

For Tom
remembering all the good food and
'taste tests' that got us to where we are today

First U.S. edition published in 2012 by
Hampton Roads Publishing Company, Inc.,
Charlottesville VA 22906
www.redwheelweiser.com

Published by arrangement with
HarperCollinsPublishers Ltd

First published by Thorsons 2005

© Janet Hudson 2012

ISBN 978-1-57174-676-4

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

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The Easy Vegan: Hindsight is 100%

It was no more than a few years ago, and it still occurs occasionally today, that people frequently commented, “Vegan, that is a hard diet to follow!” or “... being vegan, that is so bland!” And, I must admit, back then following a vegan diet was bland and a bit boring. A couple of lettuce leaves, a radish, and a slice of tomato, or a cup of oatmeal might have been it (just ask my husband who lived on salad and oatmeal for months). In order to evolve, I had to think outside the box.

Just a short time prior to this I remember thinking, “Vegan-me? Vegetarian yes, but certainly not vegan.” However, I was in search of an alternative to the “animal diet”—and because I was looking for the perfect lifestyle as well the perfect cuisine, it soon became clear that going vegan was the answer.

Some people choose this path in order to eat for better health—to feel good. Other vegetarians go vegan to show their concern and support for animal welfare. A plant-based diet is a responsible way of eating; it's the diet best suited to proper human nutrition. The plight of the world's hungry and the destruction of our natural resources remains a cause for others. In addition, the vegan diet, quite simply, is less costly.

My evolution as a vegan became my mantra, and a sort of spiritual realization. I remembered the comfort foods of my childhood and wished to combine those tastes while on my quest for perfect vegan fare.

The Easy Vegan is a sensory feast of fusion creations from my "out-of-the-box" experience: Light, cool salads mixing exotic greens such as watercress; refreshing tangy-tender leaves bathed in lime vinaigrette and tossed with jicama and avocado; hardy soups like Albondigas—flavor-packed with mildly-spiced veggie meatballs, brown rice, green chilies, zesty mint seasoning, and fresh vegetables. Ethnic entrees and sandwiches feature, too, including the Tempeh Reuben—smoked tempeh, red onion, mushroom, almond cheese, and sauerkraut with a Russian dressing; and "Shrimp" Curry, with freshly-harvested green beans and baby wax beans. And then there are the temptations—all natural, all vegan Apple Crisp, Tofu Cheesecake, Chai Tiramisu, Pumpkin Pecan Pie ... and the smoothies and shakes—fresh, fresh, fresh!

As with any recipe book, more experienced cooks may want to modify some dishes according to desire—by adding more liquid for thinner consistency, cooking longer for softer vegetables etc. Try, adapt, and above all enjoy.

The EASY Vegan ... Why did I wait so long? Hindsight is 100%!

Welcome Fellow Vegans!

I recall one visit to my folks' home shortly after I "graduated" to vegan. My father, the original carnivore, held up a fat juicy flank steak on his fork and commented how much I was missing out ... in between a huge bite of mashed potatoes, butter dripping off his chin.

I knew then that they were the ones who were really missing out. Vegan is delicious, exotic, spicy, delicate foods full of flavor and robust tastes: and best of all it is the healthiest food that there is! Vegan dining is fun!

Beginning purely by experiment—mostly on friends and relatives—I began my mission to "convert" the non-believers. I started small, substituting my mother-in-law's cream (in her coffee) with almond milk and her butter with vegetable margarine. Often the switch was a success.

Searching for the best in vegan foods and creating vegan recipes for my family to enjoy became my passion. I discovered that humans unconsciously relate certain textures, shapes and consistencies in foods with taste ... and that those taste memories are associated with pleasant eating experiences.

I embarked on a journey—catering and cooking vegan. Packed lunches, buffet dinners and hors d'oeuvre parties—what great fun indeed! During one event—a birthday party—I served a "Beef" Burgundy Fondue dish. A gentleman kept pacing back and forth from the buffet to the kitchen. Finally, he blurted out:

"Where did you purchase your sirloin—Gelsons or Bristol Farms? This is the most tender beef that I have had in quite some time!"

