a main part of their meal and thus the tradition of eating meat began. The turkey became the staple of Thanksgiving dinner. New Year's has always been

associated with pork and sauerkraut. Ham is the traditional meal of Easter. In the summer, you can't wait to smell the barbeque in the air. As you think about all of the meat that we consume, it's hard to believe that we were designed to live off of vegetables, fruits, nuts and berries.

When humans had to begin eating meat to survive, it became a group event. One Indian was not able to go out and hunt a buffalo alone. It took at least four people to hunt a buffalo. The same is true for a variety of other animals that we hunted and ate. The meat became the center of attention and it took several family or tribe members to clean, cook and even dry the meat. After the work was done, the meat was shared as a reward for hard work.

Now, we don't have to hunt our meat, but we do buy it. We still enjoy getting together and celebrating over a ham, because this is ingrained in our nature from thousands of years of traditions. All celebrations tend to hover around some sort of food item, but imagine what your options would be if we gave up meat and imagine how much healthier our meals could be.

If you recognize that you could feel much better about yourself if you were able to eat healthier then that should be a good enough reason to switch or at least decrease the amount of meat that you eat. You don't have to make a complete switch. Sure, some people enjoy a nice cold glass of milk and may need it to ensure they are receiving adequate calcium and vitamin D. If you don't think you can give meat up completely, you can simply make your meat more of a side dish and eat more healthy veggies. You will be amazed at the difference it will make.

Chapter 2

Vegetarianism & Animal Welfare

Many vegetarians are such not just because they realize it is healthy, but for the case of animal welfare as well. For many people, being a vegetarian is a part of a moral and ethical decision to not eat animal products. Throughout the many centuries we have domesticated animals, we have come to believe that we are superior to them. We use animals for a wide variety of uses other than food including clothing, shoes, belts and coats. They have also been used for scientific experiments, although many companies are trying to move away from this type of testing.

PETA

PETA stands for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. This is an organization that is devoted to changing the mindset of people when it comes to animals. They are against using animals for anything from food to clothing and they are particularly against trapping for fur.

PETA is extremely passionate for their cause, almost to an extent of being outrageous. However, their cause is noble in that they believe animals have rights and deserve that their best interests be taken into consideration. They seek to have people realize that animals can suffer and that they have an interest in leading their own lives as animals. They believe that as a society we need to re-evaluate our place on earth and where we fit in with the other animal inhabitants of the world.

Animals & Growth Hormones

In an effort to produce more animals at an increased rate for human consumption, many animals have been treated with growth hormones so that they can be raised and slaughtered at an expedited rate. At the same time this leads us to consider how these animals are raised and treated for this purpose.

The fact of the matter is that if many people saw how many of these animals were raised, they would become vegetarians on the spot. For example, egg-laying chickens are often raised with six to a cage. Each chicken only receives about 67 square inches of space. These chickens are also generally treated with growth hormones as well as antibiotics to increase growth rate and decrease disease. Free-range and certified organic chickens may receive more spacious conditions and are not fed hormones or antibiotics.

This brings us to another point. After you handle chickens it is suggested that you use bleach to clean the surfaces so that you remove bacteria. Also, chicken must be cooked at certain temperatures and for a certain period of time to ensure that you will not catch any food-borne illnesses. It does not seem wise to eat anything that has to be handled with such care.

From chickens, you can easily move into how cattle are treated. First you must consider dairy cattle. Dairy cattle are often given hormones that stimulate their reproductive processes so that it continues to produce milk. A cow will only produce milk after she has given birth. They often live in cramped conditions and as soon as they calve, male calves are sent to become veal while females are raised to produce milk. The hormones that the cows receive cause the cow to produce ten times more milk than they would ordinarily. At the same time, they are hooked up to electric pumps, which cause irritation to the cow's udders.

After a certain age, we really don't need to consume milk. At the same time, we are not designed to drink cow milk, but human milk. We don't milk pregnant women do we? Just like our bodies were not designed to eat milk, we were not designed to drink cow milk and digest those proteins either. You can receive just as much and more calcium from green, leafy vegetables.

Many people, even by those people who eat meat regularly, have viewed the veal industry negatively. The veal industry is cruel no matter who you are and how you look at it. The calves are taken from their mothers after they are about one day old. They are then kept in pens that prevent them from moving so that their muscle tissue stays soft and tender. The calves are then fed a liquid, often containing beer, that is deficient in iron and fiber. This causes anemia in the animal and produces the pale meat. At about 20 weeks, the calf is then slaughtered.

