



## Simple Recipes for Joy: More Than 200 Delicious Vegan Recipes

By Sharon Gannon

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**More than 200 delicious vegan recipes from the world-renowned founder of the Jivamukti yoga method and the New York City Jivamuktea Café**

Since 1984, Jivamukti yoga has been synonymous with a new way of living: peacefully, healthfully, and consciously. Jivamukti's dedicated instructors and message of kindness have inspired a global revolution. In 2006, Sharon Gannon and David Life opened the Jivamuktea Café to complement their yoga school as a living expression of how compassionate spiritual activism can be put to practical use. It, too, was an immediate success. The peaceful ambiance, the camaraderie, and, most of all, the delicious, hearty fare struck a chord with patrons who were thrilled to eliminate meat and dairy from their diet without sacrificing taste.

Thousands of customers—including Russell Simmons, award-winning film director Darren Aronofsky, and Eco Spokesmama Chloé Jo Davis—have become devoted fans of Gannon's cruelty-free burritos, chocolate mousse, and flower salads. Now, for the first time, Gannon presents the secrets behind the café's acclaimed menu—and also showcases her own home cooking, with recipes she's been making for family and friends for decades.

Stalwart vegans—as well as the millions of vegetarians and omnivores who eat vegan part-time for its health and environmental benefits—will embrace Gannon's accessible, delicious, and spiritually powerful recipes.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"This beautiful book will transform your life. Sharon Gannon has helped countless people achieve a dramatically new level of health and wellness. Now, you can put her wisdom to work as she guides you to using the power of food in ways you may never have imagined. Over many years, our research has established the surprising power of plant-based diets to help people regain their health and vitality. Sharon Gannon brings you everything you need to put that power to work."

—Neal D. Barnard, M.D., President, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine, George Washington University School of Medicine, Washington, DC

"Sharon Gannon infuses love and spirit into every one of her incredibly delicious dishes; eat her food and feel good in your body and soul!"

—Kathy Freston, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Veganist* and *Quantum Wellness*

"Sharon is my Guru—I like eating anything she's dishing out. Her teachings on yoga and veganism have positively transformed my life. She is not only an example of someone who walks the talk, but she excels in so many areas, teacher, philosopher, activist, artist, musician and cook, showing us all that through devotion to God one can become a divine instrument and with God's great love all is possible."

—Russell Simmons, philanthropist, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Success Through Stillness*

"All one needs to do is be around Sharon Gannon for mere moments to realize that she's figured out the secret to happiness. Sharon glows with good karma, optimal wellness, and a joyful, blissful life. Therefore, whatever she is eating, doing, teaching—we must perk up and take notice. How and what we eat is not only integral to health, but to what life brings us energetically. This cookbook is a call to tasty karmic eating, to revitalize our dulled taste buds and get our depressed palates in shape. Whole foods, fresh foods, foods alive with rich vitamin properties—these are the keys to turning our life around from the inside out. Unlike many vegan cookbooks, Sharon's recipes aren't riddled with substitutions for meat and ice cream. Sharon serves us healthy realness, the truth behind what our bodies really need (one look at hers tells us to listen up!) and what will fill us and warm us in the long term. Sharon's recipes are simple, tasty, and most importantly, recipes you will make again and again. Sharon keeps her ingredient lists short, which makes life for busy moms (like me!) committed to healthful family eating easier. This is a book all vegan-curious, committed plant-eaters, and anyone looking to up their health ante and notice a quick difference should have handy. You don't have to be a patchouli-swinging back-bender to eat these foods; any novice or mom next door can learn endless nutritional truths and tips with this book within reach. If you could live healthfully without resorting to pharmaceuticals, help the environment by eating sustainably, be in fabulous shape, feel wonderful, and be committed to ahimsa—to not participating in the brutal treatment of animals on factory farms—non harming... why on earth wouldn't you? This is the truth in Sharon's message. It's a simple decision to make. Try this diet. Eat this delicious food. The transformation in your body and mind will be dramatic, and you'll ride the sexy changes deliciously on this treasure tomb of plant powered tastiness!"

—Chloé Jo Davis, Eco Spokesmama & GirlieGirlArmy.com Founder

"Super Green Salad, Love Smoothie, Green Machine...All enlargements of the soul with the intrinsic beauty of Sharon Gannon, the most impassioned and truthful vegan chef and yogi alive today on Mother Earth."

