



The Youthful Vegan **MAGAZINE**
FROM PLANTS TO PLATES

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A Little Note

Welcome to the second issue of the Youthful Vegan Magazine, 'From Plants to Plates.' We both get asked a wide variety of questions surrounding our plant-based lifestyle and this magazine is another way to answer these questions. We thought it would be a good format to share some tips on how to create more delicious plant-based meals, along with a mix of inspiring articles to encourage you along the path of a healthier, more balanced and eco-friendly life. We are particularly excited about this issue which is filled with vibrant imagery and festive, mouth-watering recipes for the holidays (including a festive cocktail recipe!) We know you will enjoy the tips for healthy eating during the season, gift giving ideas, suggestions on how to shop more sustainably and most importantly the reminder to shop local. We take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a wonderful and safe season. Happy New Year!

Jenness & Ariann



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ABOUT JEUNESSE POUCHET Founder of The Youthful Vegan

Jeunesse Pouchet founded The Youthful Vegan in 2013 after she learnt more about the unsanitary conditions and abuse associated with animal factory farming and the negative effects this industry has on our health and the environment.

Operating as a café for 4 years, The Youthful Vegan was the 1st Vegan establishment in Trinidad, which also catered and supplied stores with products and meals. Over those years, a movement began which promoted healthy eating, fostering a greater consciousness of what we put into our bodies. Jeunesse was able to interact with people that were not only supportive but also were a source of creativity and feedback. The response was astounding as many people wanted to participate in the vegan lifestyle, and thus reduce the amount of animal products and processed foods being consumed by our population.

In 2018, The Youthful Vegan shifted its focus to providing an exciting blog filled with plant-based recipes and lifestyle content. Jeunesse is particularly passionate about sustainability and eco-friendly living, which she speaks about on her platforms and her articles. She cites her children as a huge source of inspiration in creating and cooking nutritious and delicious meals. This year, The Youthful Vegan was very excited to be asked to begin contributing articles to the well-known conscious living site www.onegreenplanet.org. With your support, The Youthful Vegan will continue to promote good health, love and compassion.

Blog: www.theyouthfulvegan.com/blog
Instagram: www.instagram.com/youthful_vegan



ABOUT ARIANN MIEKA

Ariann Mieka, who transitioned from being a vegetarian to a vegan over 13 years ago, is a visual artist. She is passionate about capturing photographs, sharing stories and creating content that highlights her country Trinidad and Tobago. Her work has been exhibited in a wide variety of exhibitions, in Trinidad, Tobago and in London. For the past 11 years, she has produced calendars showcasing her work and they were well received at home and abroad. Ariann loves to be involved in creative projects and does publication layout, t-shirt design, illustration, jewelry and videos. She is in the process of producing books showcasing her photography and the stories of her country.

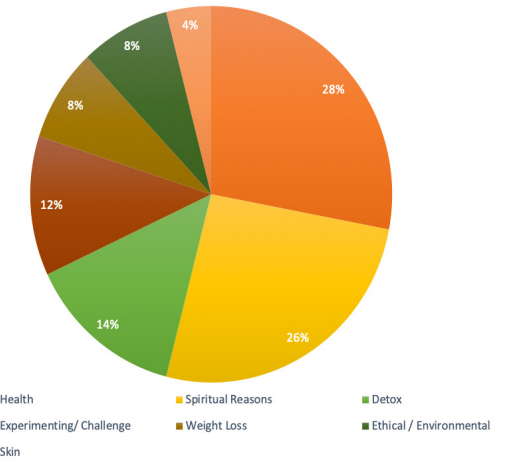
Website: www.arianmieka.com
Instagram: www.instagram.com/mynorthsea

Reasons for trying a Plant-Based Diet?

The question for the Youthful Vegan Instagram poll was directed to non-vegans, asking whether they had ever gone plant-based and for what reason. I thought that the most popular answers would relate to fasting or spiritual reasons but when we tallied the top responses, health reasons narrowly garnered the number 1 spot. Spiritual reasons were a close second though!

A healthy plant-based diet promotes a “cleaner” style of cooking and eating. After reading through the answers, it showed that many people used a plant-based diet for detoxing purposes to purify their bodies or minds leading to benefits such as clearer skin and weight loss.

