

Alaska Vegetarian Society

June 2008

Where Did *That* Come From?

by Delisa Renideo

Have you ever thought about how eating patterns differ in various parts of the world? Why would people in some parts of the world relish squid chips, caterpillars, eels, brains, flies, worms, sea horses, live prawns, eyeballs, and testicles while most Americans would gag, "Gross!" And yet most Americans think nothing of eating eggs (the ova of a bird) or milk (the mammary excretions of a cow), or meat (the muscle of a cow, pig, chicken, turkey, moose, etc.)

Is it intrinsically any different for a Japanese parent to feed a toddler kelp and eels over rice than it is for an American parent to feed a toddler a hot dog and potato chips? The children of ALL

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cultures learn from their parents what constitutes food. In fact, the young of all mammals learn what to eat from their parents.

The point I'm making is that the foods we like and feel natural eating are part of the many preconceived ideas we learn from our parents and our culture. We didn't decide as infants and young children what to eat and

what to say "yuck" about. If your mother had put a wiggly worm in your mouth, you would have eaten it without thinking it was strange.

According to the Encarta Dictionary, preconceived means: "formed in the mind in advance, especially if based on little or no information or experience"

We not only learn our food preferences from our parents and culture, but also our attitudes about what it means to be male or female, black, white, red, or brown, rich or poor, human or animal. We need to learn from our parents and those around us to help us survive in our culture until we are old enough to think our own thoughts and make our own choices. But eventually we need to wake up to all the preconceived beliefs we have about everything in order to be awake and to live our own lives.

I clearly remember being 15 or 16 years old and beginning to question everything I'd been taught. I eventually came around to believing most of what I had

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For one who has always professed to love animals, I spent a good deal of my life not walking the talk.

In the documentary movie, *Peaceable Kingdom*, Farm Sanctuary's Harold Brown tells of a calf which caused the switch in his heart to be turned on--the switch that had been off for everything except house pets. The switch controlling any love he might have felt or shown for farmed animals had been off. I can relate so well with that story!

I've loved dogs and cats all my life, and an occasional parakeet or fish. But it never entered my head that I could or should love other animals. Oh, I thought wild animals were beautiful, but I could also eat a moose, a caribou, a fish or a goose.

As an adult in bush Alaska I raised goats, pigs, turkeys, chickens and ducks. Oddly enough, it was the turkeys who turned on my love switch. I reached a point where I could no longer eat something I had cared for. But I could still eat meat if it came all neatly packaged.

After I moved to the Valley, I became friends with people who were vegetarians and vegans. My new friend, Delisa, suggested that I read John Robbins' *Diet for a New America* and his newer, *Food Revolution*.

My Story

How and Why I Choose To Be Vegan

by Elaine Albertson



Suddenly my eyes were opened to the horrible suffering of farmed animals, and I could no longer eat meat of any kind.

I still felt it was okay to consume dairy and eggs. Then I had heard my friend Peggy say she had decided to become vegan. She had been a vegetarian for some time, but like me, had still consumed dairy. When she read that cheese contained large amounts of dioxin, she shared the information with us,

Not long after that, a group of us watched *Peaceable Kingdom*, and I realized I was still contributing to the suffering and death of countless animals--chicks and calves who, merely because they'd been born male, wouldn't be allowed to live; spent milk cows and layer hens who were turned into soup or hamburger once their production slacked off; and terrible living conditions for those cows and hens while they were still producing what I wanted to drink and eat.

So with health factors and moral issues contributing to my decision, I decided I wanted, and needed, to live a vegan lifestyle. By that time, nearly six years ago, I had learned from my friends and from our frequent potlucks, that the food choices of vegans were amazing. No one was sacrificing taste or satisfaction by eating only plant foods. And best of all, I could live and love fully, with my heart switch always in the "on" position!

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Animal Quotes

“All of the animals except for man know that the principle business of life is to enjoy it.”

~ Samuel Butler

“There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before.”

~ Robert Lynd

“Until one has loved an animal, a part of one’s soul remains unawakened.”

~ Anatole France

“Animals give me more pleasure through the viewfinder of a camera than they ever did in the crosshairs of a gunsight. And after I’ve finished “shooting,” my unharmed victims are still around for others to enjoy. I have developed a deep respect for animals. I consider them fellow living creatures with certain rights that should not be violated any more than those of humans.” ~ Jimmy Stewart



Alaska Vegetarian Society

Mission Statement:
To create a compassionate and sustainable world by inspiring and supporting reverence for all life and the adoption of a plant-based diet.

Who to Call 

Elaine Albertson: AVS Newsletter Editor.....746-4668
 Peggy Robinson: Treasurer & Membership.....373-1901
 Toni Truesdell: PR Coordinator.....745-4404
 Delisa Renideo: Rays of Hope Director.....373-1526
 Charlie Renideo: Bookstore & Website.....373-1526

AdoptAFriend.net

Did you know there’s a website where you can:

- Look for companion animals from several local rescue groups.
- Find links to Valley animal shelters.
- List info about an animal you can no longer keep.
- Save a life and give a home to a furry friend in need.
- Volunteer to be a foster home for homeless animals.
- Post info about animals you have lost or found.
- Donate food, bedding, toys, kennels, leashes, & money.