Turkeys are also produced in an inhumane manner. The consumption of turkey has become very popular over the past few decades and it is eaten for more than just holidays. Turkeys are more aggressive birds so they are kept in a confined and dark area to discourage their aggressive behavior. They are then overfed until their legs cannot support the weight of their body. This is because Americans want the largest turkey breast they can get for their holiday celebrations. Naturally and wildy, a turkey may live up to 10 years. These turkeys are slaughtered at 2 years of age. They also suffer from foot and leg deformities, heat stress and starvation. Approximately 2.7 million turkeys die each year due to the abnormal stress and disease of this process.

Many religions do not eat pork for their various reasons and some meat-consuming people don't care for it either. Pigs are raised in similar unsanitary conditions. In fact, many farmers and workers on pig farms have died from breathing in the methane gas that is produced from the immense amount of waste that pigs produce at pig farms. Pigs are also overfed and kept in crates. They have a limited range of movement that does not suit their natural behaviors. They may also be fed growth hormones and antibiotics. Pigs have natural rooting behaviors and the captivity they live in does not

allow them to live naturally.

Seafood and shellfish can be a part of a healthy diet. Fish contain a lot of nutrients that we don't get from other meats. It contains a high-quality protein, essential nutrients, omega-3 fatty acids and it is low in saturated fat. However, eating fish has its harms as well. Fish often contain mercury. These levels are not usually bad enough to hurt us, but the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are advising women, especially pregnant women, and young children to avoid certain types of fish and shellfish. This is because some fish have high levels of mercury that are not safe for these people to eat. Eliminating fish from your diet is usually the last step in going towards a complete vegetarian diet.

Chapter 3

Vegetarianism & The Health Effects

You will be absolutely amazed at the difference you feel when you have eaten meat for a short period of time. It's as if your body instantly begins to relieve itself of all of the toxins that you have been consuming and you immediately begin to feel more energetic and have an overall better feeling of health.

No matter what your reasons are for eating a more vegetarian diet, the health benefits that are derived will become obvious in a very short amount of time. Vegetarians tend to have lower blood fats, cholesterol, and triglycerides than meat eaters of a similar age and status. Even those vegetarians who consume eggs and milk quickly see that their cholesterol is lower than those people who eat meat.

Heart Disease

High levels of blood fats are associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Researchers have found that men who eat meat six or more times per week double their chances of developing heart disease. Middle-aged men are more likely to suffer from

fatal heart attacks. Women are protected by their hormones for the majority of their life, but older women are prone to develop heart disease later in life. Older women who are vegetarian have been shown to have a lower risk of heart disease.

In 1982, British researchers did a study on more than 10,000 vegetarians and meat eaters. They found that the more meat that was consumed, the greater the risk of heart attack. They also found that by eliminating meat from your diet, you are reducing your consumption of fats and cholesterol that are damaging to the heart. At the same time, however you must be careful not to compensate for not eating meat by consuming too much milk and eggs, as this can negate the benefits. To gain all of the benefits of vegetarianism, your intake of cream cheese, ice cream, hard cheese and eggs should be moderate. The introduction of more veggies, fruits and raw foods will enhance your benefits.

Cancer

Vegetarianism has also been shown to reduce the incidence of certain types of cancer as well. These diets are low in saturated fat, high in fiber and contain phytochemicals, which protect from cancer. Several large studies in both England and Germany have shown that vegetarians, when compared to meat eaters, have about a 40% less chance of developing cancer as compared to meat-eaters. Seventh-Day Adventists are largely lacto-ovo vegetarians, have been known to have a reduced cancer risk because they tend to avoid meat. In China, it has been found that they have similar reduced breast cancer rates due to the amount of vegetables that they eat. In contrast, Japanese women tend to eat more meat and are eight times more likely to develop breast cancer.

Meat and dairy consumption has been linked to various other cancer including:

Colon cancer

Prostate cancer

Ovarian cancer

In studies done by Harvard on several thousand women, it has been found that those who regularly consume meat increase their chances of colon cancer by 300%. These high fat diets that many people consume also cause the body to produce excess estrogen. This increase has been linked to an increase chance for breast cancer. They have also found that breast cancer rates are one third higher in premenopausal women who eat mostly meat diets.

Cambridge University has also linked meat diets with high levels of saturated fat to breast cancer. They have linked dairy products to an increased risk of ovarian cancers as the process of breaking down lactose may damage the ovaries. In men, prostate enlargement has been linked to meat consumption and the risk triples.

