

eBites

Winter 2020/21

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

Show-stopping festive delights

Top chefs' festive favourites



New guide debunks
nutritional myths

The care
caterers
going the
extra mile
for veg*ns



PLUS: • Virtual vegan lunch club
• Win a stylish pure cotton apron

Welcome

2020 is drawing to a close – and what a year it has been. To spread a little festive cheer, our Roving Chefs have shared their top tips. Creating a show-stopping veg*n Christmas has never been easier – see [page 4](#).

Earlier this month, we held our annual Awards for Excellence in Veg*n Care Catering in a star-studded online ceremony. Hosted by English comedian, actor, writer and film producer Dave Spikey, the fun-filled event is available to watch again. Read more about the inspiring winners on [page 6](#).

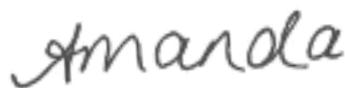
V for Life is often asked for nutrition advice – from the relatively simple to the more obscure. If you've ever wondered about protein, boosting nutrient intake, or even vegan options for a lower-fibre diet, you'll find answers in our new nutrition guide ([page 3](#)).

Chef Ollie tells us about his heartening work with Age UK Hammersmith and Fulham ([page 8](#)). Its café had never offered any veg*n options before – so, together with their management, we decided it was time for a change!

Finally, please do consider joining our virtual vegan luncheon club. Open to vegans, vegetarians, and meat reducers aged 65+, you can learn new dishes, swap tips, and meet like-minded people from across the UK. Find out more on [page 7](#).

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.

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Management decides it's time for a change!

Reader exclusive

We have teamed up with VEGAN Happy Clothing to offer one lucky winner a free 'Vegan Chef' apron (RRP £19.50).

The 100% pre-shrunk cotton apron is the perfect way to encourage you to make all those yummy vegan recipes that you have been wanting to try. Available in 20 gorgeous colours, there will be a colour to suit everyone. 10% of VEGAN Happy's profits go back

to help fund animal rescue.

For your chance to win, answer this question: How many colours can you choose from with the Vegan Chef apron? A) 5, B) 10, C) 20

Email info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk with your answer by midday 17 January.

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.



WIN!

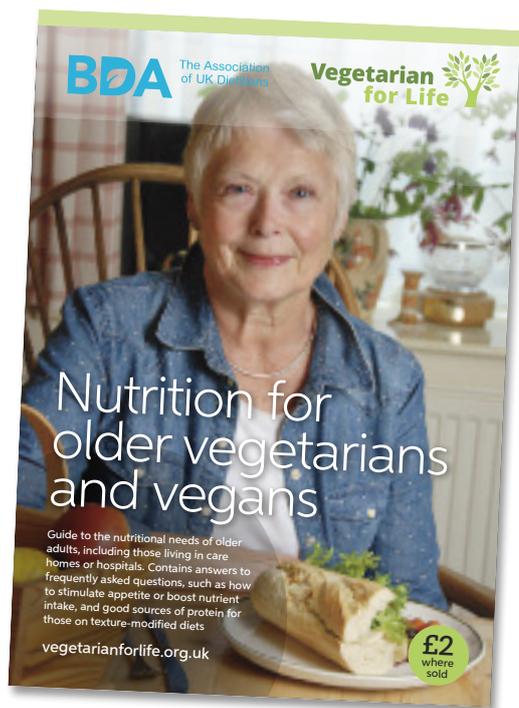
V for Life has launched a new nutrition guide, which has been endorsed by The British Dietetic Association

'Nutrition for older vegetarians and vegans' answers frequently asked questions, such as how to boost nutrient intake or stimulate appetite, and good sources of protein for those on texture modified diets. A daily menu plan is included, plus suggested vegan fortification agents, finger foods, and even vegan options that may be suitable for a lower-fibre diet.

As well as providing useful information for individuals, the 24-page publication will be valuable for care home and hospital caterers.

