

A vegan diet takes creativity

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Today's recipe comes to you, courtesy of my older son, Alex. Alex started as a vegetarian about five years ago, then converted to vegan a couple of years ago.

For those of you not familiar with vegans, they don't eat any meat, fish, dairy— nothing that has or had a face! That even means things you might not think of like— no jello (not that the lack of jello is a hardship), no fish sauce (which eliminates a lot of Thai foods unless you make them yourself or are at a restaurant that makes their sauces from scratch and are willing to adapt), no to most breads (as they often have whey powder), no mayonnaise (that one really made me cry— as it has egg product).

You've got to admire the willpower, in a house where we eat everything including some really gorgeous cheeses (that once upon a time Alex loved). Anyhow, it's been a learning experience for all of us and he has introduced us to some really great meals.

So what does a vegan eat? Lots of vegetables,



What's Cookin'

fruits, grains, beans, nuts, soy, hemp hearts, seeds. It takes more imagination and creativity to eat vegan on a daily basis than your basic meat and potatoes diet. I have great admiration for the chefs creating some of the fantastic foods we've had at the vegan restaurants that we've tried and for those of you out there, including my son, who've committed to being vegan.

Today's recipe, vegan mac and cheese is excellent. Does it taste exactly like regular mac and cheese, no. But is it a filling, tasty, comforting, wintry kind of food just like regular mac and cheese, yes! Is it the right thing to enjoy with a fire burning in the woodstove and a good movie on TV on a cold winter night - YES!

We've made this recipe with regular wheat pasta noodles, but we've done it before with some really great quinoa noodles, spelt, and veggie noodles— so you can certainly change up the pasta to suit your taste and diet.

Have fun and keep cooking!

Vegan Mac & Cheese

SERVES 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 head cauliflower, cut in to large pieces
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- salt and pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2/3 cup nutritional yeast flakes
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 1 cube vegetable bouillon
- 1/4 cup almond milk
- 3/4 cup toasted walnuts
- 1/2 cup sliced sundried tomatoes in oil
- 2 cups macaroni noodles
- 3/4 cup panko
- 2 tbsp olive oil



METHOD

Cook cauliflower in a large pot of boiling, salted water until tender. Drain well and place in food processor.

In a fry pan, heat olive oil. Add onion and cook over medium heat until onion is soft and golden brown (approx. 15 minutes). Season with salt and pepper. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute more. Add to food processor. Add Dijon, yeast flakes, spices, bouillon, almond milk, toasted walnuts and sundried tomatoes to processor. Puree until well blended. Taste for salt and pepper.

Cook noodles according to package directions. Drain, but do not rinse. Mix cooked noodles with cauliflower mixture. Spread in a baking pan. Cover with foil. Bake in a preheated 350 degree F oven for 30-40 minutes, until bubbling and heated through. In a small bowl, mix panko and oil. For last 15 minutes of cooking, remove foil. Sprinkle top with panko. Finish baking.

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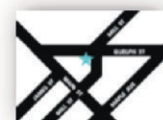
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