—Joe Sponzo, Personal chef to Sting and Trudie Styler, and author of *The Lakehouse Cookbook*

"Sharon Gannon's beautiful book lies at the untapped intersection of cooking, yoga, and ahimsa practices, demonstrating that preparing and consuming life-giving—rather than life-taking—food is the foundation of a conscious and compassionate life."

—Colleen Patrick-Goudreau, bestselling author of *The Joy of Vegan Baking* and *The 30-Day Vegan Challenge*.

"*Simple Recipes For Joy* proves that a compassionate and healthy vegan diet leaves zero to be desired. If you've ever considered leaving animals off your plate, this easy cookbook by one of yoga's masters has a lot to offer. Full of simple yet incredible meat-free recipes that don't rely on soy products, Sharon's recipes are based on wholesome, unprocessed foods that bring us health and vitality. She cooks from the heart, always keeping the well-being of others in mind—both human and animal. She is a tireless voice for the voiceless—and a great cook too!"

—Jenny Brown, Founder & Director Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary and Author of *The Lucky Ones: My Passionate Fight for Farm Animals*

"Buying a vegan cookbook is usually an expression of interest. Buying this one is a declaration. The activism known as peace springs from your plate—and thanks to Sharon Gannon, it's a delectable beginning."

—Kevin Archer, author of *In Lieu of Heaven*

"Sharon's food nourishes AND enlightens. As a long time devoted fan of her Jivamuktea Cafe and her yoga teachings, I can't wait to experiment with her alchemy at home. She's finally given up her secrets."

—Darren Aronofsky, award winning film director—*Noah*, *Black Swan* and *The Wrestler*

"With *Simple Recipes for Joy*, Sharon lets us in on the inner sanctum of her alchemical kitchen. I have had the privilege of sitting at her table since 1979, being personally served by her and eating her delicious cruelty-free meals—and can attest to the fact that they are filled with nourishment, presented with graciousness and plenty of magic. Her cookbook provides insightful ways to improve our health, the Earth's wellbeing, our relationship to our fellow animals and make positive changes in our diet that will affect the whole world and could possibly save it."

—Dr. Andrew Lange N.D., author of *Getting at the Root: Treating the Deepest Source of Disease*

About the Author

**Sharon Gannon** is a twenty-first-century Renaissance woman, an animal-rights and vegan activist, and a world-renowned yogini, author, dancer, poet, musician, and producer.

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Foreword

Sharon Gannon's latest book has the power to change your life; it may even save it. This is a pretty bold statement. After all, you're holding only a cookbook, right? Wrong. Trust me, this statement is spot-on accurate. How do I know? Because Sharon's teachings are part of the reason I'm alive. And her recipes are more than a healthy meal; they are the foundation of what's known as functional, holistic medicine. You see, the doctor of the future is you. You know exactly what your body needs to thrive and by quieting your mind, dumping your addictions, and listening to your gut wisdom, you too will learn how to use food to transform your life.

Food literally has the power to heal and the power to poison. In my journey as a cancer patient, I've come to understand that health is not an absence of disease; it is a presence of vitality, sustainable energy, and joy. Health is our birthright. And yet so many of us have forgotten. We believe that our genes determine our fate and that we have no control over our lives. This couldn't be further from the truth. The genes you were born with are not your destiny. Your daily food choices (along with your lifestyle and environment) affect your genetic future. That's right: what you eat today can literally have an impact on your DNA. Which is precisely why many people who follow the Standard American Diet (SAD) are sick, overweight, tired, and in a state of total dis-ease.

The SAD way of living, filled with acidic animal products that are high in saturated fat, cholesterol, and cancer-causing carcinogens, processed foods, and refined sugar, strips our bodies of minerals and creates oxidative stress and inflammation. In fact, inflammation is the root cause of most chronic diseases. Inflammation is like being on fire on the inside, and this fire (or stress) comes from what we eat, drink, and think. In the case of animal products, the more we consume, the more inflamed and sicker we become.

It's actually pretty ironic. We torture and slaughter billions of sentient beings each year because we erroneously believe that we need to eat their bodies for proper nourishment. "Milk, it does a body good," right? "Beef, it's what's for dinner." These messages have been strategically carved into our brains. Yet, this so-called nourishment often sends us to the grave earlier than necessary. It's such a waste.