Beth Rougier, a registered dietitian specialising in plant-based nutrition who was involved in the development of the guide, said: "The Health and Social Care Act requires caterers to provide vegans and vegetarians 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.

It's vital that people understand the needs of an older person – whether plant-based or not



Ms Rougier said it's vital that people understand the needs of an older person – whether plant-based or not.

She said: "Nutrition science is complex, and a lot of publicly available information is confusing. Dietitians are trained to match the best scientific evidence to the needs of their clients, to create healthy and achievable dietary plans. This guide was originally written in 2013, to provide practical guidance on plant-based diets for older adults. I reviewed and updated it in 2020, to reflect the latest scientific evidence."

[Click here](#) to download a copy of Nutrition for older vegetarians and vegans, or order from V for Life on 0161 257 0887. Copies cost just £2 plus postage and packing.

V for Life on the podium for Best Vegan Initiative 2020

We were thrilled to have been nominated in the category of 'Best Vegan Initiative' in the VegfestUK 2020 Awards.

Voting was down to the public vote, and with so many strong contenders in our category, we are proud to have finished in a solid third place. Huge thanks to everyone who showed their support by voting for us. We really appreciate it.

To see the results in full, please [click here](#).





Show-stopping festive delights

When it comes to creating a vegan or vegetarian Christmas meal, in many ways it has never been easier, writes Alex Connell



These days, supermarkets, manufacturers, and suppliers all sell a wide range of vegan food items – with alternatives for almost everything. Clear labelling on vegan options makes the ordering process even easier.

Of course, the way that we normally work and celebrate will be different this year depending on the COVID restrictions. Either way, as individuals, chefs, or carers, we may need to rethink how we would normally do things.

For those living alone, Christmas can be a stressful and lonely time – this year more so than ever. So, let's pull out all the stops! V for Life is here to [support](#) and offer advice, and we have a great collection of recipes, too.

For chefs, our team of Roving Chefs can offer [online training](#), and when COVID is finally put to bed, visit your workplace to deliver in person training. Let's all hope that this is as soon as possible.

So, what do vegans and vegetarians (veg*ns) want to have on Christmas day? We are a broad bunch: if you are catering for someone for the first time, ask ahead of time what they would like. Simple and obvious, but could save you a lot of time and effort.

As a main centrepiece, Chef Ollie recommends an old favourite, the [nut roast](#): "...they can be rich and packed full of flavour, recipes can be adapted to suit your tastes. Try adding chestnuts and walnuts. You may also like try something different as a centrepiece such as whole roast pumpkin, a [Wellington](#), or [Christmas Stuffed Cauliflower](#)."

I love nut roast and would happily have it on Christmas day. I know it's maybe a cliché, like vegetarians eating lentils. Well, we do eat these too! Nut roasts can be served hot or cold and also make a good addition to a buffet table.

Pies can also be a good option too: make it a good one and show off your pastry skills. Even if you use ready-made pastry, lattice the top, create festive shapes or even the name of the person going to eat it. Easy to do, and will just give that individual touch. Also many ready-made pastries are accidentally vegan too: just make sure to check the label.

If as a chef you are thinking of serving something non-traditional, be a little cautious. I like lasagne and would normally be happy to eat it. Not at Christmas, though. Tradition for one person can be quite different for another. Try not to be complacent about your unconscious bias.

Fake meat products may be something to include. These have been around for many years and have become increasingly popular. However, these types of products can divide veg*ns. People gave up meat for different reasons and may, or may not, want foods resembling it. I'm a fan, and will be including some mock turkey as part of my Christmas meal. My cultural association with this is very strong: to not have it would be like not doing Christmas properly. That's just me. The simple solution is to ask the people you cook for in the lead up to Christmas.

Christmas food of course is not just about the centrepiece on Christmas day. Roast potatoes (not cooked in animal fat), sprouts, parsnips, peas, stuffing, redcurrant jelly, veggie gravy, and even veggie sausage and bacon-style rolls all have their place.