I had prepared the dish with mushrooms.

Enough said. May I present to you this—a vegan feast, 365 days of the year!

Enjoy!

Janet



Hors d'oeuvres:

HOT AND COLD MINI ENTREES

Appetizers make for great conversation ... these whet the appetite for the entrée or satisfy the soul as a meal on their own

Anaheim Poppers

Serves 12–24

24	anaheim peppers, washed
1 cup	chunky peanut or macadamia butter
½ quantity	Haute Mango Salsa recipe (page 328)

Place the peppers under a broiler or on an open flame and roast until the skins blister. Place the peppers in a plastic bag and fill with ice water. When the skins begin to peel off, remove them from the bag and peel the skins off (wearing gloves). Halve the peppers and remove the seeds.

Mix the butter and salsa and stuff the peppers with the mixture.

Artichoke Heart Muffins

Serves 24

24	wonton wrappers
12 ounces	artichoke hearts
¼ cup	finely diced red bell pepper
¼ cup	black olives, diced
2	garlic cloves, minced
½ cup	veggie parmesan shreds
½ cup	vegan mayonnaise dressing

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Oil enough muffin pans for the 24 wrappers and place a wonton wrapper in each cup. Combine the remaining ingredients and spoon the mixture into the cups. Pinch each wrapper closed. Bake for 10–12 minutes. Serve warm.

Asparagus Surprise

Serves 6

6 slices	whole-wheat bread, crusts removed
12 tablespoons	vegetable margarine
6 dashes	powdered vegetable seasoning
6 tablespoons	soy cream cheese
6	parboiled asparagus spears
6 teaspoons	grated veggie parmesan

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

Lay out the bread slices and spread with ½ tablespoon of vegetable margarine on each slice, followed by a dash of vegetable seasoning and 1 tablespoon soy cream cheese.

Place an asparagus spear at the end of bread slice and roll up. Melt the remaining margarine, roll each slice in it and then roll them in the grated parmesan. Heat in the oven for 12 minutes, or until browned.

Asparagus with Sun-Dried Tomato Timbale

Makes 2 timbales

1 cup	fresh asparagus
Juice of 1	lemon
2 ounces	firm tofu
3 ounces	veggie cream cheese
Dash of	powdered vegetable seasoning
	salt and pepper to taste
¼ cup	minced scallions
1	garlic clove, minced
¼ cup	diced sun-dried tomatoes
¼ cup	veggie parmesan shreds
2 tablespoons	minced parsley
2	cherry tomatoes

Steam the asparagus then sprinkle it with the lemon juice. Reserve two tips and puree the remaining asparagus in a processor. Cool.

Combine the tofu and “cream cheese.” Season with the vegetable powder, add salt and pepper to taste, and whip until smooth. Fold in the scallions and garlic then add the sun-dried tomatoes. Combine the veggie parmesan and parsley in a separate bowl.

Now assemble the dish. Spray two 3–4-inch molds with non-dairy vegetable spray. Line with plastic wrap and build up layers: first the veggie cream cheese mixture, then the parmesan mixture, then the asparagus; now repeat the layers.

Refrigerate 2 hours or, for best results, overnight. Unmold. Garnish with cherry tomato and an asparagus tip. Serve with veggies or toast.

Beau Monde Nibbles

Serves 8-12

2½ cups	vegan mayonnaise dressing
2 cups	veggie sour cream
4 teaspoons	Spice Islands Beau Monde seasoning
4 tablespoons	minced onion
4 tablespoons	chopped fresh parsley
2 teaspoons	fresh dill weed
6 ounces	veggie beef or pork, very finely chopped
1	round rye loaf

Mix all the ingredients, except the loaf, and let the mixture sit 8 hours or overnight.

Hollow out the loaf and cube the bread. If you wish, you can toast the cubes in a 275°F oven until browned.

Fill the loaf with the dip just before serving and serve with the cubed bread.