Fewer people mentioned that they did it for ethical or environmental reasons. This was interesting to me, as many people had spoken to me prior to this, about giving up meat when



they learnt about these issues in relation to the meat, dairy and seafood industries from watching popular documentaries like “What the Health”. Perhaps though, most people who started a plant-based diet for those reasons continued and did not switch back.

Whatever the reason, there are undoubtedly many benefits to a plant-based lifestyle. This magazine has articles and delicious plant-based recipes that will inspire your plant-based journey. ■

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Orange Glazed Smoked Tofu

Yields 8-12 servings

INGREDIENTS

4 Packs/ Blocks Extra Firm Tofu

For The Marinade:

8 Garlic Cloves

1 Cup Olive Oil

2 tsp Liquid Smoke

1 tsp Salt

For The Orange Glaze:

8½ oz Orange Marmalade

4 - 6 Garlic Cloves

½ Cup Spicy Brown Mustard

1 Cup Brown Sugar

½ of an Orange, juiced

1 tsp Salt

METHOD:

Preparing The Tofu

1. Place the tofu on a cutting board and slice into slabs of approximately ½ inch thick.

2. Lay a kitchen towel on a flat surface or on a cutting board with absorbent paper towels on top or another kitchen towel. Then place your slabs of tofu in single rows on half of the towels, then fold the other half of your towel over the slabs of tofu.

3. Using your hands, press firmly on each piece of tofu to remove the excess liquid. Note: Make sure not to press so hard that the tofu gets smashed.

4. Repeat this process until all the slices of tofu are pressed.

The Smoked Tofu Marinade

1. Blend all of the ingredients in a food processor or blender until the oil has emulsified and the garlic is finely minced.

2. Coat the bottom of a large, deep baking dish with marinade, then place the tofu in single rows, covering the marinade.

3. Pour the remainder of the marinade over the tofu and spread to evenly coat the tofu.

4. Cover the dish and allow it to marinate overnight.

5. When the tofu is finished marinating, preheat your oven to 350°F, remove the cover from the tofu and pop in the oven.

6. Bake for 10 minutes on each side. Remove from the oven and then remove the excess marinade by tilting the dish and pouring the excess liquid into a glass or jar. You can reserve this marinade for cooking and flavouring other dishes.

7. Now, raise your oven temperature to 375°F for when you're ready to bake the glazed tofu.

Making The Orange Glaze

1. Add all the ingredients to a food processor or blender and blend until smooth.

2. Add the glaze to a pot then place on a medium low heat. Cook for 10 minutes, allowing the glaze to bubble while stirring or whisking every few minutes. This helps to enhance the flavours of the glaze before adding to your tofu.

3. When the glaze has finished simmering, pour approximately ¾ of it over the pre-cooked tofu and coat both sides of the tofu well with the orange glaze. You can reserve the remainder of glaze for when serving.

4. Return to the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes on each side until sticky and golden brown.

5. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for a few minutes before serving.

Serving suggestions:

This dish can be enjoyed alone, or served with quinoa sausage stuffing, fresh bread and quinoa salad. It's also delicious in sandwiches with a spread of pepper jelly and cashew cheese.

Note:

You can freeze the glazed tofu by cooling completely and placing it in an airtight container. It can be kept frozen for up to 2 months.





Meat & Dairy Alternatives

Going Plant Based has never been easier!

One of the main obstacles for most people when considering switching to a plant-based diet is the fear that they will miss and crave meat and dairy too much. On my own journey, when I began a plant-based diet in 2013, I immediately researched meat and dairy free alternatives to my previous staples. I soon realized that a lot of these items were not available in Trinidad and Tobago. I eventually found one local store that sold imported organic, plant-based ingredients and ready-made products, but the items were too expensive to buy for everyday use. I quickly recognized that I would have to become creative and 'veganize' some of my favorite foods at home using whole food ingredients from scratch instead.

Nowadays, meat and dairy alternatives are more readily available and affordable locally! Many

more companies, internationally and even locally, are producing these vegan alternatives. It shows that people have become more aware of their food choices and are more conscious about what they put into their bodies. Thankfully as well, the taste and textures of these products are also improving drastically. The easy accessibility and improvement to these products, especially locally, is great news for anyone trying to incorporate more vegan meals into their diet or switch to a plant-based diet completely. They can satisfy their cravings with a suitable substitute, helping them stay on track with their plans.