Pets 

Where Did *That* Come From? *continued from the front page:*

unthinkingly believed prior to this time of questioning, but it was different then . . . it was my own set of beliefs.

However, one thing I didn’t think to question during that adolescent search for my own set of values and beliefs was my food choices. It never entered my head that eating the flesh, ova, and mammary excretions of animals was anything but normal, natural, healthy. . . . and necessary.

After being vegan for about 18 years now, it seems very strange to me to think about drinking the milk of another species – the food mammals produce to feed their own young. And yet, as I talk with hundreds of other people who have never questioned this practice, I know it seems totally normal to them. It was normal to me, too, for about 40 years!

Along with it seeming normal to most Americans to consume animal products, it seems normal and appropriate to most people to use animals for our own purposes: for food, entertainment, work, to wear (skins and furs), and to experiment on. And yet, that is another preconceived idea. We didn’t think that up on our own.

Many of us, after thinking about the love we share with our companion animals,

begin to think differently about other animals as well. We begin to see them as beings in their own right, with lives to live and love to give. We recognize that cows love their calves as much as we love our children and as much as our cats love their kittens, and

that cows grieve terribly when their calves are taken from them at birth. We begin to notice that chickens are birds, just like the robins in our yards in the spring, and that they are laying eggs in order to have baby chicks to raise and care for. We may even realize that the fish that we often think are so different from ourselves also have a nervous system like ours, and that they feel pain as we do. We may start to recognize that a fish that “puts up a good fight” is experiencing terror and extreme pain, and is literally fighting for its life.

It’s never too late to look at our beliefs and values and to ask ourselves, “Where did that come from?” Since most of what we believe came from someone else, the only way to be fully alive is to constantly question our choices and see if they fit our evolving values and beliefs. This is the way to achieve better health and a better world.

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Nutrition Nuggets - *What to Believe?*

by Delisa Renideo

We've all heard that a high fiber, low fat diet is healthy. But then you may read something in the newspaper saying, "Study Shows Fiber Not Beneficial," or "Study Proves Low Fat Diet Does Not Prevent Breast Cancer." What are we to believe?

Nutritional information reported in newspapers and popular magazines rarely provides enough information about the study to evaluate the validity of the results. So you may need to do a bit of homework to decide how valid the information is.

As an example, let's look at a study that said fiber is not beneficial. Most of us know that a diet that is naturally high in fiber has many health benefits. But this particular study was not examining this kind of a diet. Instead, the participants ate their usual Standard American Diet (the SAD diet) containing lots of animal products and highly refined plant foods and then basically sprinkled fiber on it. They didn't eat whole plant foods that are naturally high in fiber. So this study determined that adding fiber to the diet was not helpful, and they generalized from this that fiber is not beneficial. Instead, they should have said, "Guess what folks. . . you can't fool Mother Nature. You can't eat a crappy diet and make it healthy by sprinkling sawdust or Metamucil on it! You've gotta actually eat lots of vegetables, fruits, beans,

and grains that are all loaded with fiber to reduce your cholesterol, lower your blood pressure, prevent cancer and diabetes."

Another example is a study that said a low fat diet doesn't help prevent breast cancer. When you read more about the study, the "low fat diet" actually obtained 29% of its calories from fat. . . . hardly a "low fat diet!" In order to achieve the benefits of a low fat diet, you need to get below a certain threshold of fat. If you consume somewhere around 10% - 15% fat in your diet, you not only reduce

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the incidence of breast cancer, but also heart disease, other cancers, diabetes, and obesity. Basing this study on a diet containing 29% fat is the equivalent of cutting back from 3 packs of cigarettes a day to only 2 packs, and then saying that smoking has no affect on lung cancer.

So before you throw up your hands about all the conflicting information, find out who is funding the study (and why it is important to them to get certain results) and how the study was designed. Even though there are some legitimate differences in study results, what we really find is that there are literally thousands of good studies that show the benefits of a whole plant-foods diet.



by Delisa Renideo

If you're up for loads of fun, amazing vegan food, an incredible opportunity to learn from some of the world's leaders in plant-based nutrition and vegan lifestyles, and to meet and mix with like-minded people from around the country, consider attending the **Vegetarian Summerfest!** This yearly event is hosted by the North American Vegetarian Society, and they've got it down – this is their 34th annual conference!

Charlie and I attended Summerfest in 2005, with our friends Elaine Albertson and her teenage granddaughter, Rian. All four of us had a fantastic time and vowed to go back anytime we could. Well, this year, Charlie and I are going back and we hope some of you can join us.

