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D E D I C A T E D T O

the memory of Riley and Black Bumps Kramer



Introduction



Welcome to *The Garden of Vegan*. In our last book, *How It All Vegan!*, we covered the basics of vegan life: how to set up an easy-to-use kitchen, where our vegan roots came from, and aspects of Veganism 101.

We hope that *How It All Vegan!* helped you to get your foot in the vegan door and that you're now having fun incorporating veganism into your life. Even if you're not 100 percent vegan, we wanted to tantalize your palate, make your belly feel full and satisfied, and perhaps open your mind to the idea that a vegan lifestyle doesn't always have to be about sprouts and sandals. Although, if that's what you're into ... yay!

The Garden of Vegan is an extension of *How It All Vegan!*: more yummy, easy-to-prepare recipes, plus some more ... dare we say ... gourmet recipes. Plus tips for throwing parties, tricks for when you screw up in the kitchen, and answers to frequently asked questions.

One of our favorite things in the first book was to include recipes submitted from our friends and family. This time around, not only has Auntie Bonnie, Cousin Tasha, Tanya's Na-Na Marg, and other friends and family members submitted more recipes, but we asked all of YOU to help out as well. We received countless recipes from as far as Australia, Texas, Kentucky, Ontario ... all over the place. It's been a blast testing them all, and adding them to the book. We can't thank you all enough for your support ... now we also have to thank you for your recipes. You guys rock!

We hope you enjoy the book and will visit us at GoVegan.net. Now get into your kitchen and start cooking!

SARAH'S INTRODUCTION: THROW ME A CURVE

Nothing makes me feel better than a mouthful of delicious vegan food. There is something satisfying about starting with raw ingredients and with a few simple flicks of the knife and a blast of heat, creating a meal.

I eat for different reasons. Obviously, hunger is number one. There's also health, of course, and lastly, my favorite: for comfort. Certain foods and kitchen smells take me back to a place where nothing mattered but trying to stay up past your bedtime and convincing your parents into thinking that you brushed your teeth.

The kitchen is where I feel most connected to my past. My mum loved to cook and was ahead of her time with regard to vegetarianism. I think I was the only veggie-kid I knew growing up in Regina, Saskatchewan. All my friends were meat and potatoes while I was salad and soup.





I had a healthy relationship with food. Okay, sure, I went through kid phases when I would only eat grilled cheese sandwiches. Then there was the baked beans and bananas phase. I even remember wanting to be a cat, and my parents letting me eat soup out of a bowl on the floor.

My mum died when I was ten and my memories of her are fragmented at best and are more like snapshots in a photo album than a movie in my head. The most intense memories I have of her are in the kitchen: watching her make me play dough from scratch; helping her stir the cookie dough and anxiously waiting for the moment when she did her final scrape of the bowl and allowed me lick what was left. I remember banana chips and carrot sticks were my after-school snack. I remember being so excited when she'd bring out the carrot cake at my birthday parties. I remember the big jar of honey on the top shelf of the cupboard that was brought out for special occasions.

Yeah. Things were a little different at the Kramer house.

My dad and stepmum gave me the bowl my mum used to use to make bread and cookies in; a large ceramic bowl that is heavy and large enough for a triple batch of cookies. I had been begging them to give it to me for years. It's the one thing that reminds me the most of my mum. They finally relented when Gerry and I eloped to Vegas in 1996. They gave it to me as a wedding present and it is one of my most treasured objects.

Our family's relationship with food changed when my mum died. My dad was devastated and I remember eating a lot of pizzas. Inside I felt a shift occur; the joy of eating and sharing a meal with family had suddenly changed into something else. My dad, brother, and I were like zombies; just there, but not really. A little black rain cloud sat over top of me and stayed with me for a long, long time.

When my stepmum Denise moved in, I gave her a hard time. Oooh, that's an understatement: I was the devil. I was an eleven-year-old with the weight of the world on her shoulders and I didn't give Denise any slack. I was a horrible stepdaughter. I criticized her food, refused to eat what she offered. I had bile in my belly and I let everyone have a taste of it.