Try our easy, tasty [onion gravy](#). Or for an even quicker option, Bisto original gravy is accidentally vegan too.

Roving Chef, Justina, says: "A Christmas meal can be easily enhanced by adding a starter and a side dish. Begin with a mildly flavoured starter to 'warm up' the taste buds for the star dish of the celebration. Accompany with a side dish rich in herbs and aromas to compliment the main meal and lift the experience to another level. Be mindful of adding too much salt, because it is not a flavour, it is only an enhancer of the flavours brought by natural caramelisation or herbs."

For a tasty starter or buffet option, try our [Cream Cheese & Cranberry Parcels](#). [Carrot, Ginger & Orange Soup](#) makes a delicious, festive starter, suitable for all. And for a flavoursome side, check out our [Festive Gratin](#).

Roving Chef, Claire, reminds us that we should not forget pudding: "Christmas is a



great time to show off fantastic desserts, but remember to hold the honey. It's less obvious than meat, dairy and eggs, but it's not suitable for vegans. Maple syrup, brown sugar or agave are perfect substitutes. Also forget the gelatine – if you are making a jelly trifle or panna cotta that everyone can enjoy, swap gelatine for agar agar or use vegetarian jelly crystals."

This [fruit cake](#) makes a great Christmas cake. Perfect served on its own or traditionally decorated with marzipan and icing. [Angelic Mince Pies](#) are a vegan and gluten-free festive treat. Last but not least, try our tasty, traditional [Sticky Toffee Pudding](#).

Christmas calls for cream. My go-to recipe is V for Life's protein-rich [cashew cream](#).

Don't forget the custard, too! Try our [easy recipe](#), or for an even easier option, Bird's custard powder is accidentally vegan. Just make with plant milk such as soya or oat.

Of course, Christmas dinner is only one meal over the festive period. Plan your menus with thought and care. Take extra care over preparation and presentation. Make sure foods are clearly labelled for those you support and you won't go far wrong.

Think about those little touches that all contribute to the whole experience: the canapes, the Boxing Day buffet, the snacks, cakes and sweet treats. Plan ahead; don't let your veg*n options be an afterthought. With vegan alternatives available for almost everything, veg*ns can enjoy the same seasonal treats as everyone else.

If you want to go the extra mile this Christmas, watch our recent [Showstopping Festive Delights](#) demonstration – part of our YouTube video library for professional caterers.

Have a safe and happy Christmas.

V for Life celebrates veggie care heroes in star-studded awards ceremony

V for Life has revealed the winners of its 2020 Awards for Excellence in Vegetarian and Vegan Care Catering.

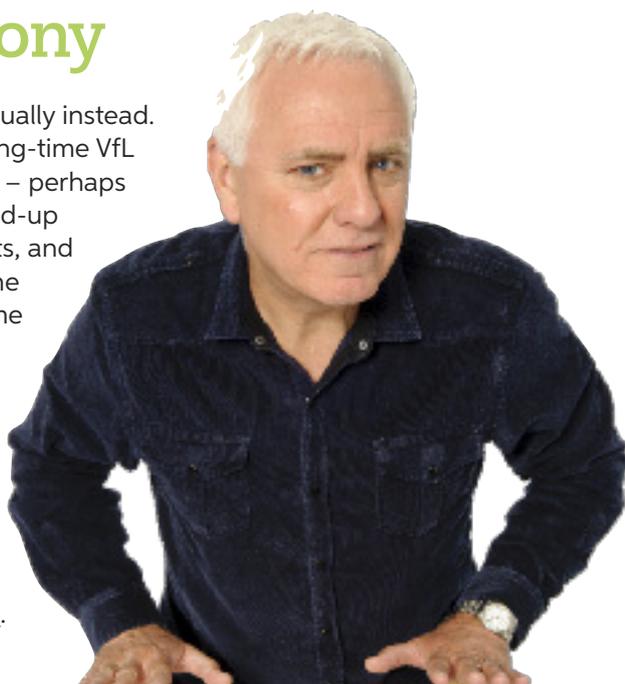
Now in their fifth year, the awards are a celebration of those going the extra mile for their vegan and vegetarian residents.