And who propagates these myths? The food industry. With billions of advertising dollars at their disposal, we are led to believe that meat, dairy, eggs, fish, poultry, processed foods, sugary snacks, and sodas are good for us. Because there is little regulation, we are incredibly vulnerable and often confused. As a result we blindly consume the foods that lead to heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, osteoporosis, arthritis, and so on. Let's pause for a moment and follow the money trail. If plant-based foods are so good for us, then why can they sometimes be more expensive? Special interests do not favor broccoli. The fast-food burger is cheap because of government subsidies. And yet, calorie per calorie, there is more nourishment (vitamins, minerals, fiber, phytonutrients, antioxidants, and even protein!) in broccoli than in steak. So is cheap food a wise investment? No way. And once you learn how to shop wisely, you'll see that a plant-based diet can fit into any budget.

It's that simple, and yet we're so confused. I know I certainly was. I was a hard-core omnivore and a junk-food junkie for many years. But on February 14, 2003, everything changed. Happy Valentine's Day, you have cancer—a rare stage-IV disease with no treatment (no chemo, radiation, or surgery) and no cure. I was devastated. The first doctor I consulted suggested a triple organ transplant to remove and replace my liver and both of my lungs. Because these organs were riddled with malignant tumors, he thought it was my only hope. The second doctor suggested another radical treatment (that wouldn't cure me) and gave me just ten years to live. I was only thirty-one years old. In an instant, I thought my life was over. I had no idea it was just getting started. I finally found an open-minded oncologist who helped me decide upon a radical approach. Watch and wait. Do nothing. Since the disease could be slow-moving, maybe I had time.

As it turns out, I did have time, and I decided to use it wisely. Next stop, Whole Foods, my pharmacy. How did I know to go to Whole Foods and stock up on plant-powered medicine? Sharon Gannon.

I started practicing Jivamukti yoga in 1991. At the time I was a young dancer, actress, and bartender with lots of injuries and "isms." Jivamukti quickly became my church. It was a place I could go to take care of my temple and find my way home. I had never heard of veganism before studying with Sharon. I barely knew how to sit still, let alone make a bowl of quinoa! But slowly I began to listen.

When the diagnosis came, I listened at the deepest level imaginable. Here's what I heard: "Practice yoga,

learn how to take care of yourself, reduce your stress load, calm your mind, sleep, and most important—change what’s on your plate.” Influenced by Sharon’s teachings of ahimsa (nonviolence), I decided to practice kindness and compassion toward all beings, including myself. The first step was to remove stimulants like caffeine, alcohol, and sugar, all processed foods, and all animal products from my diet. After the initial detox period, I was astonished by how great I felt. For the next eight years, I researched the diets and lifestyles that were known to increase immunity, strength, and longevity. Guess what? They were all plant-based.

At this point, you may be questioning why your doctor hasn’t told you any of this information, or worse, you may wonder why he or she won’t validate these findings. The truth is that doctors don’t study nutrition in medical school. Therefore it’s our job to teach ourselves.

For nearly a decade now, I have lived a happy, healthy, and stable life in the face of a deadly disease. I still have cancer but it doesn’t have me. The diagnosis that once terrified me continues to lie dormant. Thanks to my diet and lifestyle, I’m in terrific overall health and have boundless energy, peace, and strength.

In the process of learning about the power of foods, I’ve had the privilege to share these principles with thousands of people from around the world, many of whom have been able to fully restore their health naturally without drugs, surgeries, or complicated and costly medical procedures. Like Sharon, I can’t think of a better way to spend my life than in the service of others. Because once we learn this information, we must pay it forward by spreading this lifesaving message to our families and friends.

As a nation we are getting sicker and fatter. Every day, fifteen hundred people die of cancer. Every minute a person in the United States dies of heart disease. Two-thirds of adults are overweight or obese. And diabetes is growing at an alarming rate. Young people are being diagnosed with diseases common to their grandparents, and many researchers believe that the next generation will be the first to die before their parents. Health care costs are ballooning out of control, yet most of the money goes toward treating diseases that are preventable with proper plant-based nutrition. It’s easy to conclude that the leading cause of death in this country is not disease, it’s an unhealthy diet.