As I became a preteen and then a teenager, under the confusion of all that comes with puberty, food became something else yet again. My school was not in the same area I lived in, so I would go to friends' houses at lunchtime. I'd be armed with my veggie sandwich on brown bread and watched my friends devour fluorescent orange pasta and sip bubbly sugary drinks. Eventually I began dumping my lunch to eat what they were eating. I have this vivid memory of sitting in my friend Vanna's kitchen eating a giant bowl of cake icing for lunch and watching on TV the footage of President Reagan being shot.

Grades 7 and 8 were all about sleepovers at my girlfriends' houses. The food at my house seemed so bland compared to what they had: cakes, cookies, white sugar icing, potato chips, chocolate bars, and all the Pic-a-Pop you could drink. Not a carrot in sight. I was a skinny little kid and could consume half a cake and not even have my belly pooch out. I've always been a bit of a late bloomer and I didn't look like any of my friends. While they were all blossoming into women, I still looked like a little kid. My friends were envious; by that time they were all watching their weight.

As I entered high school I started worrying about my weight too. By then my girlfriends and I had decided that if you looked in a mirror, held your knees together, and couldn't see through your thighs, you were fat. According to our test, we all needed to go on diets.

In high school, food had no meaning to me. It was a waste of time. I only ate if I had to. I had cereal in the morning, and replaced lunch with a cigarette and a Slurpee. I had to eat dinner because we always ate



together as family, but I would do my darnedest to be sent to my room so I could skip out on eating.

I wanted to be able to see through my thighs. I hated my body. I thought my thighs were fat, that my stomach protruded too much. My arms were thick. I would be in tears if the scale hit ninety-five pounds. My goal was to be eighty-three pounds. I thought eighty-three would be perfect. Then I would be perfect.

When I graduated from high school (by the skin of my teeth), I moved out of the house and was on my own for the first time. Food was last on my list of priorities; it consisted of things out of boxes and cans. I wouldn't eat anything that was fresh unless I had to. Especially food that had veins; tomatoes and lettuce freaked me out. I didn't even want to touch them. Anything out of a package was all I could manage to swallow.

Being poor, I worked out a budget for food. After cigarettes and other necessities like hairspray for my Mohawk, punk rock shows, and beer (God, I was stupid) I had thirty-five dollars a week for food. That meant I could only eat once or twice a day. But by then, I could do that. I learned that cigarettes curb your appetite, so I smoked more. Almost a pack and a half a day. Anytime my stomach growled, I would light up a smoke.

I was in a bad place for a long time in Regina. I finally decided to make a change, so I packed up my stuff and hopped the train west to Victoria. I started to change my life in positive ways, but my food issues followed me. When my health began to deteriorate and I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), I could barely eat at all. I was so exhausted; it was an ordeal just to pick up a fork. I mostly ate cereal and on a good day could manage to make perogies. I think that's all I ate for a month. One day I stepped on the scale and I was eighty-three pounds.

I looked in the mirror and realized that I was killing myself. I need to fix things. I need to make myself better.

It was interesting, because while I was struggling to get my weight up, become healthy again, and learn to have a new relationship with food, I had people coming up to me and telling me I looked fantastic. They wanted to know how I stayed so skinny. They wished they had CFS so they could lose some weight (ha ha).

It freaked me out. I looked like a skeleton, I knew I looked bad, and yet people wanted to look like me.

As I struggled with my CFS and began leaning towards veganism, my relationship with food made a dramatic shift. Food became fuel. It gave me energy and filled me up and made me strong. Slowly I became friends with food again. I started to enjoy cooking for myself and memories of my mum and her joyful relationship with food came back to me.

This isn't to say I still don't have that voice in my head that tells me my thighs are too big. There is no stinking way you can see through my thighs anymore (!) but that's not a measure of a woman anyway.

Women are supposed to be soft. We're meant to be round. We are built for cuddling. Curvy waists, sloping thighs, round soft bellies. That's what's real. My body makes more sense to me now that it's at the weight it's supposed to be. Sure, it may be a little squishy and you may not be able to see my ribs anymore, but you're not *supposed* to see my ribs.