My husband's journey to veganism, which came years after mine, is an example of how these products can assist in making the transition easier. He stopped eating meat after two

back-to-back incidents. The first was when our daughter Gaia asked, "Daddy why do you eat meat, don't you want to be healthy like Arius, mummy and I?". The second was when he watched the documentary 'What the Health', and realized the devastating effects meat can have on his body, especially processed meat products. Although he was never a huge meat eater (for example, he would never eat a steak but he enjoyed hot dog sausages or burger patties) he is also not a fan of most vegetables. Cooking for him was, therefore, always a challenge as not only do I follow a plant-based diet, I have always enjoyed cooking and enjoying a variety of vegetables as part of my daily meals. I began to experiment and over time, I found creative methods for adding veggies discreetly into his meals. The real lifesaver came though when I started utilizing these meat alternatives for his meals, such as the vegan sausages, burger patties, 'minced meat' and 'bacon' to create dishes he would surely love!

When it came to the children, I was a little wary about serving them these meat alternatives as they had never eaten meat and therefore there wasn't a need to compensate for anything. More importantly, I didn't want to confuse them with the texture and the resemblance to meat products. Now that they are a bit older, we all eat them more often, especially for special occasions. I just always make sure to stress to my younger child that we are having a vegan sausage, or a vegan burger pattie to avoid any confusion when he is offered something later on by a friend at school.

I would never recommend eating these alternatives in every meal because a healthy plant-based diet should always contain more whole foods and fresh fruits than processed products. But I think they are beneficial in moderation as they are fantastic for saving time,



fun treats on the weekend, cook-ups, BBQ's and serving to family and friends who are not vegan when they come over.

All of these products can make mealtime easy, fun and delicious."

I am truly thankful that there is a lot more variety now available to us in the country, and these products can be found at grocery stores too and not solely at the gourmet stores anymore. **Tru Valu Supermarket** is

one of my favorite stores for shopping for plant-based meat and dairy alternatives. Their prices are affordable and they have a wide selection of brands for vegan-friendly meat, dairy, health products and snack alternatives from which to choose. Some of my favorite products from this supermarket are: Field Roast Sausages, Lightlife Smart bacon, Pure Farmlands meat alternatives,

Beyond Meat alternatives, Vans Foods waffles and pancakes, Chobani Dairy Free milk and yogurts, Daiya Foods cheese and cream cheese, Half Moon dairy free ice creams.

All of these products can make mealtime easy, fun and delicious. No matter your reason for switching to a plant-based diet, there are many products to choose from that can make this switch a lot easier. Oh, fun tip - make sure to taste their non-dairy ice cream and yogurt!

Featured in the photos from Tru Valu Supermarket are: **1.** Field Roast Smoked Apple & Sage Sausages grilled to perfection. **2.** Darby Culinary Veggie Patties cooked in a cast iron skillet and topped with Daiya Foods Cheddar. **3.** Lightlife Smart Bacon grilled until crisp, and Lightlife sausages sliced and pan fried with onions and peppers. **4.** Vans Food waffles and pancakes reheated and served with fruit compote and coconut yogurt. **5.** Chobani oat milk served on ice for the kids. **6.** Scoops of Half-moon coconut ice cream for an after lunch treat. ■



THE KIDS READY FOR THEIR HALF MOON COCONUT ICE CREAM



Quinoa Cranberry Almond Salad

Yields 3 - 4 servings

For the Quinoa Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Cup Uncooked Quinoa, rinsed and drained
- 1¾ Cup Water
- 1- 2 Cucumbers, sliced or chopped
- ¼ - ½ Cup Slivered or Chopped Almonds
- ¼ - ½ Cup Cranberries
- 3 - 4 Cups loosely chopped Greens like; Lettuce, Spinach, Kale, Micro Greens or any of your favourite Salad Mixes

METHOD:

- 1.** Place the rinsed quinoa and water in a pot on medium heat, and cook until it reaches a gentle boil.
- 2.** Reduce the heat to low and partially cover the pot. **Note:** Keep a close eye on this process to prevent the quinoa from overcooking or sticking to the pot.
- 3.** Turn off the heat and use a fork to fluff the quinoa, then transfer to a tray or something where you can spread the quinoa so that it cools evenly.
- 4.** Assemble your salad by adding your chopped greens to a bowl then top with quinoa, cucumbers, almonds, and cranberries. Drizzle with the sweet mustard dressing, toss and serve.