This event is held at the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown, Pennsylvania from June 18-22. (Or, you can just attend the week-end portion, but if you're going all that way, you may as well go for the whole thing.) Everyone stays on campus and gets to enjoy a huge variety of vegan food for breakfast, lunch and dinner -- all prepared under the direction of Ken Bergeron, an International Gold Medal winning chef. And the food is included in the registration fees.

There are dozens of speakers: doctors, dieticians, chefs, and authors. You'll recognize some of their names: Dr. T. Colin Campbell, who wrote ***The China Study***; Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, who wrote ***Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease***; Howard Lyman, former cattle

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Summer Grilling



Our Recipe of the Month for June is not one, but several ideas for summer grilling, vegan style!

Last July, Elaine's granddaughter wanted a barbecue for her 18th birthday party. In ***Seventeen*** she had found ideas for vegetarian grilling and with a few changes they had great, low-fat vegan food for the party.

So clean off the grill, and try these at your next summer barbecue!

Corn-on-the-Cob

Grill 6 - 8 ears of corn in their husks for 15 - 20 minutes, turning, and also misting with water sprayer, occasionally.

Remove from grill, discard husks and silk. While warm, eat the naturally delicious ears, or sprinkle with your choice of seasoning: Parmesan "cheese" (recipe: www.AlaskaVeg.org), chili powder, garlic powder, dried cilantro, or cayenne pepper.

See how good corn is without the added fat of butter!



Vegan Style!



Vegetable Kebabs

Marinade:

1 Tbsp. olive oil 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 - 2 Tbsp. water 1 Tbsp. chopped green chile
1 Tbsp minced garlic 1/2 tsp. ground rosemary

Vegetables for Kebabs:

1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 12 triangles
1 yellow bell pepper, seeded & cut into 12 triangles
2 medium zucchini, cut into 3/4 inch slices
12 cherry tomatoes 12 whole pearl onions, peeled
12 crimini button mushrooms
1 pound baked tofu, cut into 12 cubes

Mix marinade ingredients in medium bowl, then add vegetables and tofu. With a spoon, turn all until they are completely coated. Cover bowl and chill for 1 hour. Put all on 12 metal skewers and grill for 4-6 minutes, brushing on extra marinade and turning occasionally. Serve immediately.

Portabella Mushroom "Burgers"

4 large portabella mushrooms
2 tsp. olive oil 2 tsp. chopped garlic
2 Tbsp. red wine (optional) 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

Clean mushrooms and trim stems flush with bottom of caps. Heat remaining ingredients until mixture begins to bubble and pour over mushrooms, tops down. Marinate for 1 hour or more. Remove mushrooms from liquid and grill until browned, about 5 minutes on each side. Serve on whole wheat hamburger buns with your favorite condiments.

Looking for a speaker?

Delisa Renideo is now a Heart Health Speaker for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

If you are part of an organization that offers presentations to its members, Delisa is available to do 15 to 30 minute presentations on preventing and reversing heart disease.

She can be contacted at 907-373-1526.

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rancher turned vegan who wrote *The Mad Cowboy* and many more. There are cooking demonstrations, nature walks, music, games, humor, and dancing as well as cutting edge educational sessions.

If you'd like to combine a unique vacation with an opportunity to learn more about how and why to eat a plant-based diet, this conference just might be for you!

For a complete description of this year's offerings, as well as registration information, go to www.vegetariansummerfest.org.



Food for Life

Nutrition & Cooking Classes

for Cancer Prevention and Survival

Classes starting soon!

Providence Cancer Center

Tuesdays, 6:30 – 8:30pm
July 1 – Aug. 12, 2008

Mat-Su Regional Medical Center

Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30pm
July 2 – Aug. 13, 2008

Mat-Su Activities & Respite Center

Thursdays, 1:30 – 3:30pm
July 3 – Aug. 14, 2008

To register
contact Delisa or Charlie
at 907-373-1526

Upcoming Events



Thursday, June 5

Rays of Hope board of directors' monthly meeting, 5:30pm. If you are interested in knowing more about AVS' parent organization, call Delisa at 373-1526 to find out more about the meeting.

Friday, June 20

Deadline for articles and information to be included in the July AVS newsletter. Email elaine@alaskaveg.org or call Elaine at 746-4668.

Saturday, June 28

Alaska Vegetarian Society potluck dinner, 6:00-8:00pm at the United Protestant (Presbyterian) Church in Palmer. There will be information, an educational program and opportunities to meet new people. For more information and a map, visit: www.alaskaveg.org/PotluckDinners.html or call 373-1526.

Saturday, July 12

Mark your calendars for *July 12*, because the **AlaskaVegMeetup** group is planning an **Anchor-age vegan potluck picnic**. This is a chance to enjoy two great things: being outdoors in Alaska and great vegan food. Go to www.vegetarian.meetup.com/396/calendar/7947169/ for details.

Alaska Vegetarian Society
5010 Lakeside Drive
Wasilla, AK 99654
907-373-1526
www.AlaskaVeg.org