Tanya and I get lots of letters from girls who want to be vegan so they can lose weight and it breaks my heart.

This is what I tell them:

First off, if you're under twenty years old, you're still in or coming out of puberty and your body is still growing. Even if you're not in puberty, and you are in your thirties like me, or whatever age you are, your body is always changing. It depends on you to keep it healthy. Just eat properly, and leave it alone. Mucking around with your weight only leads to trouble. Your body is what your body is, so try to enjoy it rather than make it look like something it's not.



But saying that, there are some healthy things you can do:

- Never skip meals. Eat well-balanced meals full of all the nutrients you need in a day.
- Drink lots of water. Not pop or juice or coffee ... water.
- Exercise every day if you can. Not anything crazy but things like walking, hiking, running around with your dog, etc. ... as well as something exercise-like (yoga, weights, etc.) at least 3-5 times a week.
- Don't eat after 8 pm.
- Let your body become what it is and try enjoy it.

I still struggle every day with the negative voices in my head that tell me my belly is poochy and that my thighs are too big. I just turned thirty-four and I always thought that by the time I reached this age, I would be comfortable with what my body is. But I'm not. I'm never satisfied. It's a constant struggle that is slowly getting better but has yet to go away.

I occasionally have to remind myself that food is my friend. Remind myself that my CFS is finally under control now. I am a healthy, almost fully functioning human being again. I am no longer bedridden, no longer have to miss out on all the fun. I try to make sure that there is no denying myself anymore. Now I can relish the taste of a tomato; enjoy the smell of rolled oats and freshly baked bread. Fill my mouth with food and not stress about consequence. And most importantly, there is nothing I enjoy more than sitting at a table with my family and friends, enjoying each other and a good meal.

Food is life. Without it, we die.

I am constantly asked when I turned/decided/went vegan.

It wasn't a specific day, like my husband, who remembers the exact day and time. For me, everything in my life has been a step forward in a personal journey; every day I learn something new about myself. Every day I make tiny choices. What I do know is that my experiences with animals has changed my life forever. I am unabashedly in love with them and they have taught me so much about myself.

My life lessons come from all different kinds of sources. I don't ignore what's right in front of me anymore.

I've tried to turn my focus outward; to stop obsessing over little things and to just enjoy what's around me. For example, my cats BB and Riley came into my life when I needed them the most. I was twenty-one (God, was I really ever twenty-one?). Practically a baby myself. I was not very confident, not a nice person, selfish, manipulative. Living with cats changed me. I learned that the love you put out comes back to you ten times over. What a gift they gave me.

I recently lost both of them to illness. To say that I am devastated is an understatement. They showed me the pleasure of snuggling an afternoon away and to not sweat the little things. To be quiet and to revel in the things at my fingertips and not worry about the things I can't reach. My understanding of compassion came directly from my relationship with them.

My friend Ian R. sent me a quote by Robert A. Heinlein the day Riley died. It said: "There is no such thing as 'just a cat'." Ain't that the truth?

Why am I vegan? How can I not be? I can't love one animal and eat another. That seems stupid to me. Every single action we do and decision we make affects the world around us. For example:



- Fish all the salmon in the sea until they are almost extinct and then complain about the price of Coho. There's an obvious solution there.
- Dump toxic waste and then complain about birth defects. There's an obvious solution there.
- Drive your car to the corner store and complain about pollution. There's an obvious solution there.
- Waste away to eighty-three pounds and wonder why you're sick. There's an obvious solution there.

Compassion isn't sissy; it isn't hippie dippy. It's a way to change the world, and it can change you at the same time. If you think the tiny things you do every day (negative or positive) don't make a difference, think again. Compassion, caring, taking care of what's around you in a positive and pro-active way, is the only way things can change in a healthy way. And not only that, you might learn something about yourself. You might start showing yourself a little compassion.

