

VEGAN A GO-GO!

A COOKBOOK & SURVIVAL MANUAL
FOR VEGANS ON THE ROAD

Sarah Kramer



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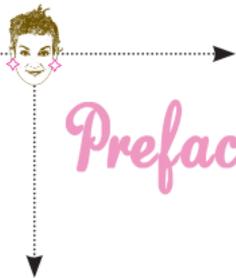
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Preface

Traveling is exhausting at the best of times, under the best of circumstances. Passports, homeland security, lineups, remembering to bring enough socks, counting out vitamins, yada, yada, yada ... throw veganism into the mix and there's one more thing to worry about. Oy.

In this travel-sized book, you will find some of the most popular recipes from *How It All Vegan!* (HIAV), *The Garden of Vegan* (GOV), and *La Dolce Vegan!* (LDV), as well as some NEW easy and delicious recipes. When you get to your destination you can reach into your suitcase, grab your copy of *Vegan à Go-Go!* (VAGG) and wow your friends, family, or travel buddies with your cooking skills, all thanks to this wee book.

How To Use This Book

You can keep this book with your other cookbooks, but I would suggest you stick it in the same safe place you keep your passport and other travel items. That way you'll never forget to shove it in your suitcase when you leave town.

Passport Stamps

These stamps will give you a quick idea of what each recipe is geared for.

New Stamp

These are new—*never before seen*—yumtastic recipes.





Quick & Easy Stamp

Many of the ingredients in these recipes can be found at any grocery store, and these recipes are quick to make.

Travels Well Stamp

These are recipes for surviving that visit to your family who live in Meat-ville and have never seen a soybean, let alone tasted one.



Will Impress Your Friends Stamp

These are recipes that you can make when you want to impress your friends and families with your mad culinary skills.



Needs Special Ingredients Stamp

These recipes require ingredients that you may not be able to find in Meat-ville, but if you come prepared with a few key ingredients in your luggage, you can knock the socks off all the folks who dare to doubt that vegans eat yummy, delicious food.



Last But Not Least

When you see vegan milk or “milk” in quotes, that means use your favorite “milk” alternative (soy, rice, hemp, oat, etc.). *Happy trails!*



Introduction

"Vacation—all I ever wanted..."

THE GO-GO'S

I love my creature comforts. I love my pillow. I like my bed sheets to be tucked a certain way. I like having a place for everything and everything in its place. I'm a total creature of habit. I like knowing what my day is going to be like before I get out of my pajamas.

And while I love traveling, I dislike the logistics of it all. The packing, the schlepping of heavy bags, late flights, lost luggage, airplane food, flat tires, dirty gas station bathrooms ... and, worst of all, the germs. Other people's germs. *Eeeek!*

While I might come across as a bit of a travel diva, I did not start out this way. As a child, I lived a somewhat nomadic life. In 1966, my parents founded Saskatchewan's first professional theater company, and while Regina was the home base for the theater, the company also toured extensively across the province and performed in communities for school students.

Many of my childhood travel memories are of being on tour with the theater: playing in the back seat, looking wistfully out the window at the prairie landscape, singing "*where, oh where, is the gas station because Sarah has to pee,*" or sleeping curled up on the floor of the car while we drove through the night (this was before seat belt laws).





As a child, I felt that my life was perfectly normal and it wasn't until I got a little older that I realized—not everyone's mother wore a cat costume on stage. I thought that everyone's dad could sword fight and recite *Hamlet*. Not all kids had parents who took them to art galleries or wrote poetry or did yoga with them. None of my schoolmates had parents with friends who could juggle or sculpt cows or write plays. Looking back, it was an unusual life, but one which filled me with so much wonderful creative energy that made me who I am today.

Since my mother was originally from England, we would often travel back and forth to Europe to see her side of the family. I have many memories of riding double-decker buses, exploring castles, and visiting art museum after art museum after art museum. On my dad's side, who lived on the west coast of Canada, we would travel to Lotusland (Vancouver) to visit my Zeyda and then take a ferry to Victoria, on Vancouver Island, to see my Auntie Bonnie and my cousins. Lucky for us, Zeyda also had a condo in Hawaii, so we would frequently escape the dreadful winters of Saskatchewan to explore the warm, breezy tropics of Maui.

As I transitioned from childhood into a sullen teenager, we didn't do a lot of traveling. My mum had passed away a few years earlier, and my dad became more rooted in operating the theater in our hometown. Most of our travels at that time were short family vacations, and throughout almost all of them, I was miserable. Miserable because I was a teenager, yes, but also because I hadn't learned how to take care of myself. I was dependent on others for my happiness and I had yet to realize that despite all the chaos of life, YOU are the captain of your own ship and can point yourself in whatever direction you want.

