

eBites

Spring 2020

Published by Vegetarian for Life, the advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegetarians and vegans

Let them eat cake

With Vfl's new vegan
baking guide



Veggie pen-
and phone-
pal scheme

Care catering for vegetarians & vegans

Excel at plant-based catering with our
new online training



PLUS: Win superfood protein
powder worth £41.75



Welcome

What a difference a few months can make. Since the last issue, a pandemic has struck, and we've grown accustomed to terms such as social distancing and flattening the curve. Like millions of others throughout the UK, VfL staff bring you this issue working safely from their own homes. We hope that you and yours are equally safe and well.

Home comforts are the order of the day, and we're pleased to release our newest guide, Vegan Baking ([see page 4](#)). You might find it extra handy, given the intermittent food shortages that we've been experiencing! We do hope that it inspires you to get baking.

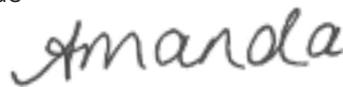
If you're ready to take your plant-based catering to the next level, check out VfL's new 'Care catering for older vegetarians and vegans' online training ([page 3](#)). Created by our team of chefs and nutritionists, the conveniently bite-sized training will help care establishments to take their plant-based catering to the next level – while maintaining that vital safe distance.

Staying social as we get older can sometimes be more challenging – and even more so in the current climate. We recently caught up with members of our veggie pen- and phone-pal scheme. Find out more about their experiences on [page 6](#).

If you do need any extra support during this difficult time, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Some of the ways in which we might be able to help are outlined on [page 8](#).

I hope that you enjoy the issue

Amanda Woodvine, Editor



Vegetarian for Life is an advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegetarians and vegans throughout the UK.



83 Ducie Street, Manchester M1 2JQ
Vegetarian for Life is a charity registered in England and Wales, number 1120687

Editor: Amanda Woodvine

news@vegetarianforlife.org.uk

Features writers: Ian Chandler,

Yasmine El-Gabry, Oliver Thompson

Design: The Ethical Graphic Design Co

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T: 0161 257 0887

E: info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk

W: vegetarianforlife.org.uk

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Reader exclusive

Interested in trying a new superfood protein powder? Water for Health is offering one lucky reader the chance to win a tub in a flavour of their choice (RRP £41.75).

Composed of only the highest-quality natural whole-food ingredients and notable for its great taste, it contains ingredients such as pea protein, broccoli and kale, plus a proprietary enzyme blend. Manufacturer, Ground-Based Nutrition, recommends this formula for anyone craving a nutritious

snack or meal replacement.

For your chance to win, answer this question: If selected to win, what would be your desired flavour of superfood protein powder? A) Chocolate B) Vanilla C) Natural

Email info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk with your answer by midday 12 June.

Terms and conditions: One winner will be drawn at random from all entries received. One entry per household only. UK addresses only. There is no cash alternative.



Learn to cater successfully for the fastest growing diets in the UK

...with Vegetarian for Life's new online care caterer training

Like us, you might be wondering when lockdown will end, and what a post-COVID-19 world holds for the future. With millions of workers furloughed and others adapting to working remotely, COVID-19 has accelerated digital transformation in many ways.

Businesses are more reliant on technology. Healthcare has never been more important. And educators are teaching online. Online resources enable global sharing of vital information – and when travel is limited, online learning can bridge this gap.

One thing we can be certain about in a post-COVID climate is – the future is definitely digital. So we are excited to be able to offer you a brand new online care caterer training series, just in time for National Vegetarian Week (11–17 May 2020).

Created by our team of chefs and nutritionists, the conveniently bite-sized training will help your organisation to take its plant-based catering to the next level.

Beth Rougier, a registered dietitian specialising in plant-based nutrition and tutor on the course said: “The Health and Social Care Act requires caterers to provide vegetarians and vegans with a diet that meets their nutritional needs. Like any diet, a plant-based diet needs to be well planned, to ensure that it is healthy and balanced.

“This training course educates caterers about the core components of a plant-based diet, and provides strategies and practical advice to meet the nutritional needs of older vegetarians and vegans.”

The British Dietetic Association accredited training features five dedicated modules sharing best practice, and guidance on catering for veg*ns and meat-reducers in your care. Topics include what vegans and vegetarians eat, plant-based nutrition and fortification, meal planning, and how to cook with meat and dairy substitutes. Each module includes easy-to-follow recipe videos with some fantastic, tasty recipes for you to introduce to your menus.

If you're looking to train additional members of your team, now could be a great time to enhance your organisation's membership to Premium Accredited.