Beer-Battered Artichoke Hearts

Serves 4

¼ cup	oat milk
1 cup	whole-wheat flour
3 teaspoons	egg replacer
1 teaspoon	sea salt
½ cup	organic beer
2 cups	artichoke hearts, parboiled
	safflower oil

Puree the first four ingredients. Once the batter is smooth, stir in the beer.

Dip the artichokes into the batter and fry in safflower oil until brown and crispy.

These are good served with vegan mayonnaise dressing and lemon wedges.

Bruschetta

Serves 10

½ cup	olive oil
¼ cup	tomatillos or bell pepper, finely diced
¼ cup	finely diced white onion
2 teaspoons	chopped fresh basil
2 cups	vine-ripened tomatoes, finely diced
4 tablespoons	red wine
½ teaspoon	black pepper
1	baguette, cut into 1-inch slices

Preheat the oven to 275°F.

Coat a skillet with 2 teaspoons of olive oil. Place the tomatillos or peppers, onions, and basil in skillet; sauté for 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes, red wine, and pepper. Cook an additional 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

Place the baguette slices on a cookie sheet and brush with the remaining olive oil. Mound 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce on each baguette. Bake 4 minutes, or until crispy.

The following recipe expands on this theme, adding a few special ingredients to make it extra tasty.

Bravo! Bravo! Bruschetta

Serves 10

¼ cup	olive oil
¼ cup	finely diced bell pepper
¼ cup	finely diced white onion
2	ears corn, cut off stalk and parboiled
2 teaspoons	chopped fresh basil
2 cups	diced vine-ripened tomatoes
4 tablespoons	red wine
1	baguette, cut into 1-inch slices
1 teaspoon	black pepper
1 can	artichoke hearts or 6 fresh, prepared and diced
¼ cup	grated veggie parmesan

Preheat the oven to 275°F.

Coat a skillet with 2 teaspoons of olive oil. Place the peppers, onions, corn, and basil in the skillet; sauté for 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes and red wine. Cook an additional 2 minutes then remove from the heat.

Place the baguette slices on a cookie sheet and brush with the remaining olive oil. Mound 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce on each baguette. Top each slice with some artichoke and sprinkle with veggie cheese. Bake 4 minutes, or until crispy.

"California Dream'n" Shrimp Cocktail

Serves 4

Cocktail:

1 pound	veggie prawns, each cut into three pieces
1 cup	radish sprouts
2	Haas avocados
1	pink grapefruit, peeled and sectioned
1	white grapefruit, peeled and sectioned
2 cups	baby spinach
2 tablespoons	limejuice
¼ cup	toasted pine nuts

Dressing:

½ cup	grapefruit juice
3 tablespoons	limejuice
3 tablespoons	olive oil
¼ teaspoon	grated ginger root

Place all the cocktail ingredients in a bowl and toss. Place all the dressing ingredients in a screw-top jar or bottle. Shake and then pour the dressing over the salad.

Spoon into chilled sherbet dishes. Start dream'n.

Caponata Debut

Yields 4 cups

1	large eggplant, diced into cubes
1¾ teaspoons	sea salt
6 tablespoons	olive oil
1 cup	thinly sliced scallions, including greens (about two bunches)
2 tablespoons	chopped garlic
1 cup	diced celery, parboiled
½ teaspoon	red-pepper flakes
2½ cups	diced fresh tomatoes (6–8 medium)
6 tablespoons	chopped fresh basil
¼ cup	capers
6 ounces	(about ¾ cup) Greek olives, halved
½ teaspoon	cocoa powder
3 tablespoons	balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon	maple syrup

Preheat the oven to 450°F.

Lay the eggplant on an aluminum foil-covered cookie sheet. Sprinkle ½ teaspoon salt over the eggplant and cover with another piece of aluminum foil. Place a weight on top and allow it to drain 15 minutes. Place 3 tablespoons of olive oil in skillet and heat for 2 minutes. Add the eggplant and cook for 6 minutes, stirring occasionally. Return the eggplant to the cookie sheet, sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt and bake for 5 minutes. Cool.