Other studies have linked an increase in white blood cell production to vegetarianism as well. These cells are required in fending off bacteria, infection and disease. Thus, the immune system is stronger when a vegetarian diet is consumed.

Improved Digestion

Vegetarians see a lot of improvement in their digestive systems because they are able to create a healthy and natural environment for these organs. Our digestive system was originally designed to consume more vegetable matter rather than meat. Fruits, vegetables, legumes, and nuts were the staple of the prehistoric diet and your digestive system greatly benefits when you go back to this natural type of diet. The Western diet has been drastically changed to include highly processed food and refined flour and sugar products. This has led to a variety of health problems from heart disease to obesity.

When the body isn't being fed properly and the digestive system isn't functioning properly, the body begins to adapt. It begins to make changes in the cells of the stomach and colon. When we don't consume enough fiber, we incur a variety of problems including constipation and hemorrhoids. These problems are not normally seen in a vegetarian diet.

Weight

Weight is a huge problem in this country and if you think about it, have you ever really seen a fat vegetarian? Most likely you have not. In fact, most vegetarians are lean and healthy. Whenever you see a dietician or nutritionist, they most likely tell you to increase your vegetable intake and decrease the amount of meat you consume, especially red meats and pork. Many vegetarians who resume their old diets have found that the weight they lost tends to come back. Your will power is not enough to prevent the onset of weight from eating a high-fat meat based diet.

You are naturally healthier and feel better when you eat a diet that is high in dietary fiber, which is consumed from vegetables and fruits. As a vegetarian you are essentially feeding your body the nutrition that it needs to provide your body with useful energy, not energy that has to be stored. You just feel better because of this.

Many diets fail because we are forcing ourselves to avoid food that we like. This only leads to temptation to eat those foods. The trick to being a successful vegetarian is to realize that you don't need to eat meat and that you can go without it. You are focused on eating healthier and you forget that you are trying to lose weight. You actually begin to lose weight without realizing it, simply because you have eliminated your main source of fat and overall unhealthiness. At the same time, all of the bad health effects disappear because of your healthy and natural diet.

Kidneys

Diets that are high in animal proteins tend to cause the body to excrete more calcium, uric acid and oxalates. These are three substances that are the main components of kidney stones. For those people who have a tendency for kidney stones, British

researchers have advised that these people follow a vegetarian diet. The American Academy of Family Physicians has also confirmed that high animal protein consumption is the cause of kidney stones in the US as well. By eating a vegetarian diet your body does not secrete as much of these substances, therefore it does not form kidney stones.

Osteoporosis

For many of the same reasons we are able to reduce the risk of kidney stones by following a vegetarian diet, we are also able to reduce our chances for osteoporosis. Eating meat may actually promote bone loss because it forces calcium out of the body. In many nations where veggies are the basis of their diet, osteoporosis is less common than in developed countries such as the US. And, calcium is consumed less in the US.

So, with our meat-eating diets we are forced to also consume calcium supplements and prescription drugs to prevent the onset of osteoporosis. These supplements can also have drastic side effects. Many nutrition experts agree that the calcium supplements purchased at drug stores are inferior to the calcium that you receive from natural food sources. This is typically because they are not absorbed well by the body.

There are several good sources of calcium including:

Orange juice

Dry beans

Dark leafy vegetables

Tofu

Detoxification

Many people have gotten on a kick of doing weekend Detox diets and similar programs. Did you know that you don't have to do this if you are a vegetarian? Cleansing the body of harmful toxins is easy if you eat a vegetarian diet. You are not consuming all of the growth hormones and antibiotics that you get from the meat that you purchase at the grocery store. People really don't realize that they get these toxins from their carnivorous diet. A diet that is high in fat and processed tends to slow down the digestion of your food and this allows your body to soak up and accumulate the toxins from this type of diet.

Bacteria and toxins that accumulate in your system can also create a feeling of sluggishness. There are also a variety of digestive disorders, such as colitis and irritable bowel disorders that may develop as well. When you eat a healthy vegetarian diet, you introduce dietary fiber to your diet and your digestive system begins to suddenly work better.

When you eliminate meat from your diet, your body is freed from the intense work it takes to digest those types of food. Everything seems to become clearer and work better. You also become more aware of the toxicity of the food you had been eating before.