**Vegetarian
for Life** 
ACCREDITED

Not only will this give you the benefit of unlimited free access to this online training – for all of your staff – but all of this, too:

- Independent accreditation of your menus and dishes
- 150 word description of each site on Vfl website
- Search engine optimisation allowing each site to appear at the top of area listing on [Vfl website](https://vegetarianforlife.org.uk/uk-list/about)
- Free listing of menus online
- Promotion where applicable at events and on Vfl blog and social media.

Visit <https://vegetarianforlife.org.uk/uk-list/about> to find out more and join today.

Your team will have access to complete the training at a time that suits them. All that they'll need is a laptop and internet connection. We know that getting cover in the kitchen for your catering staff can be a

challenge, and this online training solves that issue. The full course takes about 2.5 hours to complete but doesn't have to be completed in one go. Once completed, there will be a short test. A certificate will be gained on completion.

So what are you waiting for? Register for this training to upskill your team, help to future-proof your career, and learn something new today.



Let them eat cake

A new guide from Vegetarian for Life explains how to create a range of tasty vegan bakes – from light, airy sponges, to traditional puddings and eggless meringue. Packed full of delicious recipes, 'Vegan baking' is aimed at care caterers, but is a valuable resource for anyone cooking for vegans.

Just because someone chooses to be vegan doesn't mean that they should miss out on their favourite sweet treats. Enjoyment of food is such an important aspect of life, and if someone is living in a care home, food can become even more significant.

The smells and tastes of baking can evoke fond memories. If someone is struggling to eat and losing weight, providing a tempting slice of their favourite cake and a cuppa can

be an easy, enjoyable way for them to get those much-needed extra calories.

Vegan baking is enjoying a wave of popularity. In 2019, a number of ready-made vegan cakes were launched in supermarkets – and many catering suppliers are now increasing their vegan ranges, too. With the number of vegans on the rise – almost trebling in UK care homes, according to Vfl's recent survey – the demand for satisfying vegan desserts is increasing, too.



Vegan baking can be downloaded free of charge from the Vegetarian for Life [website](#). Alternatively, order a physical copy for just £2 plus P&P by calling us on 0161 257 0887.

Creamy mushroom and 'chicken' pie

Time to prepare 25 minutes

Time to cook 45 minutes

Makes 4 individual pies

Basic filling

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 stick celery, finely chopped
- 300g/10½oz mushrooms, sliced
- 1 tsp paprika
- 300g/10½oz vegan Quorn pieces
- 200ml vegetable stock
- ½ tsp cornflour, mixed with a little water
- 100ml soya cream
- 5g/½oz fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 500g/generous 1lb vegan puff pastry (e.g. Jus-Rol)

1 In a large saucepan, gently sauté the onions for 5 minutes, then add the garlic, celery, mushrooms, paprika and Quorn. Continue to cook for another 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

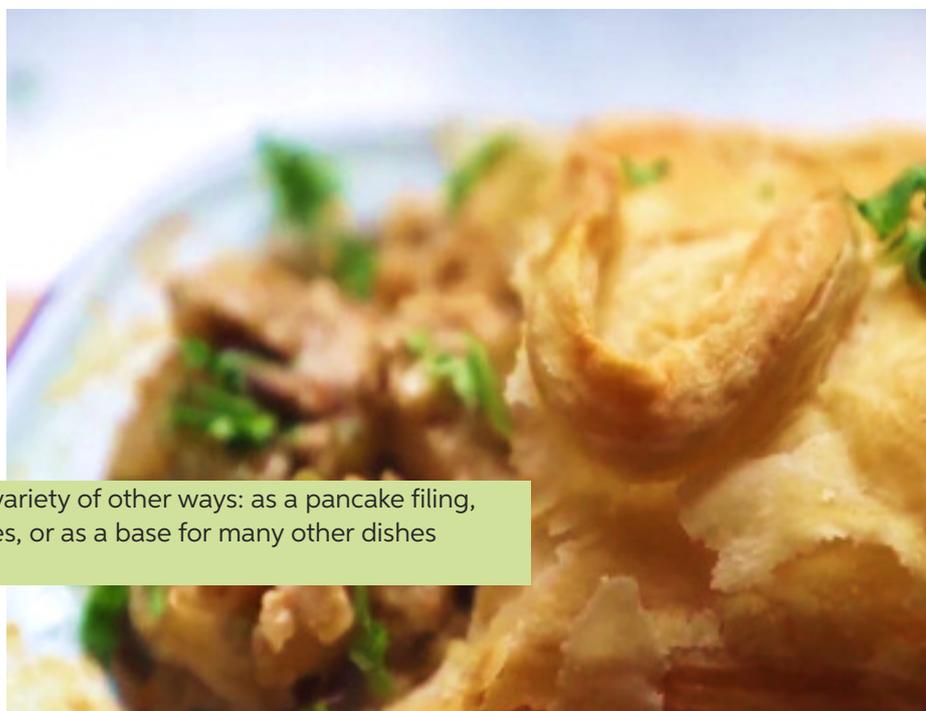
2 Add the stock and cornflour mix and bring to a simmer. If the sauce needs thickening, add a little more cornflour mixed into water.