With a 167% increase in the number of vegans in residential care in recent years, the charity's work to improve catering standards for older vegans and vegetarians is now more important than ever.

Amanda Woodvine, CEO of V for Life said: "The awards have become a much-anticipated event, with the ceremony taking place in the Houses of Parliament in recent years. COVID-19 restrictions made a physical event impossible, so this year's

ceremony was held virtually instead. We're delighted that long-time VFL supporter, Dave Spikey – perhaps best known for his stand-up comedy, Phoenix Nights, and Bullseye – presented the awards, along with some fantastic celebrity friends."

All winners were announced in a virtual awards ceremony held in early December, which streamed live to [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).



The winners of this year's awards were:

VEGGIE CARE CHEF OF THE YEAR

Grant Burton, Head Chef of The Hawthorns in Braintree Speaking of Grant's win, Simon Lawrence, Head of Culinary for Avery Healthcare, said: "As proud members of the V for Life [UK List](#) we have actively encouraged and developed our chefs to compete in this competition.

"Avery Healthcare continues to promote inclusivity for older vegans and vegetarians and we are absolutely delighted to have had one of our chefs win the coveted title of Veggie Care Chef of the Year."

Winner Grant told us: "I'm delighted to win Veggie Care Chef of the Year. I'm very passionate about vegetarian cookery and always keen to pass on my knowledge and encourage participation. At our restaurant, non-vegetarians actively choose a vegetarian dish based on the taste and description. We are committed to holding talks and demonstrations, reinforcing the health benefits of vegetarian cookery while ensuring that each dish is balanced, flavoursome, and meets individual dietary needs. I would like to thank the team for their hard work and dedication."

For more information about the awards, head to vegetarianforlife.org.uk/veggiehero or call the charity on 0161 257 0887. You can also watch again on YouTube [here](#)

MOST INNOVATIVE VEGGIE DISH

Gary McGurk, Primose Bank Care Home in Poulton le Fylde – Pan Seared Watermelon

Said Gary: "Winner winner, watermelon for dinner! It's a great honour to win this award – it shows that hard work pays off. I look forward to working hard towards next year's awards and seeing what new dish I can come up with and maybe push for Veggie Care Chef of the Year."

VEGGIE WHOLESALER OF THE YEAR

Bidfood

THE BEULAH CHARITY TRUST SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

Steve Dale, The Moreton Centre in East Sussex

"The win means a huge amount, it confirms my belief that care home food has changed, that residents deserve a chance to enjoy a diversity of food. When I first started to cook in care homes, residents were referred to as 'they', as in "they won't like curry". It became obvious to me that residents deserve a chance to try as wide a range of food as possible. V for Life seems to agree – the uptake of our vegetarian food proves the point. Our residents with diabetes are responding well to the change of direction, the food is much easier to digest, and the range seems to be endless. If I had been told I would be serving slow-cooked jackfruit a few years ago as a replacement to pulled pork I would have laughed – but now, goes down so well."

Now you can Zoom into a virtual vegan luncheon club

V for Life invites you to join its monthly virtual vegan luncheon club.

Open to vegans, vegetarians, and meat reducers aged 65 and over, the club offers attendees the chance to learn new dishes, get tips from an experienced vegan chef, and meet like-minded people from across the UK.

The club takes place through Zoom video-conferencing on the fourth Tuesday of every month.

Recipes are provided in advance, so you have plenty of time to get the ingredients. Cook that morning and then join V for Life Chef Justina, along with attendees from across the UK, at 1pm.