Wipe the skillet and add the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil; heat for 2 minutes. Add the onions and sauté for 4 minutes. Add garlic, celery, red-pepper flakes, ¼ teaspoon salt; cook an additional 4 minutes. Add tomatoes, basil, eggplant, capers and olives; cook 6 minutes, bringing to a boil. Add the cocoa powder, mix well, and simmer 2 minutes. Heat vinegar and

syrup until thickened, about 2 minutes. Add this to the vegetable mixture and stir. Simmer on low for 4 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and refrigerate at least overnight (48 hours is best). Serve at room temperature on bread slices, as sandwich spread, relish, tapas etc.

Cheesy Artichoke Fondue

Yields 2 cups

2 cups	cooked artichoke hearts
1 cup	fresh basil
2	garlic cloves
Juice of 1	lemon
¼ teaspoon	lemon zest
½ cup	vegan mayonnaise dressing
1 cup	grated veggie parmesan
1½ cups	veggie mozzarella shreds
	salt and pepper

In blender, process the chokes, basil, and garlic. Mix in the remaining ingredients and season to taste. Heat until the "cheese" is melted and slightly bubbly.

Idea: Carve out a sourdough round and stuff with fondue; heat in a 350°F oven until warm and bubbly and serve with bread cubes on tooth picks. To die for!

Citrus Cavoli

Serves 12

6	mandarin oranges, peeled and sectioned
4 tablespoons	olive oil
1 medium-large	cauliflower (1 pound), cut into 1-inch pieces and parboiled
1 cup	thinly sliced scallions, including greens (about two bunches)
4	garlic cloves, thinly sliced
¾ teaspoon	sea salt
5 tablespoons	pine nuts
3 tablespoons	chopped fresh parsley
1 teaspoon	grated lemon peel
½ teaspoon	red pepper
1½ cups	diced fresh tomatoes (4-6 medium)
¼ teaspoon	saffron powder
3 tablespoons	balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon	maple syrup
½ teaspoon	cocoa powder
½ cup	vegetable broth*

Score the orange slices once to allow the juices to escape; place in bowl. Pour 2 tablespoons of olive oil into a skillet and heat for 2 minutes. Add the cauliflower and scallions and cook for another 2 minutes. Now add the garlic, cook for 2 minutes then mix in the salt. Set aside.

Wipe the skillet clean and add the remaining oil, the pine nuts, parsley, lemon peel, and red pepper. Cook for 3 minutes then add the cauliflower mixture. Cook for 3 minutes on medium-high heat. Add the tomatoes and cook for 2 minutes more. Now add the saffron, balsamic vinegar, syrup, cocoa powder, orange slices, and vegetable broth or remaining juice (see note) and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until

the sauce is almost absorbed, 5–8 minutes. Serve warm on Italian bread slices.

**If using canned orange slices, the juice in the can may be used in place of vegetable broth.*

“Crab” Boats

Serves 8

1 pound	shredded veggie crab
¼ cup	diced celery
4 tablespoons	capers
1 tablespoon	powdered vegetable seasoning
¼ teaspoon	black pepper
1 teaspoon	chopped fresh mint
2 teaspoons	chopped fresh dill weed
½ teaspoon	sea salt
¾ cup	vegan mayonnaise dressing
1	head each white and red endive

Mix all the ingredients, except the endive, and refrigerate for 1 hour. Wash and separate the endive leaves and spoon the “crab” mixture onto the leaves. Place on a serving tray.

Dynamite Dolmas

Serves 6

12	grape leaves
6 tablespoons	olive oil
3 teaspoons	dry sherry
1 cup	cooked brown rice
3 teaspoons	chopped fresh parsley
¼ cup	vegan soy hamburger
1 teaspoon	cumin
¼ teaspoon	sea salt
¼ teaspoon	red pepper

Steam the grape leaves then spread them out on an oiled (use 3 tablespoons) surface to cool. Brush with the sherry.

In a skillet, place the remaining oil, the rice, parsley, "hamburger," cumin, salt, and red pepper. Brown the mixture over a medium heat for 4 minutes. Cool. Divide the mixture between the grape leaves, placing it in the center, and roll up.