3 Finally add the soya cream and parsley and simmer for a few minutes more.

4 Transfer the mixture to 1 large pie dish or 4 separate dishes.

5 Roll out the pastry and top the pies, sealing the edges with a little water and pressing down with a fork. Mark the pies with a little small pastry V in order to identify it as vegan.

6 Brush the top with a little soya milk and bake at 180°C/360°F/gas mark 4 for 25 minutes, or until golden and risen. Serve with a selection of vegetables and vegan gravy.



CHEF'S TIP This simple dish can be used in a variety of other ways: as a pancake filling, served with pasta, a topping for jacket potatoes, or as a base for many other dishes including curry or lasagne filling



M'hancha

This is a sweet treat made from filo pastry filled with chopped dried fruits, sugar and vanilla, then rolled up and baked. It has a Christmassy flavour, but perfect all year round, especially with a cup of tea or coffee.

Time to prepare 15 minutes

Time to cook 20 minutes

Makes 15 slices

- 8 sheets of filo pastry (leave these in the packet until ready to use)

For the filling

- 100g/3½oz vegan margarine, melted
- 50g/1¾oz caster sugar
- 50g/1¾oz glacé cherries, chopped
- 100g/3½oz ground almonds
- Zest and juice of one orange
- 75g/generous 2½oz orange marmalade
- 150g/scant 5½oz mixed nuts chopped and lightly toasted
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- ¼ tsp mixed spice

Garnish

- A little icing sugar
- A few chopped nuts

1 Preheat oven to 180°C/360°F/gas mark 4.

2 Place half the margarine and all the remaining filling ingredients into a bowl and combine.

3 On a large work surface (see chef's tip below) place the filo pastry sheets in a row, overlapping by approximately 5cm.

4 Spread the filling out in a line, 10cm from the top. Quickly drizzle half of the remaining margarine over the pastry and filling.

5 Fold over the left and right edges of the pastry to seal the ends. Carefully roll the pastry from top to bottom. This can be tricky, but don't worry if the filo breaks. Once rolled into a sausage shape, carefully form into a coiled snake.

6 Carefully transfer to a lined baking sheet and drizzle on the remaining margarine.

7 Bake for 20 minutes.

8 Transfer to a large serving plate and garnish with a few chopped nuts and a dusting of icing sugar, or alternatively a squirt of maple syrup. This is a sweet treat so only a small piece is needed. Start with the end of the 'tail' and work to the 'head'!

VfL also offers one-day vegan baking courses for professional caterers. These will give catering teams the tools for success, using tried-and-tested egg- and dairy- replacements to create a variety of delicious desserts. For more information, please contact Ellie, Cookery & Training Outreach Coordinator: ellie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk or on 0161 257 0887.

CHEF'S TIP You will need a large, clean work surface (e.g. long kitchen worktop) to make this on, so it's worth clearing an area before starting. This cake will keep well for up to a week

Friends for life

Staying social as we get older can sometimes be more challenging, while forming new relationships and making friends might be even more difficult. Not only can a lack of social contact negatively affect our mood in the short term, but over a longer period it may have a detrimental effect on our overall mental health.

According to research carried out by Age UK, around 1.4 million older people in the UK struggle with loneliness, with around 225,000 often going a week without speaking to anyone.

As a vegetarian or vegan, there can often be an added barrier to friendship if we feel that another person doesn't share the same interests or value the same things that we do. Animal rights and animal welfare can be topics that vegetarians and vegans feel passionate about, and sometimes it can be hard to look past that when we are meeting new people who eat meat.

LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

Vegetarian for Life's pen- and phone-pal scheme offers a way to meet like-minded people from all over the UK, who are vegetarians or vegans, mostly aged 65 or older. It can be a reassuring way to make lasting friendships.

Alison from the Central Lowlands of Scotland has been a member for a while and is pleased with how well it works for her: "I love it, really I do. It's the best thing I've done in a long, long time. I've now got a few people I speak to from the scheme and I'm delighted with how well it's been going."