At the same time, our precious environment urgently cries out for help. According to the United Nations, “livestock are responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, a bigger share than that of transport. Livestock now use more than 30 percent of the Earth’s entire land surface. As forests are cleared to create new pastures, it is a major driver of deforestation, especially in Latin America, where 70 percent of former forests have been turned over to grazing. The livestock business is also among the most damaging sectors to the Earth’s increasingly scarce water resources, contributing among other things to water pollution from animal wastes, antibiotics and hormones, chemicals from tanneries, fertilizers and the pesticides used to spray feed crops.”

Now, this all may seem depressing at first, but it’s also thoroughly empowering if you’re willing to do something. But know this: We can’t wait for change. We must *be* the change. You can change the world from your kitchen. You can lead a peaceful plant-based protest, but only if you’re willing to buck the broken system and take a compassionate stand for yourself, the animal beings, and the precious world around you.

Take it from me: prevention is the only lasting cure. No matter what your circumstance, actively participating in your health, spiritual wealth, and happiness is a revolutionary act. Join the revolution today. Read this book, try the delicious recipes, and tell everyone you know to do the same. Listen to Sharon. She is a true visionary, a pioneer, and a compassionate mother to many beings. I’m so grateful to her for teaching me how to heal. Now she will teach you.

Peace, love, and veggies,

## Introduction

It's a Tuesday afternoon in New York City, and Union Square is as hectic and bustling as ever. People pass our Broadway entrance looking harried, barking into cell phones, lugging overstuffed briefcases, tugging toddlers' hands. But inside the Jivamukti Yoga School, the creases of worry on the people's faces fade away. After a peaceful yoga class, many of them step into Jivamuktea Café for a Chakra Rainbow Smoothie, a Burrito Verdura, or some Spirulina Millet. They linger to talk—laughing quietly, reading, or simply sitting—at home in the tranquillity and joy that abounds in this place.

Serving them, I am filled with gladness. I learned long ago that if I wanted to find enlightenment, cooking was the first step, and that if I was in search of joy, there was no better way to reach it than by providing for others. Yogis, who live by the nonviolent yogic principle of ahimsa, naturally gravitate toward the all-vegan, cruelty-free menu at Jivamuktea Café; and the simple peace and joy that fills them as they sit down to eat infuses the entire room with happiness.

As a child, I asked my mother, “If killing is wrong, isn't it wrong to eat animals?” My mother replied, “It is okay, because they are raised for that.” Like most people, she felt that eating enslaved animals was normal and acceptable. Due to what they eat, many human beings on the planet today consciously or unconsciously cause tremendous harm to themselves, to the environment, and to billions of animals.

For most, what they eat is influenced by unconscious habits, ignorance, and mass media advertising rather than common sense, kindness, or joy. I have been reminded time and time again of the power of the printed word. Cookbooks, food critics, and celebrities can have a huge influence on what people choose to eat and whether or not restaurants stay open. The animal-user industries of course are well aware of this and pay a lot of money to get celebrities to endorse their products. Remember the milk mustache? And it's worked; most of us have become so *civilized* that we can't think for ourselves. Common sense is not so common. We have relinquished our innate sense and sensibilities, giving them over to the advertising agencies and food critics to manipulate our appetites.

In fact, we too often have no appetite outside of what we have become programmed to crave. As we have dissociated ourselves from nature, we have also become disconnected from the natural intelligence of the body. We can no longer feel what our bodies really need; we live in our heads, and our heads have been thoroughly programmed by our culture. We have allowed our own bodies to become so polluted by and addicted to junk food, tainted animal flesh, and milk products that we cannot even tell anymore when we are consuming something poisonous and injurious to our health. We have allowed “Food Inc.”—corporations and the animal-user industries, which have in many cases become more powerful than governments—to decide what's available and affordable to eat. In America, Froot Loops (a highly processed, high-fructose, genetically modified, corn-based breakfast cereal) is cheaper to buy per serving than a piece of real organic fruit! Everything that is good for us and good for the environment has been stigmatized with the label *alternative*, while foods that are harmful to our health and the health of the environment are called *normal* or *standard*, and that is sad.