As I stretched my wings and moved away from home, traveling became more of an adventure. My friends and I would fill up the



car with gas, buy supplies at the corner store, and hit the road with no plans and no idea what was around the bend. It was so exciting.

Sometimes it would just be a quick drive to Regina Beach or, once I moved to Victoria, a full day trip up Vancouver Island to hit some of the thrift stores in Nanaimo (visit page 156 for recipe), or a roadtrip down to Portland, Oregon, with nothing but a credit card, a toothbrush, and a vague idea of which way was south. I went to Vegas more than a few times with nothing but a few \$\$ in my pocket and the hope that I'd strike it rich—thank goodness the slot machines were always good to me. Then there's the time my roommates and I decided to drive from Victoria to Mexico in a VW bug for Xmas. Exhausted, cranky, and cramped for space, we decided to stop in San Diego and crash at a friend's house for the holidays instead. We did eventually make it to Mexico but only as a day trip to Tijuana, where I was swarmed by a group of small children who picked my pocket ... but that's a story for another day.

Those trips were crazy fun—driving late at night, singing along to Elvis cassettes, feeling drunk from too much sugar, and being so exhausted from the many hours on the road that we got so giddy and crazy. But hindsight is everything. While I was traveling around with my friends, we weren't being very safe. We slept in the car in unfamiliar parking lots, did a lot of couch surfing at random strangers' houses, and, worst of all, I did a little hitchhiking. I was in a lovely little bubble of my own creation and, for a long time, I felt that as long as I had a smile on my face





and a credit card in my pocket nothing could hurt me. Boy, was I wrong.

I've had a long love affair with Elvis and I had always wanted to go to Graceland to visit The King, so one day two girlfriends and I headed to Memphis, Tennessee. We were staying at a friend of a friend's house that was half a block from Sun Records. It was amazing; everywhere we turned we saw something historic. And then, of course, there was the incredible day we spent wandering around Graceland. What a wonderful time we had. Wowzers. So much fun....

After our trip to Memphis, we decided to drive to New Orleans. This was back in the day before the Internet and the punk rock scene was sewn together by word of mouth. You could usually find a place to stay by knowing someone who knew someone who had been where you were going and met someone with a couch to sleep on. So with a hand-drawn map from a friend



and some rough directions to a punk house to crash at, we hit the road.

New Orleans was dark by the time we arrived. We drove around and around trying to find the punk house—only to find ourselves completely lost. We stopped at a gas station, got some directions, and *voilà!* We found the house and knocked on the door, but there was no answer. We stood in the street trying to figure out what to do or where to go next. I looked around at all the cute little houses with their cute little porches. The neighborhood looked a little rough around the edges but not any rougher than the punk house where I was living in Victoria. We knocked on the door one last time but still no answer. *Now what?*

A man drove by us on a bicycle, then he did a U-turn, hopped off his bike, and asked us if we needed directions. My gut instinct was to run. I had this funny, nagging feeling ... but instead I smiled and showed him our crude directions. He asked us if we were looking for some “punk girls” who lived in this house; we were so thrilled he knew who we were talking about.

The next thing I knew I had a gun in my face, a hand on my throat, and we were in serious trouble. The man wanted our wallets. *Fine, take them.* Then he wanted to go through our suitcases. *Fine, go ahead.* Look in the



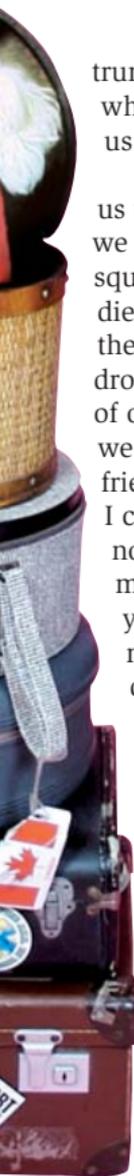


trunk. *Fine*. Then he wanted to go through our pockets. That's when things got crazy. He got rough. He was mean. He threatened us. Hurt us.

When he was done assaulting us, he took our car keys, had us take off our shoes, and made us lie on the ground. I knew we were dead. I was ready for it. I reached for my friend's hand, squeezed it with all my might, and closed my eyes. I didn't want to die, but I knew it was coming. What came instead was a blow to the head. He hit us with the butt of his gun, got into our car, and drove away. I looked up and watched in disbelief as the taillights of our car rounded the corner and disappeared. Was I alive? Were we shot? Was everyone OK? I was in a daze as I watched my friends scramble to put their shoes on. My body was frozen and I couldn't think. I was in shock. Completely shut down. I could not comprehend what had happened and couldn't move until my girlfriends grabbed my hands and dragged me up the street, yelling at me to run. Somehow we managed to make it to the main road to find help. We flagged down a security car whose driver called the police who then called an ambulance.