Chemicals and toxins in our food have become a large concern in the US. There are more and more chemicals and preservatives being added to our food. We are ingesting these products every time we eat processed foods, refined foods, and various other hormones and antibiotics that we receive through our meat. Because of this, a variety of other issues are developed in its wake including:

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Skin problems
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Pains
- Coughs
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Weak immune systems

Chapter 4

Making the Switch

If you are considering making the switch to a vegetarian diet, you probably will want to pass your newfound nutritional knowledge onto your family. In fact, as a parent you probably want to ensure that your family is receiving the best nutrition possible. It also helps them to learn about why it is important to eat healthy.

Making the switch with a family can be difficult because children are even more tempted from the various fast food restaurants and commercials for snacks on television. It's very hard to make veggies look good over chicken nuggets and a free toy!

You have to slowly change you and your family's diet. Everything starts at the grocery store. Instead of cookies, buy apples, bananas, carrots and other tasty snacks. Exchange white rice for healthy, brown rice. You also want to avoid processed side dishes. Slowly make your meat portions smaller and increase more veggies and grains. If you have small children, it is much easier to make this switch. You can teach them from an early age that olives are good snacks and that peaches are good desserts. They

will learn to love these foods and they won't even know about all the other junk food out there. The real challenge will come when your children are in school and they have to learn to make healthy choices.

The idea is to gradually change so that it is easier on you and your family. Many children will change simply because you tell them that they are saving the lives of animals. Children are very sympathetic and it's not unusual for children to become vegetarians on their own accord simply because they don't want to eat animals.

Your children may not realize it now, but you are doing them a huge favor that will last them their entire lives. Childhood obesity is at epidemic levels in the US and you will be setting your children up for a healthy lifestyle by teaching them how to eat healthy now.

Stuff You Need to Start Cooking Vegetarian Style

You will use the same type of cooking supplies that you already use. However, you may need to breakout the blender and food processor if you aren't using it on a regular basis.

There are also several new ingredients and foods that you will be incorporating into your diet including:

Fruits & Vegetables

Grapes

Melon

Apple

Mushrooms

Avocado

Tomatoes

Oranges

Broccoli

Kiwi

Potato

Sweet Potato

Peppers

Cucumber

Onion

Celery

Cherry

Plum

Carrot

Cabbage

Banana

Egg Whites, Soy Milk & Dairy (Unless You Are Giving These Up)

Egg whites

Milk

Dairy Milk

Soy Milk

Dairy Cheese

Soy Cheese

Yogurt

Sauces & Oils

Olive oil

Rice vinegar

Toasted Sesame Oil

Groundnut oil

Tamari (Japanese Soy Sauce)

Hot Chili Oil

Seasonings

Black Pepper

Curry Powder

Dijon Mustard

Fresh Garlic

Fresh Ginger

Sea Salt

Herbs & Spices

Anise

Basil

Cayenne pepper

Chili powder

Cinnamon

Coriander

Cumin

Dill

Garlic powder

Nutmeg

Oregano

Paprika

Red chili flakes

Rosemary

Sage

Thyme

Noodles & Rice

Rice noodles
Soba noodles
Brown basmati rice

Nuts & Seeds

Almonds
Cashews
Peanuts
Sesame Seeds
Sunflower seeds
Legumes
Black beans
Chickpeas
Lentils (Red, green and brown)
Split Peas (Yellow and green)
Kidney beans

Other

Coconut milk
Nutritional yeast
Pure Maple Syrup
Raw, unrefined sugar

Breakfast & Brunch

Breakfast is an important meal that many people skip. The fact of the matter is that if you eat at least your three basic meals per day you will actually lose weight, if that is your goal. Also it does not have to be boring and dull and the vegetarian has a few tasty options.

Apple Cinnamon Granola

Ingredients

4 cups oatmeal
1 cup wheat germ
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
dash of nutmeg
½ cup finely chopped walnuts
½ cup honey
2 tbsp. Sunflower oil
1 cup dried apples, finely chopped
½ cup raisins

Preheat oven to 275 degrees Fahrenheit. In a large mixing bowl, mix oatmeal, wheat germ, cinnamon, nutmeg and walnuts. In a separate bowl, mix honey and sunflower oil and drizzle over the top of the mixture. Mix together, stirring constantly, until the oat mixture is evenly coated with honey and oil. Lightly oil a large baking sheet and spread the mixture over the pan. Bake for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Once the granola turns golden, remove from the oven and set aside to cool. Prepare jars to place the ready granola in. Once cool, add dried apples and raisins and transfer the mixture into jars. Store in a dry place.

Makes 6 cups.