Some people may argue that they have a right to eat meat and dairy products, saying that it is nobody's business what they do. When a person defends their right to eat meat and dairy products, they are failing to realize the devastating impact that such a diet has upon the environment and all of the life on this planet. It is fair to assume that most meat eaters are not eating meat because they want to cause harm to an animal or the environment; it is most likely more a matter of not thinking further than what appeals to their appetite at the

moment. I think meat eaters generally view veganism as no more than a dietary preference, similar to preferring chocolate over vanilla, not realizing the life-and-death seriousness of the issue. When you are a meat eater, you generally don't bring consciousness to your food choices. Of course some do, like people who eat kosher or halal food, or Catholics who abstain from meat on Fridays, or others with food allergies to gluten, peanuts, etc. But nevertheless, out of the worldwide human population of seven billion, very few meat eaters bring any significant level of awareness to the food on their plates. For the vast majority of people, food choices are a matter of habit, convenience, and personal preference rather than ethical considerations. They will just eat whatever is being served, whatever appeals to them on the menu, as the flight attendant asks, "Chicken or beef?"

When we become aware of the atrocities that are being committed against defenseless animals, many of us feel saddened and even overwhelmed. We feel helpless to do something about it all. Confronting or even discussing the issue with our family and friends can feel overwhelming, not to mention the helplessness we may feel against the forces of government or multinational corporations. How could any of us make a difference in a world where the majority of human beings feel it is not only normal and okay to eat animals but it is our God-given right as the dominant species to exploit the weak?

It is a fact that our consumption of meat, eggs, and dairy is excessive, yet our culture is founded upon the excessive enslaving and exploiting of animals for food. This way of life started around ten thousand years ago, when human beings began to domesticate animals and exploit them for material gain as part of the shift from a nomadic lifestyle to a more sedentary one.<sup>1</sup> So the good news is that eating animals and animal products is not hardwired into us—it is cultural, something we have learned. Behaviors and habits that are learned can be unlearned, if exposed to enlightening education.

Our relationship to food is fundamental to our existence. Who can deny the importance that food plays in our lives? It sustains us physically, emotionally, and even spiritually, because without a physical body the spirit has no vehicle through which to experience life. Eating is the most essential way that we as human beings relate to the Earth—to nature. Eating is also the most essential way that we relate to each other. The most basic relationship in the human/animal world is between a parent and child. The primal relationship between a mother and her baby is based on the mother providing food for her dependent baby by means of her own breast milk. Without mother's milk, most newborn infant mammals would die. Meals shared with family and friends play a valuable role in the development of social ties. Whole societies are built upon food—the planting, harvesting, storing, trading or selling, and preparation of food.

For many of us who consume meat and dairy products, food is the only way that we relate to animals. Peter Singer, author of the groundbreaking book *Animal Liberation* (first published in 1975), has so aptly observed, "Most of us relate to animals three times a day when we sit down to eat them." "That's a terrible way to define a relationship," adds Ingrid Newkirk, founder of PETA.

My own personal relationship with food has taken me into various worlds of eating and not eating. As a child, I endured times of starvation due to financial difficulties, and I learned the power that imagination plays in regard to food. My brother, sister, and I would take the condiments and spices out of a pretty much bare cupboard, sprinkle salt and pepper into our palms, and "tongue taste." As we licked up the salt and pepper we would "savor," imagining we were eating a baked potato. A bit of cinnamon would transport us into a world filled with pumpkin pie or French toast. The interesting thing was that after such a "virtual meal," we didn't feel so hungry. As a young woman, I was anorexic for seven years due to severe emotional trauma. During that time, I became very sensitive and could feel the minute effects of a sip of water or a crumb of bread in my body. Experiences like these have taught me how powerful our thoughts can be in regard to food. Since immersing myself in the practices of yoga, I have become aware of how offering food to God before eating it transforms the experience of eating into a sacred act.



Ironically, after dropping out of college during my first year—due to a nervous breakdown brought on by lack of food coupled with the stress of living with my boyfriend, who was starving himself to obtain a draft deferment from the Vietnam War—I went into the restaurant business. Partnering with my boyfriend and another friend, the three of us opened our own restaurant in Seattle in 1971. Hunger is what motivated us. We called the restaurant *You Are What You Eat*. None of us knew very much about cooking or running a business, but we did know that we were hungry.

Hunger can be a very passionate motivator, and passion tends to attract attention. Our little restaurant became an overnight success. The food was tasty, the dishes were very creative, and the portions a bit too generous for the prices we charged. The decor was whimsical and swinging—one table actually sported a swing seat, a wooden plank hanging by two chains mounted in the ceiling. Instead of a conventional chair, a customer could dine while swaying in a swing. Milton Katims, the then conductor of the Seattle Symphony, was a regular customer and was outspoken with his enthusiasm for my cooking, especially the borscht, about which he would remark, “Sharon, this is as good as my Russian grandmother’s! With no beef stock, how do you do it?”

