



Ontario Home Economics Association

Ask a Professional Home Economist

For Immediate Release

The New Vegetarianism

by Erin MacGregor, P.H.Ec., RD

Canadians are embracing vegetarian restaurants, buying meat-free cookbooks and consuming an increasing number of vegetable-centric meals at home. It appears that *Meatless Mondays* are official.

Much of this recent popularity stems from a growing body of research which indicates that a vegetarian lifestyle can significantly reduce one's risk of developing chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes.

Nevertheless, improved health is not the only reason people enlist a more plant based diet. Some choose flora over fauna for ethical reasons. Others relish the opportunity to reduce their ecological footprint by adopting more environmentally sustainable eating habits.

Regardless of the motivation for the lifestyle choice, the term 'vegetarianism' no longer carries a concrete definition. People identifying themselves as vegetarian now lie within a larger spectrum where the degree to which they limit animal products in their diet may vary considerably.

The following are common new vegetarianism terms:

Vegan: Avoids all animal products and byproducts including meat, poultry, seafood, dairy products and eggs. An example of a lesser known byproduct includes gelatin, which is derived from animal collagen and can be found in some processed foods, including candy and marshmallows.

Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian: Avoids all animal products other than dairy products (lacto) and eggs (ovo). Dairy products containing gelatin or rennet, found in some yogurt and cheese products, may also be avoided.

Pescetarian: Avoids all animal products and by-products other than fish and shellfish. Pesce is the Italian word for fish.

Flexitarian (or Semi-vegetarian): As of 2012, this term is officially defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as 'one whose normally meatless diet occasionally includes meat or fish'.

Entertaining vegetarian guests can be a challenge. The following recipe is loaded with great flavour and wholesome ingredients to impress meat eaters and vegetarians alike. To make this recipe vegan friendly, simply omit the sour cream (or yogurt) and cheese.

Roasted Butternut Squash Enchiladas

1 small butternut squash
2 green onions, white and light green parts, finely sliced
1 canned Chipotle Pepper in Adobo Sauce along with 1 tsp (5 mL) of the Adobo Sauce
1/2 tsp (2 mL) cumin
3 Tbsp (45 mL) sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
3/4 cup (185 mL) refried beans (for a lower sodium option, the same amount of drained and rinsed canned black beans)
6 medium sized (approx. 8”) whole grain whole wheat tortillas or corn tortillas
1 cup (250 mL) salsa
1 cup (250 mL) shredded Monterey Jack cheese
Additional sour cream and chopped chives for garnish (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Cut squash in half lengthwise. Remove seeds and bake cut-side down on a lightly oiled baking sheet for 40 min. Remove from oven. Cool slightly. Reduce oven to 350° F.
2. Scoop cooked flesh from squash into a large bowl. Add green onions, chipotle pepper, adobo sauce, cumin and sour cream and stir with a fork while mashing the squash, until well combined.
3. Spread 2 Tbsp (30 mL) of refried beans and 1/2 cup (125 mL) of the squash mixture down the centre of each tortilla. Roll each tortilla. Place them side by side in an 8” X 11” (28 x 17 cm) baking dish.
4. Top with salsa and cheese. Bake for 15 - 20 minutes until cheese is bubbly.

Serves 3 – 4

-30-

Erin MacGregor, P.H.Ec., RD is a Professional Home Economist and Registered Dietitian working at Toronto’s Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and in her community. MacGregor co-authors *How to Eat* - a blog encouraging busy families to cook simple, wholesome food, www.howtoeat.ca. As a member of OHEA, Erin contributed to the national best seller: *The Vegetarian’s Complete Quinoa Cookbook*, a lacto-ovo vegetarian friendly collaboration from the Ontario Home Economics Association, a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists that promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families/individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.

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