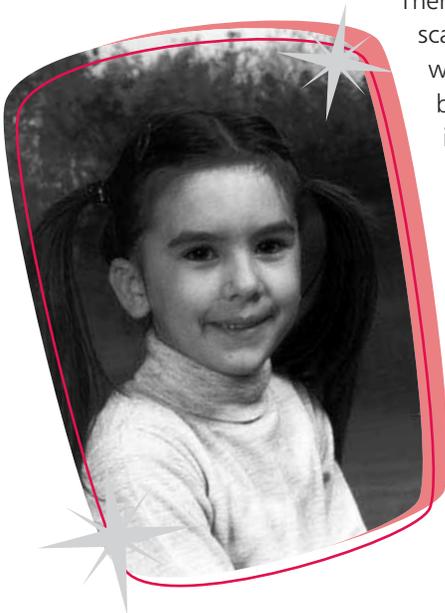
Life lessons come with many different faces. Slow down and take a look at what you are experiencing every day. If you don't embrace that and learn something from what is happening to you at this exact moment... What's the point?

My desire with *How It All Vegan!* and now with *The Garden of Vegan* is to make veganism a fun and easy place to be. So that you can spend less time worrying about how to be vegan and spend more time just enjoying being vegan.

Have a good time, enjoy yourself. Love the things around you and more importantly, love yourself.

– SARAH

TANYA'S INTRODUCTION: A PILE OF LEAVES



There is an old Japanese proverb: The wind will pick up the leaves scattered around and swirl them about. Then it will drop them, and they will form a pile. I think this is a powerful message. It speaks to me as I believe that's how communities are built; a group of like-minded individuals from different walks of life, having the same strong desires and passions, attracting one another. From this we form one huge community, like leaves in a pile. I couldn't live without my community of friends, and don't ever want to. There are many days when I'm buried in work, but I take a moment and smile, because I know my friends are there. However your community presents itself, love it and nurture it, as it's the glue that holds you together. I know that mine is, and I'm thankful everyday that I have it.

I can't believe it's been three years since *How It all Vegan!* first hit the market. So much has happened that I couldn't possibly have the space to tell it all, and I wouldn't want to bore you to death either! When I look back upon these last three years, they



seem remarkable, challenging, rewarding, and painful, because as you must know, a lot can happen in three years. I've grown a lot, and feel blessed daily by the gift of beautiful friends and family to share life with. I'm very excited to bring you *The Garden of Vegan*. This book has seen many sleepless nights up late in my kitchen trying to get recipes right, nights full of tears, laughing fits, you name it. The result of our efforts is what you now hold in your hands. So please, enjoy it and let us know what you think.

The most exciting thing about having a new cookbook published means a book tour! And if you've been good vegans we'll come to your town and visit you soon! One of the things that I love about writing cookbooks is traveling and meeting people who love what we do. It means so much to me, and gives me so much inspiration. Just knowing that people enjoy our work gives me the energy and passion to keep on doing it. Without you, there would be no book two, and I think the most important person to thank for that is you.

The last three years have taken Sarah and me on numerous adventures. We've had the opportunity to promote ourselves on radio, television, and in print. We've traveled far and wide to participate in cooking demonstrations and speaking engagements. We've gone to Toronto twice and down the west coast to Bellingham, Seattle, and Portland. We even went all the way to Louisville, Kentucky to do a cooking demonstration for Earthsave! I love to travel and explore new cities. Each trip was amazing because I came away with a number of new friends. It's nice to invite new people into your life. I hope that with this new cookbook I can do the same. All of you reading this are friends that I just haven't met yet!

Food is something that is always on my mind. Whenever I try and do a cleanse or fast, I never last long because I can't stop thinking about food. I love thinking about mealtimes and different ways to prepare them using alternative ingredients. I love mucking about in the kitchen trying different grains and vegetables and combining different textures and flavors. I think I'm lucky as cooking comes naturally to me. I find it hard to believe that some people think they can't cook. It seems so simple to me; get a little this, mix it with a little that, and you've got yourself a wonderful vegan dish. This book is tried and true testament that anyone with a stovetop and oven can make amazing quick and simple meals, even you!