At the time there were no vegetarian restaurants in Seattle and items on our menu such as alfalfa sprouts, soy nuts, and avocado sandwiches were hard to find. Even though there was a heavy emphasis on vegetarian dishes at *You Are What You Eat*, it wasn’t a vegetarian restaurant. I was not a vegan at the time, and my two partners were voracious omnivores. We were hippies, and, like most of our contemporaries, we had been influenced by the vegetarianism of the Beatles and the *Farm Vegetarian Cookbook*, but also, unfortunately, the non-vegetarianism of Arlo Guthrie’s *Alice’s Restaurant Cookbook*. *You Are What You Eat* stayed open for a little less than a year but had to close when the landlord sold the property to an oil company to build a gas station. After we closed the restaurant, I focused on developing myself as an artist for the next decade or so.

My life changed forever in 1982, when I saw a British documentary film titled simply *The Animals Film*. The film exposed many of the cruel and exploitive ways that human beings treat animals—all of which are considered quite normal in our culture. It explored the use of animals as entertainment, food, providers of clothing, and subjects in scientific and military experiments.

I had been an on-again, off-again vegetarian before the film, but shortly afterward I became a vegan and shortly after that a yoga teacher. I incorporated veganism and animal rights in all the work I did as my way of taking direct action against the cruelty inflicted upon other animals by us, human beings. And I started to educate myself about the damage done by the Standard American Diet.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics, in the United States 10 billion land animals are slaughtered every year for food, and approximately 53 billion sea creatures are slaughtered every year worldwide for American consumption—that’s 63 billion individual beings killed!<sup>2</sup> The number is staggering when you consider that there are only 7 billion human beings on the entire planet—and we’re talking here just about the number of animals killed by human beings in only *one* country in *one* year.

Then there is the water issue. Fresh, clean drinking water is rapidly becoming a scarce commodity. One in every seven people in the world today does not have access to clean water.<sup>3</sup> Most of the water that is consumed is used to raise animals for food.<sup>4</sup> It takes 2,400 gallons of water to produce a pound of meat, but only twenty-five gallons to produce a pound of wheat. A vegan diet requires three hundred gallons of water per day;<sup>5</sup> a meat-eating diet requires more than 4,000 gallons of water per day.<sup>6</sup> Raising animals for food causes more water pollution than any other industry.<sup>7</sup> Much of the waste from farms, which contains high levels of toxic chemicals from pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics, hormones, and other pharmaceuticals, flows into and contaminates streams, groundwater, rivers, and oceans.

As for the benefits of going vegan: a vegan diet has been proven to reverse and prevent heart disease<sup>8</sup> and cancer,<sup>9</sup> and there is growing evidence that it can successfully treat diabetes.<sup>10</sup> Vegans on average live longer than meat eaters and they weigh less.<sup>11</sup> (Meat and dairy consumption makes you fat and can even contribute to erectile dysfunction in men.<sup>12</sup>) Perhaps most important, by eating a plant-based diet, you contribute to more joy in the world and in yourself.

In 1983, I moved to New York City to further the career as a musician/artist that I had begun in Seattle after *You Are What You Eat* closed. To support myself, I worked as a cook and as a waitress in David Life's Life Café. Because of the awareness I had developed about the impact of meat-eating on our bodies, other animals, and the environment, I am proud to say that I influenced the Life Café to become the first restaurant in New York City to offer a soy milk cappuccino and other vegan dishes. Though the Life Café did come to offer many vegetarian and vegan options, it was not strictly a vegetarian restaurant.

The Life Café provided David with his main source of income, but when he and I started to teach more and more yoga classes, the meat on the café menu started to bother him. He found it more and more difficult to justify serving hamburgers and omelets. Then John Robbins's book *Diet for a New America* came out in 1987. David read the book, and after he was done he read it again. After the second reading, he put the book down, walked over to the Life Café, told his partner that he was finished and she could have his percentage of the business; he didn't want a monetary settlement. She asked him, "What will you do now? How will you support yourself?" And he answered, "I'm not sure of that, but I am sure of one thing, and that's that I'm not going to make my living by causing the death of animals."

