

Meatless Mondays (or more!)

by Jenny Abel

In the last issue of the *Mount Vernon Sierran* we introduced the idea of cutting meat out of your diet one day a week to help the planet. We of course weren't the first ones to come up with this idea: people in developed countries around the world who enjoy meat are cutting back on occasion as one of many actions that we all can take to help address climate change.

In that issue we featured a meatless chili recipe. Has anyone made it? I'd love to hear your feedback! That was just the beginning of a series in which you'll find a tasty meat-free recipe in every issue.

Before we get to this issue's recipe, I'd like to share some information [from an article by Ben Adler](#) that I read recently in *Grist*, an online environmental magazine, about just how much livestock production contributes to greenhouse gas emissions:

"Meat consumption is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Animals — so like us! — burp, fart, and poop. When they do, they release methane, a greenhouse gas that is 86 times more potent per pound than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. Then there's the carbon pollution associated with using far more grain, and thus land, to feed livestock than we'd need if we just ate the grain directly. Housing, transporting, and slaughtering farm animals are all energy-intensive compared to growing and processing other foods. Milk cows are also big emitters, since cows are the worst methane producers. Add up the emissions and deforestation that's often associated with raising animals, and livestock accounts for an estimated 14.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Global meat consumption is rapidly increasing...without severe cuts in this trend, agricultural emissions will take up the entire world's carbon budget by 2050, with livestock a major contributor."

The article goes on to say that we don't all have to become vegetarians to have a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions: "You don't need to be vegetarian to play your part in reducing meat consumption. At roughly 270 pounds of meat per year per person, the U.S. ranks second only to Luxembourg in per capita meat consumption. Only about 2 percent of Americans are vegetarian, but if everyone else simply ate half as much meat, we'd have the same effect as if half the country went vegetarian."

It's therefore a pleasure to be able to share some meatless recipes with you. If there are certain ingredients that you'd like to see highlighted, let me know by sending a note to jabel209@gmail.com.

And now for this month's offering—a recipe with an Asian flair:
Marinated Tofu with Pineapple, Bok Choy, and Roasted Red Peppers
(Adapted from a recipe by Christina Pirello of Christina Cooks)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup uncooked quinoa
- 2 cups water
- 1 pound extra firm tofu
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 3 tsp sesame oil, divided
- 1 tsp canola oil
- 1 red onion, cut in half and sliced into half moon slices
- 3 cloves garlic (or more if you're a garlic fan like me!), minced
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 jar roasted red peppers (or two whole roasted peppers if you roast them yourself)
- 1 inch piece of ginger
- 1 bunch bok choy, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 can pineapple chunks in juice, not syrup
- 4 green onions, chopped
- Sriracha or other Asian hot sauce (optional)

1. Cook quinoa by heating a dry saucepan over medium heat. Add quinoa and toast for about 30 seconds, shaking frequently to prevent burning. Add water, raise heat to high until it comes to a boil, reduce heat to low and cook for 15-20 minutes until all of the water is absorbed.

2. While the quinoa is cooking, prepare the tofu: drain all of the liquid from the package, chop into bite-sized chunks, and place in a mixing bowl. Add soy sauce and 2 tsp. sesame oil and mix until all pieces are coated. If the tofu seems dry add a bit more sauce and oil. Set aside.

3. In a skillet add the other tsp of sesame oil and the canola oil. Once the pan is hot, add the onions, garlic, salt, and red pepper flakes and sautee until the onion softens, about 3 minutes.

4. Add the chopped red peppers and grate the ginger into the pan.

5. Add the bok choy and pineapple chunks. Cook until the bok choy begins to become tender.

6. Add the green onions.

7. Add the tofu with its marinating liquid and cook until heated through. Taste and adjust seasonings, adding a few drops of sriracha if you like things spicy.

8. Serve over the cooked quinoa.

This dish is full of lots of different colors and textures. In my home we typically make it once a week. Hope you enjoy!