Justina is a Culinary Arts Management graduate who brings knowledge and passion for sustainable, plant-based eating. She has managed a variety of groups of chefs and created her own menus, working in both Italian and theatre restaurants. Justina is passionate about experimenting with different/unusual flavours and baking. She enjoys travelling and seeking inspiration in cuisines around the globe.

Justina said: "The virtual lunch club is not only a place for food lovers, but also for like-minded people to share their stories and laugh. It cannot be easier to meet friendly faces than in the comfort of your own home with a plate of warm food in front of you. It might sound strange at first, but I promise that it is really fun when we all get to enjoy the same food as if we are sitting at the same table".

Recipes take a different theme each month – from a Pies & Pastries Week, boasting Mushroom & Ale Pies and Puff Pastry Tartlets, through to One-Pot Wonders such as Carrot, Ginger & Orange Soup and Versatile Stew – you'll get to make and enjoy a wide variety of tasty dishes.

The next club on 22 December will take a festive-theme; followed by a Burns night celebration in January; all things chocolatey in February; and bread-making basics in March.

Attendees have told us: "It was a lovely lunchtime meet up, with lots of pie!" and: "It was really nice to attend for the first time yesterday. Thank you."

Prospective attendees are invited to join the [Facebook group](#) where they can socialise with others and watch a demonstration of the dishes being made.

Email ellie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk to find out more, or to book your place and get the Zoom link and password. Or call the VfL office on 0161 257 0887.

If technology and Zoom in particular are new to you, visit abilitynet.org.uk call 0800 048 7642, or email enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk for help. If you're already tech savvy, all you'll need to do is open the Zoom link in your internet browser and join the meeting.



Age UK Hammersmith and Fulham go veggie

By Ollie Bragg, Roving Chef, V for Life

I was recently invited to deliver a [Zoom cookery session](#) for Hammersmith and Fulham Age UK. The centre has a café with a fully equipped kitchen and a talented chef. Incredibly, the café had never offered any vegan or vegetarian options before – so, together with the centre’s management staff, we decided that it was time for a change!

We arranged the session so that I could deliver an hour-long cookery demo for those using the centre, who would either watch from the comfort of their own

homes and cook along, or watch from the centre on the big screen. While I demonstrated a vegetarian [country garden cottage pie](#) and a simple, yet delicious, vegan fruit crumble with custard (recipe below), the chef cooked the same recipes in the café kitchen.

When the demo was over, the food at the centre was ready for everyone to tuck into. It all went down really well with no leftovers. It was a great way to get everyone to taste the great recipes that we produce at V for Life, and the next best thing to doing a cookery demo in person.

Fruit Crumble

SERVES: 4 | DIETARY REQUIREMENTS: DAIRY-FREE, EGG-FREE, HALAL, KOSHER, VEGAN

- 110g/4oz plain wholemeal flour
- 55g/2oz vegan margarine
- 75g/3oz brown sugar
- 25g/1oz rolled oats
- 900g/2lb fruit (apples, plums, gooseberries, rhubarb, mixed soft fruit etc)

- 1 Sift the flour into a mixing bowl and rub in the margarine and 25g/1oz of the brown sugar.
- 2 Add the oats and mix well.
- 3 Peel/prepare the fruit, mix with the remaining sugar and place in pie dish.
- 4 Sprinkle crumble mixture evenly over top, pressing down to form a seal.
- 5 Bake in preheated oven at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 15–30 minutes, depending on fruit.



Feedback from some of the people using the centre:

“It was a lovely meal – all-in-all a lovely afternoon”

“Very good recipe”

“Very interesting”

“Enjoyed the meal”

“More vegetarian dishes please”

“I would welcome a weekly vegetarian meal at Age UK”

If you cater for older people and would like to arrange something similar, please get in touch with ellie@vegetarianforlife.org.uk for more info, or to book.

We’d love to support you in introducing veggie/vegan options at your venue, and can help you develop a new menu, with plenty of tasty options.