Sweet Mustard Dressing

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Cup + 2 Tbsp Olive oil
- ¼ Cup + 1 Tsp Malt Vinegar
- 2 Tbsp Yellow Mustard
- 2 Tbsp Spicy Brown Mustard
- ¼ Cup Agave
- 1 Tbsp minced Garlic
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper to taste

METHOD: Combine all of the ingredients in a mixing bowl and whisk until it's well blended and smooth. Serve with your quinoa salad for a flavourful festive dish.

Tasty Tip: You can use this dressing for a variety of salads. I would also suggest using it to dress a warm or cold, potato or pasta salad. **Storing:** You can store the remainder of sweet mustard dressing in the fridge for up to 1 month.



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Gift Giving Tips with Krystle



The Christmas season is a time for giving. I always enjoy the process of trying to figure out the perfect gift. For the past few years, my mom and I have had a small business making personalized gift boxes and the ones that we create at Christmas, always bring out extra creativity in us. For every gift we give, whether for clients or personal friends, we stick to the motto: "Give from the heart or not at all." We also agree that it is important that the recipient can feel and see that much thought has gone into their present. To get you to think outside of the box this season, here are five ideas to inspire your gift-giving this year.

GIFT BOXES

As mentioned above, our business creates beautiful gift boxes that are custom-made for the client! To curate a very special gift box, you also need

to consider the following: Firstly, decide on your budget from the beginning as you do not want to start to choose items which may exceed what you want to spend. Secondly, decide on a colour scheme so that everything has a cohesive look and blends well together. Lastly, the type of decorations you choose should reflect the time of year or the special occasion. You can also place trinkets or fillers that your friend would like, in the box.

DO IT YOURSELF (DIY)

During the holiday season, most of my Christmas presents have some DIY element to them. Normally, I end up engaging with these projects for my close friends because I know them well and thus can create something that means a lot to them. Also, making your gifts can help you save money which is a big plus when you need to stick to a budget.

Some easy DIY projects are:

1. Homemade Christmas decorations. These can be made extra special with the addition of a photograph of a loved one or their favourite pet.

2. Popsicle Stick Signs. These can have the name of the plant or an inspiring quote written on them and stuck into plant pots for our plant-loving friends.

3. Bath Gift Sets. These can be created by adding a few bath items to a box, basket or even in a cute bag, creating a relaxing themed gift option.

4. Bonus idea. A simple, fun idea is to make a Christmas-themed decorated water bottle by adding pipe cleaners around the bottleneck with two eyes stuck on the bottle to look like a Reindeer to celebrate the season! This is a fun gift to give as a 'thought' to someone special.

Options are unlimited! Just spend a little time researching online and you are sure to come up with a doable project!

REPURPOSED GIFTS

Another type of cute DIY gift is to create something new using repurposed items. This is a wonderful idea that not only allows us to recycle items but also, we can breathe new life into them, creating one-of-a-kind gifts! For example, you can use old paint tins and turn them into plant pots for the plant-loving friend. Sometimes gifts don't even have to be

for the person directly. I have quite a few friends who are animal lovers and would be thrilled to receive a homemade gift for their pets instead. You can use a repurposed jar that you decorate and fill with homemade treats for their fur babies! Or even a simple box in good condition or basket filled with other pet goodies such as toys, cute clothes or collars. I have repurposed a shoebox, spray painted it and filled it with homemade dog cookies, some tennis balls and a homemade blanket that I created from material that I had at home and stitched the ends. I added some Christmas decorations in the box to add that extra sparkle and put a beautiful bow around it. Simple yet effective.

COUPON BOOKS

Staying along the same DIY vein, the idea to create a "Coupon book" is not only fun and simple to make for the kids in your life and allows the gift to be experientially based! I particularly love this idea and the fact that you can get creative with the design of the book and the execution of the gift later on. Each "coupon" is redeemable for a fun activity that you can create such as a movie night with parents, going on a scavenger hunt around the house, a picnic at the park or even having a sleepover by grandparents. You could opt to put 3 or 4 of the coupons together to make a mini book and the children can pick one of them when they are ready to redeem. These coupons are easy to create as you can either print them out or even write them out on paper using different colours!