Serve warm or cold. Cucumber Dressing (page 302) is a fine complement to this dish.

Eggplant Medallions

Serves 12

- 1** Japanese eggplant, sliced into 12
sea salt
- 6** veggie mozzarella slices, cut into triangles
- 2** medium tomatoes, sliced into 12
cracked pepper
- 12** fresh basil leaves
olive oil

Sprinkle the eggplant slices with sea salt, place in a colander with a weight on top and drain for 1 hour. In a skillet, grill the eggplant, without any oil, for 2 minutes each side. Place the cheese triangles on top followed by the tomato slices. Sprinkle with pepper and add a basil leaf. Drizzle with oil. Place under the broiler for 2 minutes, or until the "cheese" begins to melt.

"Egg" Salad Rollups

Serves 12

1 bunch	collard greens, washed and leaves separated
2 pounds	soft tofu, rinsed
1 bunch	scallions, sliced paper thin
2	garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon	sea salt
1 teaspoon	white pepper
2 teaspoons	paprika
2 teaspoons	cumin
1 can	hearts of palm, each piece quartered lengthwise

Place the collard greens in boiling water and cook until tender, about 15 minutes. Remove the leaves from the water, separate them out on paper towels and pat dry.

In a blender, mix all remaining ingredients except the hearts of palm. Chill the mixture for 1 hour. Place 2-3 tablespoons of the salad on each collard leaf. Place one of the hearts of palm on top and roll up, placing the rolls end side down on a serving tray. Secure with toothpicks.

Fire and Ice

Serves 12

- 6** small habañero peppers, halved, seeded, and roasted
- 1 cup** coconut, lemon, lime, or mango sorbet

Stuff each chili half with the sorbet and freeze well.

Call 911!

Fisherman's Net

Serves 12

1 cup	hickory syrup
1 cup	virgin olive oil
12	peppercorns
12	juniper berries
½ teaspoon	creole spice
12	veggie scallops
12	veggie shrimp
6 pieces	sea vegetable
4 cups	roma tomatoes, diced with skins left on
½ cup	balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons	ground cinnamon
¼ cup	virgin olive oil

Combine the syrup, oil, peppercorns, juniper berries, and spice. Place the "scallops" and "shrimps" in this mixture and marinate overnight.

Soak the sea vegetable in water until soft then pat dry. Cut each piece in half lengthwise. Combine the tomatoes with vinegar, oil, and cinnamon. Spread out in an ovenproof dish and bake under the broiler until bubbly and just charred. Do the same with the "seafood."

To assemble: Place the tomatoes in timbales and place on plates. Wrap the sea vegetable around the timbales for garnish. Arrange one scallop and one shrimp alongside and drizzle with hickory syrup. Serve warm.

Freshwater (Up Stream) Quesadillas

Serves 8

1	veggie salmon, diced (2 cups)
2 teaspoons	sea salt
2 teaspoons	pepper
1 teaspoon	cumin
1	large white onion, chopped
6	garlic cloves, chopped
12 tablespoons	vegetable margarine
3	plum tomatoes, diced
½ cup	limejuice
16	small corn tortillas
2 cups	veggie mozzarella, shredded
6 teaspoons	powdered vegetable seasoning
3 teaspoons	fresh purple basil, chopped
3	limes, wedged

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

In a skillet, flash cook the salmon with the salt, pepper, cumin, onion, garlic, and 1 tablespoon of the margarine for 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and lime juice.

Baste each tortilla with some margarine. Divide the "salmon" between 8 tortillas. Follow with the shredded veggie cheese. Top with a corn tortilla, baste with a little more margarine, and sprinkle with vegetable seasoning. Bake for 5 minutes, turning over once. Cut each tortilla into four pieces, sprinkle with the basil and serve immediately with the lime wedges. Red or Haute Mango Salsa (pages 329 and 328) are good accompaniments.

Variation:

Cook the "salmon" with 1 cup limejuice, 2 tablespoons

powdered vegetable seasoning, 1 tablespoon dill, 2 cloves minced garlic, 1 teaspoon pepper, and 3 cups fresh spinach ... and use veggie cheddar instead of mozzarella.