When I think about food, I think about pleasure. I think about soul-nourishing satisfaction. I find that I eat really slowly so I can taste every morsel and contemplate why it's so pleasurable. Is it the taste? The texture? The company I'm dining with? Sometimes, especially when Matthew (my sweetheart) is over, we spend more than an hour eating dinner. It's such a wonderful time of eating, talking, and laughing that it's hard not to feel fully nourished afterwards, and not just in our bellies! It makes me sad when I think that not everyone eats in the same manner and thus misses out on the wonderful experience of eating. What kind of messages are we sending to children? Cultivating healthy bodies and minds starts with cultivating healthy mealtimes.

What does the word food mean to you? What associations, if any, do you have to it? Does it conjure up bad issues in you, thoughts of calorie counting and diet shakes? It's a loaded word for sure. Our fast food life and culture has definitely changed the way we think about food. It seems it has morphed into something that does not represent its original purpose, which is simply to nourish and sustain life, to keep us healthy and happy and connected to our families, friends, and environment. I fear that new generations of kids will have a different attitude towards food. They are going to believe that it only comes from a store, where you can get whatever you need and want all year round. They won't know and understand how an eggplant grows, or where bananas come from. They won't know how hard a farmer works and how they struggle to stay in business. Do



we know the ramifications this ignorance will have on our future? Food for thought, no doubt.

Educating ourselves about food and its positive and negative effects on bodies, families, and culture is essential. What else better defines a culture than its food? While it is important to maintain a positive outlook on our evolving contemporary world, some things should remain sacred, namely food. Every body is unique and different eating habits work for different bodies. I think that it's important to figure out what works best for your body and live and eat according to that. If meat is what makes your body truly feel good, I can live with that because that is you and your body's choice, while being vegan is mine. Sounds like a contradiction for sure, but you can purchase animal products in a thoughtful and ethical way, such as products raised organically, free-range and chemical-free. If you eat meat, just try to remember that a life was taken to give you life. Some would argue that vegetables do the same – give up their life without choice to nourish and sustain ours – but that's a whole other topic for another time.

There are people and organizations out there who strive to maintain a healthy balance between our contemporary world and the sacred act of eating and food cultivation. Some are close at hand and some are international. Many cities now have farmer's markets. Try supporting them; it's so nice to give your money directly to those who cultivate your food. The slow food movement is a great example of an international movement of individuals who want to see the idea of food and its intended use maintained and cultivated. Its proponents believe that food should be about enjoyment and nourishment. Mind you, this is not a vegetarian movement, but I think that there are strong lessons to be learned from it. They believe that our fast way of life threatens our environment and our landscapes and that as human beings we have to slow down our lifestyle before we make ourselves extinct. The slow food movement encapsulates almost everything that I believe about our contemporary world. But I too have a hectic lifestyle. I'm a full-time university student and a preacher of the vegan lifestyle. (Can I get an amen?) So I'm constantly trying to find a healthy balance between the two. It's difficult, but all I can do is try my best.

I know that a lot of what I think is idealistic. But as individuals we owe it to ourselves to do all that we can to make the world better. My wise friend Jamie once told me that if you strive for what you believe in and only see a small change, then that's good enough, because at least you know that you tried and were true to yourself. I really think that he is right. I believe that it's important to make your choices with dignity and thoughtfulness. Then when you look back on your life you will know that it was lived with grace and integrity. I believe that awareness and education is the key to opening all doors, then comes putting all that knowledge into practice. Practice makes perfect, so if all we do is a little each day, soon that's all you will know. If you can, slow down, sit with your family and friends, and enjoy their company. Tell them once in a while how much you enjoy them and take pleasure in having them in your life. You never know how that little act of kindness will change and make their day. Now enough about me and what I think. Grab your apron and cooking utensils and get in the kitchen. We have a book filled with new and exciting recipes for you to try and enjoy. I know that I enjoyed testing every one of them and I hope that you do too!

– TANYA