We went to the hospital, had our wounds tended, filled out a police report, and canceled our credit cards. The robber had taken everything we owned and now we were stuck in the South with no money, no clothing, no passports, nothing. Then I called my parents. Heartbroken and emotionally wrecked, I was immediately lifted up by the support of my stepmum. She quickly wired us some money so we could buy necessities like socks, toothbrushes, underwear, et cetera. She was amazing.... She is amazing.

Now, it was time to call home to Gerry. I left this call for last because this was the one I was dreading the most; I knew I was going to break down when I heard Gerry's voice, and I wasn't ready yet. I had to keep it together. I had to get us home. Nobody answered at the house. *Ha*. I left a message





on the machine for our roommates, but because I didn't want to freak them out, I tried to make it sound casual: "Hey. We were robbed. I'm at the hospital and we're all OK. I'll call back later." Because cell phones were not yet commonplace, I asked them to tell Gerry about what happened and let him know that I was OK and that I would call back as soon as I could.

As I left the message, I absentmindedly watched a janitor mop and clean the hallway. I hung up the phone and gave him a smile as I started to head back to the ER to check on my friends. He quickly ran over and passed me a five-dollar bill and said he hoped it would help. I fell apart. His kindness was overwhelming.

I went back to the nurses' station and explained that we were stranded with *nothing* and were desperate. They immediately got on the phone and helped get us a free hotel room. They also handed me a pile of scrubs for us to wear. We seemed to be surrounded by guardian angels, and I took great comfort in their kindness.

The next morning, the police called us at the hotel and told us they had found our car. They picked us up (I got to sit in the back like a criminal, *eeek*) and drove us to the vacant lot. The car was wrecked. It had been unsuccessfully set on fire so it stunk like burnt chemicals and booze. Luckily, the engine still worked, so we got in the car and drove to the police station where they helped us get the necessary paperwork to get back over the border to Canada. Then we hit the road and hauled our broke-down asses home at lightning speed.

It wasn't until the ferry pulled into the harbor in Victoria that I realized how damaged I was. Now safely at home, my body finally started to let me process what had happened and it wasn't pretty. I was a mess. I headed straight for therapy and started working on my stuff, and I have to say that it's the best thing I ever did. Not only did it help me work through the robbery but it also allowed me to process and understand that it wasn't my fault. We may



have been traveling in an unsafe way but we didn't deserve what happened.

This might sound bizarre, but the robbery kick-started my life. Before the robbery, I was just wandering aimlessly, watching life pass me by. After the robbery, I had a thirst for life that I couldn't quench. I wanted to do something positive, fun, and creative with my life, and when my former coauthor, Tanya, came to me with the idea to do a cookbook, I knew immediately we were on to something special.

As it came time to start promoting the first book, ***How It All Vegan!***, I had a difficult time getting back out on the road. I was gun-shy, literally. Out of fear, I had spent many years not doing any traveling, and the thought of putting myself back out on the road was scary, to say the least. But I had a book to promote, so I jumped back in with both feet and what a joy it was. Having the chance to meet and greet readers at book signings and cooking demos across North America helped me feel more comfortable about being back on the road again. Slowly but surely I started to feel more secure and confident about traveling. Now this travel diva needs to stay safe, and if that means hopping from hotel to hotel rather than from couch to couch, so be it.

My reason for sharing my robbery story is two-fold. One, is that I want you to know that you can survive anything as long as you seek out the proper support. Help is everywhere (ask your doctor or a trusted friend for a referral, or look in your local Yellow Pages), and finding a safe, positive place to share is so important to promote healing so you can move forward in your life. Two, I want to remind you to *always listen to your instincts*, especially when you're away from home and out of your comfort zone. It's vital as travelers to stay safe, but it's especially important for women travelers to have a good and solid safety plan.

Most importantly, what I've learned is that life is for living, so while my experience changed me in ways that I can't adequately



put into words, I didn't let it define or confine me. I love my life and my life loves me back. I live without fear or shame, and while I now tread a little more cautiously when I'm away from home, I am still ready and willing to enjoy the bumps along the road.

So my friends, keep your tank full and the rubber side down. Let's hit the road!

XOXO
Sawal

*"No matter what, I want to continue living
with the awareness that I will die.
Without that, I am not alive.
That is what makes the life I have now possible."*

BANANA YOSHIMOTO (from Kitchen)