Simple Crepes

Ingredients

3 eggs

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup + 2 tbsp. All purpose flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups milk

1 tbsp. Granulated sugar

1 tbsp. Vegetable oil

Pinch salt

1 tsp. butter

Whip cream, for the filling

A few handfuls of strawberries, rinsed with stems removed and cut in half

A few handfuls of raspberries, rinsed and drained

A few handfuls of blueberries, rinsed and drained

Combine eggs, flour, milk, sugar, oil and salt in a blender or food processor. Blend until smooth. Transfer batter into a mixing bowl, cover and set aside in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Add the butter into a non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Once the butter has melted, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the batter into the pan and swirl around to coat the whole bottom of the pan. Cook until the crepe lightly browns, about 1 or 2 minutes. Flip over and cook the second side until lightly browned. Transfer to plates and spray a line of whip cream down the middle. Sprinkle in your fruit. Fold the sides gently to make a cylinder.

Makes 8 to 12 crepes

Vegetable Omelet

Ingredients

2 eggs
3 tbsp. Milk
Big pinch of salt
Big pinch of black pepper
1 tbsp. Butter
¼ c. green bell pepper
¼ c. red bell pepper
¼ c. onion
Grated cheese to taste (optional)

In a medium size mixing bowl beat eggs, salt, pepper, green and red pepper and onion with a fork. Do not over mix. Melt the butter in a 7 to 8 inch pan over medium-high heat. Make sure the butter covers the base of the pan. When the foam is gone, pour in the egg mixture. Tilt the pan to make sure the egg covers the entire base of the pan. Let the eggs set for 45 seconds before flipping. Do the same on the other side. Once done, transfer to a plate and sprinkle with cheese.

Smoothies

Smoothies are great and very healthy. You can have them as snacks or drink them with your brunch.

Breakfast Smoothies

Ingredients

1 ½ cups plain fat-free yogurt
3 to 4 bananas
3 cups of strawberries, stems removed and roughly chopped
¼ cup soy milk
2 tbsp. Honey
1 cup of ice

Mix ingredients into blender one at a time and serve.

Banana and Yogurt Smoothie

Ingredients

1 ripe banana, thinly sliced
1 cup low-fat plain or vanilla yogurt
¾ cup skim milk

Set aside two or three slices of banana and place the rest of the banana in the blender. Add yogurt and milk. Blend until smooth and garnish with extra pieces of banana and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

Mango Smoothie

Ingredients

1 mango, peeled and chopped
1 banana, peeled
3 tbsp. Yogurt
1 tsp. honey
½ tsp. cinnamon
4 cubes of ice

Add ingredients to blender one at a time and puree until smooth.

Pear Smoothie

Ingredients

3 pears
½ inch fresh ginger
3 tbsp. Fresh yogurt
½ tsp. cinnamon
4 cubes of ice

Gradually juice the pear, ginger and cinnamon together. Transfer to blender and add yogurt and ice. Blend until smooth.

Appetizers & Side Dishes

These make great sides to a healthy meal or an appetizer. You might even want one for a snack!

Special Tomato Bruschetta

Ingredients

4 bread rolls
4 garlic cloves
2 tbsp. Butter
1 tbsp. Chopped basil
4 large tomatoes
1 tbsp. Tomato paste
8 black olives, pitted and halved
1 ¾ ounce mozzarella cheese, sliced
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tbsp. Olive oil
2 tsp. lemon juice or Balsamic Vinegar
1 tsp. clear honey
Basil leaves for garnish

Place rolls on cutting board and slice each in half. Transfer to a toaster oven or oven to brown and crisp. Preheat oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Place butter, garlic and chopped basil into a small mixing bowl and stir until combined. Once rolls are toasted, spoon garlic mixture onto each half.

Pour boiling water into a large bowl, slice a small cross shape at the base of each tomato and place in boiling water. After tomatoes soften, remove and peel the flesh away from the tomatoes. Once flesh is removed, chop into small squares. Pour diced tomatoes, tomato paste, and olives in mixing bowl and blend together. Spoon onto rolls.

In a separate bowl, mix olive oil, lemon juice and honey together. Drizzle mixture over tomato covered rolls and lightly place mozzarella slices on top. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place rolls on baking sheet and place in oven. Melt cheese for about 2 minutes.

Transfer rolls to a platter or tray and garnish with basil leaves.