David and I had faith that by teaching yoga in a way that was aligned with the ethical precepts, which included ahimsa—a practice that attempts to minimize the harm one causes—the universe would guide and take care of our needs. Fortune smiles on the brave, they say, and so it came to pass that more and more people came knocking on our door wanting yoga classes. The heavy animal rights and vegan message in the classes we taught didn't seem to put them off, and our school quickly became very popular and outgrew three spaces.

Veganism and yoga are natural partners. The Sanskrit word *yoga* means "to link, to connect," and that implies relationship. Asana, which is perhaps the most well-known of the many yogic practices, to many just means physical exercises like standing on your head or back bending. But the term *asana* actually means how one connects or relates to the Earth. In the *Yoga Sutra*, Patanjali says that our relationship to the Earth (*asana*) should be steady (*sthira*) and joyful (*sukham*), if we desire yoga—enlightenment, ultimate happiness, freedom from suffering. A yogi is someone who strives to live harmoniously with the Earth and all beings.

A yogic lifestyle is radical because it challenges the very root of our present culture—a culture economically based on enslaving, exploiting, and eating animals. What sets the yogi apart from most normal people today is that a yogi wants liberation, or *moksha*. A yogi realizes that how we treat others will determine how others treat us, how others treat us will determine how we see ourselves, and how we see ourselves will determine who we are.

Yoga teaches that whatever we want in life we can have if we are willing to provide it for others. So if yogis want to be free, they understand that to deprive others of freedom will ultimately not benefit their project—to be free themselves. Following that logic, yogis abhor slavery and examine their own lives to find ways that they themselves might be condoning slavery and then eradicate those ways of acting. The fact is that animals who are raised for food are slaves. Making kind choices when it comes to the food we eat is one of the most basic ways to begin to ensure our own happiness and freedom. The cause for our own happiness, health, and freedom lies in how happy and free we can make the lives of others. The definition of *others* includes other

animals.

In 2006 we opened the Jivamukti Yoga School at 841 Broadway, off Fourteenth Street, in New York City and with it, the elegant, seventy-seat Jivamuktea Café, serving organic teas as well as organic vegan food seven days a week. Our statement of purpose for our café and for our school is the same: *Jivamukti Yoga is a path to enlightenment through compassion for all beings. Jivamukti is a Sanskrit word that means to live liberated in joyful, musical harmony with the Earth. The Earth does not belong to us—we belong to the Earth. Let us celebrate our connection to life by not enslaving animals and exploiting the Earth, and attain freedom and happiness for ourselves in the process. For surely, the best way to uplift our own lives is to do all we can to uplift the lives of others. Go vegan!*

I asked my first spiritual teacher, the alchemist Randy Hall, “How do I become enlightened?,” and he responded, “First, learn how to cook, clean, and garden.” I started to put that into practice when I became vegan, and I began to share it with others on a grand scale with Jivamuktea Café, creating a menu of vegan dishes that are delicious and designed to bring peace and joy to the chef, the staff, the diners, the animals, and the planet.

Preparing and cooking food is an alchemical practice: deftly combining varied ingredients and subjecting them to the elements of water, fire, and air in just the right proportions and with just the right timing and appropriate spells—consisting of good mental intentions, with no gossip or small talk in the kitchen—to manifest a delicious meal that satisfies both body and soul. Food prepared in this way can even produce a magical shift in perception of oneself and others, yielding hope and encouragement to move forward through life!

So what exactly does it mean to be vegan? To eat a vegan diet means that you eat a 100 percent plant-based diet: you eat vegetables, you don't eat any animal products, and you do this for ethical reasons—out of compassion for the animals and the Earth as well as respect for yourself and for life itself. Some people may say they are vegetarians but still eat milk products, eggs, and fish. Vegans do not eat dairy products, eggs, honey, or fish because these are not vegetables and eating them causes great harm. Some clarification about what constitutes animal products: *animal products* pertains to the muscles, flesh, fat, organs, milk, fluids, blood, saliva, eggs, unborn fetuses, and infants that come from the body of an animal. The term *animal* refers to any living being, which includes all species of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and insects.

In other words, a vegan would not eat any part of or any substance produced by a cow, which includes their milk, blood, testicles, hooves (gelatin), brains, liver, kidney, or intestines, or any part of or any substance produced by a pig, sheep, goat, chicken, turkey, duck, goose, fish, frog, snake, or bee (honey). Nor would a vegan refer to any fellow Earthling by using derogatory terms such as *beef*, *pork*, *mutton*, or *poultry*—all of which indicate the categorizing of a living being according to his or her exploitable, edible resources.