"It's not complicated at all and I like how easy it is to get into it and start chatting to people. I'm very happy with it"

She notes how straightforward the scheme is to use: "It's not complicated at all and I like how easy it is to get into it and start chatting to people. I'm very happy with it."

Linda from Surrey has also found the scheme easy to use: "I've found it very enjoyable. Things like these can often be very complicated, and you never really know what you're signing up for. But this scheme is very honest and open. I've found

a number of people to contact, one of which I'm close friends with now over the phone, even though she lives quite far away and I'd probably have never met her otherwise."

Diane from London agrees: "I've made two friends: one I chat with once a week on the phone, and I've met up with a few times for coffee in town. The other, we write letters once every month or two. I'm grateful for it, I think it's a great service."

Richard, also from London, is especially enthusiastic: "I've got about 10 pen pals. I've been meeting up with one. We went to Drayton Manor and had a lovely day, and now we're planning to go to Thorpe Park. Everybody's different and they're all interesting. We send each other recipes and things."

MEMBER PROTECTION

While the scheme is all about encouraging friendship, it has the protection of its members at its heart, as Malcolm from South Yorkshire notes: "It's very reassuring to know that I can pick and choose who to contact and how to contact them. When I want to stop, I can do. There's no pressure whatsoever."

Anne from London is also reassured: "I'm quite concerned with how my personal details are shared online and who has access to them. But my profile on the scheme has as much information as I want it to have, and I'm happy that I can control that as much as I want to."

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Quite simply, the scheme is there for you to use as you wish. The application form can be filled out by hand. Either download it from the website, or request a paper copy to be sent to you by post.

The application form will ask you to specify whether you'd prefer to communicate with people by letter or by phone, or both, and whether you'd prefer to speak to just men or just women.

After filling in a little information about yourself, you can specify which parts you'd like to be made available to other members, such as your telephone number, and which parts you wouldn't. These details are then circulated to other members.

In return, you will then receive details of the other participants. Updates are currently sent out seasonally, three to four times per



"My profile on the scheme has as much information as I want it to have, and I'm happy that I can control that as much as I want to"

year. We can assure you that your details will not be used for any other purpose or circulated to any third party. Furthermore, your details will be deleted automatically after 1 year, or if you decide to leave the scheme before then.

Naturally the more information that you supply leads to a greater chance of you being contacted by someone who shares the same interests. However, we recommend that you only provide information that you are comfortable with other people knowing.

We hope that you will find the scheme interesting and, if you decide to take part, that you will then enjoy being in touch with like-minded people throughout the UK.

Our support for you...

These unprecedented times mean that there are kinks to work out and issues to deal with as never before. Vegetarian for Life is still able to offer support and advocacy services for older vegetarians and vegans who are currently in need.

Recently we helped John's wife. A strict vegan of 45 years and "not in the best health", the couple have been unable to go out for food shopping. They typically do their shopping at Waitrose, but currently can't get there to buy food. They had a look at Vegetarian for Life's [Veggie Meals to Your Door](#) guide and couldn't find anything for their area.

After reaching out to us, VfL was able to find a company that was still delivering to their area and very helpful on the phone. They are a great go-to for people who need vegan meals across the UK. Luckily, they also had Shepherd's pie, which is exactly what John's wife wanted! It can be a little extra work to find delivery at the moment and as John said to VfL: "Thanks for your help, I would have never been able to find that. You're an angel".

We were so glad to be able to help John and his wife, allowing them to stay safe in their home. This is one example of how we can offer support to you.

Another example is Eve, who has been using online delivery for many years because of her disabilities. Because online delivery slots with many food retailers have been reserved for those aged 70 or older, Eve was struggling to find a supermarket that she could continue to receive weekly deliveries from.

Eve had spent hours on hold with supermarkets and had no success speaking with a representative to ensure that she was put on the supermarket vulnerabilities list.

After reaching out to VfL, we were able to get in touch with the two supermarkets that Eve uses most often and they added her to their list, which would allow her to make online orders.

In her case, she was able to order all her essentials to be delivered to her door by the end of the same week. Eve said: "[You're] a miracle worker and I have a Sainsbury's order for SUNDAY! Not even 3 weeks away! Actual Sunday!"

We are happy to help you or advocate for you. If you need help, please contact us at info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk or call us on 0161 257 0887.



Mature Vegans and Veggies UK Facebook group

Veggie pen- and phone-pals scheme

Meal support for vulnerable vegans and veggies

Signposting to shopping, cooking, and isolation support

Nutrition during self-isolation

Grants to support independent living

Self-isolation survival guide