Spring Rolls

Ingredients for Spring Rolls

- ¾ cup broken rice vermicelli noodles
- 6 fresh shitake mushrooms
- ½ cup carrots, slivered
- 1 cup bok choy, thinly sliced
- 1 cup green onion, slivered
- 2 tbsp. Chopped coriander
- salt and ground pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp. Soy sauce
- ½ tsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. sesame oil
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh ginger
- Eight 8 inch square spring roll skins
- 3 tbsp. All-purpose flour
- ¼ cup water
- 4 cups vegetable oil

Ingredients for Salad

- 1 cup daikon radish, slivered
- 1 cup carrots, slivered
- 4 green onions, slivered
- ½ cup red onion, slivered
- 1 cup slivered cucumber, juice squeezed out

Ingredients for Dressing

- 2 tbsp. Seasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp. Soy sauce

½ tsp. sesame oil

Place noodles and mushrooms into individual bowls and cover with hot water. Cover bowls and set aside for 20 minutes. Once noodles and mushrooms have soaked transfer to colander and drain. Transfer into a large bowl. Drain mushrooms as well and transfer onto a cutting board. Remove and discard stems and slice mushroom heads thinly. Add into a large bowl with noodles.

Add carrots, bok choy, green onion and coriander onto the bowl of noodles and mushrooms and mix together. Sprinkle in salt, pepper, and toss mixture to combine. Cover and set aside.

Pour soy sauce, sugar, sesame oil and fresh ginger into a small bowl. Stir mixture to combine well. Cover and set aside.

Gently pull spring roll skins apart and place on a flat, clean surface. Using a small spoon place, ¼ cup of the noodle and vegetable mixture onto the upper third of each skin. Roll once and then take the two ends and fold them in and continue to roll the skins forward until it forms a cylinder. Whisk together flour and water in a bowl until well combined. Using a small pastry brush, coat spring roll with just enough flour and water mixture to seal the edges. Repeat with all rolls.

In a wok, heat some of the vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Once the wok and oil are hot add spring rolls in 3 at a time. Fry until golden brown. Transfer onto a rack with paper towel to drain.

To make the salad, place the radish, carrot, green and red onions and cucumber in bowl and toss together. In a separate bowl pour in vinegar, soy sauce, and sesame oil. Whisk together until mixed. Once spring rolls are drained, place onto a cutting board and slice each in half at an angle serve 3 halves onto the plates standing with cut ends up. Garnish with salad around rolls.

Main Courses

Pita Pizza

Ingredients

- ¼ tsp. olive oil
- ½ small onion, peeled and chopped and diced
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- ¼ tsp. dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. dried basil
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ cup canned whole peeled tomatoes, roughly chopped
- ½ cup tomato paste
- 2 whole wheat pita breads
- ½ yellow bell pepper, seeds and membranes removed, cut into thin strips
- 1/8 cup baby spinach leaves, chopped into fine pieces
- ½ cup mozzarella cheese, grated
- Fresh basil, thinly sliced for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Over medium heat, heat oil in skillet. Add onion and garlic, stirring occasionally so that they don't burn. Cook for about 4 minutes until both are brown in color. Sprinkle oregano, basil, red pepper flakes and bay leaf. Mix spices together. Stir in peeled tomatoes and tomato paste, increase to high heat. Once boiling, bring heat down to medium-low and allow mixture to simmer until sauce is thick. Arrange pizzas on baking sheets. Divide sauce between pitas, leaving a crust border. Sprinkle mozzarella cheese on top. Bake in oven for 20-25 minutes.

Chinese Noodles with Assorted Vegetables

Ingredients for Sauce

- 1 tsp. corn flour
- 1 cup vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp. Soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. Rice wine
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. sugar

Noodles

- 12 oz. egg noodles

Vegetable Stir-Fry

- 3 tbsp. Sunflower oil
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 inch piece fresh ginger root, grated
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- ¼ cup button mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 250 g package Pak Choi, sliced

½ cup bean sprouts
2 carrots, cut into match sticks

In a medium sized mixing bowl, dissolve corn flour with a small amount of vegetable stock in hot water. Once dissolved, pour in soy sauce, rice wine, salt and sugar. Whisk together until well combined or until sugar dissolves.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add noodles. Cook until tender. Transfer to colander, drain properly and place in pot. Set aside and keep warm until ready to serve.

Place a large wok or skillet over medium-high heat and add sunflower oil. Once oil is heated add in chopped garlic, ginger root and shallots. Allow to sauté for a few seconds. Add in mushrooms, pak choi, bean sprouts and carrots and stir-fry for 1 to 2 minutes. Drizzle in sauce and continue to stir-fry until sauce thickens. Divide noodles onto separate serving plates and top with vegetable mixture.s