Many vegans extend their ethics to include not just what they eat but everything they consume: food, clothing, furnishings, medicine, and entertainment, to name a few. Vegans do not view animals as existing to be used by human beings. A vegan is an abolitionist who abhors slavery. Most humans believe that slavery and concentration camps are a shameful thing of the past. But the fact is that billions of animal beings are cruelly confined in today's concentration camps: the modern industrial factory farms—CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations). And even animals who are raised for food on small family-owned farms and on fish farms are slaves—they are confined to serve the interests of their “owners” with no rights to live full, happy lives true to their nature. A person who eats enslaved animals is not only condoning slavery but sustaining it as the foundation of our global economy. People who adopt a vegan diet solely for health reasons may not be motivated by a desire to see the end of slavery and exploitation of animals, but their dietary choices further those ends just the same.

In truth, the Standard American Diet (SAD) is sad because it is not healthy for humans, animals, or the environment. A plant-based, vegan diet is the healthiest diet for human beings. A vegan's negative impact upon the environment is substantially lower than a meat eater's, and a vegan diet is obviously kinder to animals. When you have a simple choice to be kind or cruel, why not choose to be kind and, by doing so, contribute to raising the level of joy and happiness in the world?

We are in the midst of a global crisis. The living world is dying in our time. I hope that the book you hold in your hands will help to provide you with the means to begin to heal the global crisis, saving this planet from destruction. To be a joyful vegan in the world today is to become involved in the most radical, positive, political revolution ever. A fork can be a weapon of mass destruction or an instrument of peace. Everything a vegan eats or consumes reflects a choice that takes into account the well-being of others rather than just ourselves—and that *is* a big difference. Each one of us can make a huge difference by choosing not to eat animals. By choosing kindness over cruelty, we contribute to the sustainability of our planet Earth and can even change the destiny of our species and all the species on Earth.

Simply put, this is a book of formulas, complete with how-to instructions, suggestions, and advice, which, if followed with a cheerful heart and sense of adventure, could result in the most delightful culinary experiences manifesting on your dinner table. But don't worry—use these recipes as guidelines; feel free to improvise, as seasoned cooks do. Most of the recipes for the dishes, drinks, and desserts that are served in Jivamuktea Café are contained in this book, plus a whole lot more. Many of the photos come from the café, and the rest come from my home kitchen and from the organic garden and forest at the Wild Woodstock Jivamukti Forest Sanctuary in Woodstock, New York. I hope you enjoy trying out these recipes for yourself and your friends and family. When people cook their own food, they develop more awareness of the connection between what they eat and how they feel.

The great changes in history (such as the abolition of human slavery, women's rights to education and to vote, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the fall of the Berlin Wall) have never been instigated by governments or corporations but by small groups of committed individuals acting out of consciousness for a greater good. We instigate the awakening of self-confidence within ourselves when we stop blaming others for the ills of the world and instead look at our own lives and ask, "What am I doing to contribute to a more peaceful, joyful, and unpolluted world?" By healing ourselves, we heal the world. After all, the world around us is only a reflection of who we are. And when we make others happy, we become happier too.

To become a vegan is by far the best way we have at this time in history to contribute to peace on Earth. Being a vegan in the world today is to be involved in a nonviolent, direct-action protest against cruelty and an affirmation of kindness. There is no more direct and powerful way to make a positive impact than being vegan. When your grandchildren or great-grandchildren ask you what *you* were doing during the war on Mother Earth, when billions of animals were enslaved, tortured, and exploited as part of the animal holocaust and mass genocide, have you considered what you will tell them? Have the courage to step outside the dictates of an authoritarian world culture that is based on the cruel exploitation of animals and the planet, to joyfully celebrate your respect for yourself and all of life by committing to a diet rooted in kindness. The most courageous act any of us can do at this time is to dare to care about others—other animals, the Earth, and all beings. To be more other-centered rather than self-centered is the first step to happiness. The delicious recipes in this book will not only help you create tasty meals but will help you start your own radical movement of peaceful, joyful coexistence with all of life.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHERE DO I GET MY PROTEIN?

## **Users Review**

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