Fond of Fondue... Cape Aire Cheddar

Serves 8 or more

½ pound	vegan soy hamburger
6 tablespoons	vegetable margarine
1	yellow onion, chopped
1	garlic clove
6 tablespoons	flour
2 cups	soymilk
16 ounces	veggie cheddar cheese, shredded
1 cup	organic beer
4 ounces	green chilies
Pinch of	sea salt
½ teaspoon	black pepper
	baguette rounds, cubed
	pear slices

Cook the veggie hamburger in 3 tablespoons of margarine, breaking it up as it cooks. Remove from the pan, add the remaining margarine and sauté the onion and garlic in it.

Add the flour, stirring constantly to form a roux. Add the soymilk and stir until thickened. Return the "hamburger" crumbles to the pan and add the veggie cheddar and organic beer. Continue stirring until melted. Add the chilies and season with salt and pepper. Use the bread and pears for dipping. Great for Super Bowl.

Got Hot Wings?

Serves 6

2 cups	veggie chicken, cubed
1 cup	hickory syrup
5 tablespoons	bottled chili sauce
1	yellow onion, diced
3 tablespoons	cider vinegar
1 tablespoon	Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon	vegan Worcestershire sauce
6	wooden skewers

Place the "chicken" in a shallow dish. Combine the remaining ingredients and pour over the "chicken." Leave to marinate for 6 hours, turning every so often. Skewer the "chicken" and bake in a 350°F oven, or barbecue it, until lightly browned.

Greek Toasts

Serves 8 or more

2 cups	soy cream cheese
½ cup	kalamata olives
½ cup	sun-dried tomatoes, snipped into small pieces
1	small cucumber, peeled
2 teaspoons	capers, well rinsed
8 slices	favorite bread, trimmed of crusts and sliced into triangles
2 teaspoons	black pepper
4 tablespoons	lemon juice
4 tablespoons	olive oil
2 teaspoon	chopped fresh parsley
	onion powder

In food processor combine the cream cheese, olives, tomatoes, cucumber, and capers.

Spread the filling on one toast triangle and top with another. Mix the pepper, lemon juice, oil, and parsley together. Dip each "sandwich" in the mixture and place in a 375°F oven until browned and filling is bubbly. Garnish with onion powder.

Serve warm.

Grilled Cheese Shish Kabob

Serves 4-6

8 ounces	tofu cheddar cheese block, cut into cubes
1 loaf	French bread, cut into cubes
6 ounces	sun-dried tomatoes
½ cup	olive oil
3	garlic cloves, minced
3 teaspoons	sea salt
	barbecue

Light the barbecue and heat the coals.

Place the "cheese" cubes, bread, and tomatoes on skewers. Mix the oil, garlic and salt. Baste the skewered foodstuffs with the mixture. Grill on the barbecue for 5 minutes or until bread is crisp and cheese begins to soften

Key Lime Avocado Rapture

Serves 4

1 cup	raw sugar
6	key limes, juiced (grate 2½ teaspoons peel or zest from the limes and set aside)
1 cup	corn syrup
4	large avocados, peeled, sliced, and chopped
3 tablespoons	minced fresh cilantro
1 cup	chopped tomatoes
1	jalapeño pepper
	a few cilantro leaves

Place the sugar in a saucepan with 1 cup of water and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Set aside to cool. Place the lime juice in a saucepan with 1 cup of water and boil. Add the sugar syrup and corn syrup. Refrigerate until cold. Pour the chilled sorbet base into an ice cream maker and process according to manufacturer's instructions. Combine the avocado, cilantro, and 2 teaspoons of the lime zest. Divide the mixture into four portions and place in a "stack-up" or timbales.

Scoop out the sorbet and pack it into the timbales on top of the avocado. Refrigerate for 1-2 hours.

Meanwhile, purée the tomatoes and pepper and set aside. To serve, turn over and plate each timbale. Drizzle the tomatoes over the stack and garnish with cilantro and lime zest.