TIME

Lastly, one more option is giving the gift of 'Time'. Tuning in to what your loved ones need and offering to spend time helping them especially in this busy Christmas season, is always a special gift. The friends in your life who are parents would certainly be appreciative if you offered to babysit for a few hours to allow them to run errands or to

have a much-needed break to drink an uninterrupted cup of coffee. If you have elderly relatives, you can make their day a bit easier by doing their grocery shopping or running errands for them. Organizing to set aside an hour or so to go have coffee or tea and just chat with a friend can be a wonderful highlight for someone. Sometimes your presence is more valuable to some people

Your presence is more valuable to some people than actual presents."

than actual presents. This gift is a simple one but can be one that your loved one appreciates the most.

I hope these ideas, most of which can be done on the smallest budget, have inspired you to create thoughtful gifts for your loved ones. Christmas is the season of giving, so please remember to give from the heart or not at all! ■

FUN PLAYDOUGH ACTIVITIES + KITS FOR CHILDREN

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Quinoa Sausage Stuffing

Yields 6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

1½ Cup Uncooked Quinoa

1 Sprig of Fresh Rosemary

1¾ Cups of Water

2 Tbsp Garlic Olive Oil (fresh minced garlic and olive oil mixed up)

5 Celery Sticks, finely chopped with leaves (Use 1 stick if using large imported celery)

5 Pimentos, finely chopped

2 Apples, cubed with skin

3 Large Vegan Sausages, sliced - I quite enjoy *Beyond Meat sausages* and, or *Field Roast Smoked Apple sausages*

½ Cup diced Red Onions

1 tsp Salt (adjust to taste)

2 tsp Parsley Flakes (or fresh chopped parsley)

2 tsp Paprika

1¼ Cup Unsalted Veggie Stock

METHOD:

For the Quinoa

1. Add the quinoa, water and sprig of rosemary to a pot on medium heat.
2. When the quinoa comes to a gentle boil (gently rolling bubbles) lower the heat and partially cover the pot until the water is absorbed.
3. After, turn off the heat, remove the rosemary and fluff the quinoa using a fork.

For The Sausage Stuffing

1. Place a cast iron skillet or a pan on medium heat.
2. When the skillet is heated, coat the pan with the garlic and olive oil mix.
3. Add the onions and toss for a minute. Then stir in your diced pimentos, celery, and seasonings. Stir and cook together until softened and fragrant.
4. Now add the sliced sausages and mix together with the seasonings.
5. Cook until the sausages begin to brown, then fold in the sliced apples, and continue to cook for another 2 minutes while stirring. Note: Feel free to add in some extra nuts or dried fruit here.
6. Remove from the heat and set aside.

To Assemble The Stuffing

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Lightly oil a deep baking dish with garlic and olive oil, then cover with cooked quinoa.
3. Add the sausage filling and gently toss together.
4. Cover with veggie stock and top with bread crumbs, slivered almonds, and a sprig of rosemary.
5. Cover and bake for approximately 15 minutes then remove the cover (you can increase the heat), and bake for another 5-10 minutes or until the breadcrumbs are golden brown.
6. Remove from the oven and allow the stuffing to sit for a few minutes before serving.



Fitness Chat with Jenna Camacho

Tips to eating healthily during the holidays!

It's that time of the year again! The Christmas holiday season is a glorious time in our country. It's a time full of family gatherings, friendly get-togethers, house limes, dinner parties, and not to mention lots of great food!

So, it's no surprise that the foods served at this time are usually higher in calories, fats, and sugars making it extremely easy to overeat and overindulge. However, it's quite possible to *thoroughly* enjoy the foods and festivities during the holiday. Try these tips to help you maintain healthy eating throughout the season.

1. Focus on maintaining weight rather than losing. Don't set yourself up to fail with unrealistic expectations. Do not stress too much over losing weight, instead stay present and enjoy the seasonal foods in moderation.

2. Stay active (do household chores)
Try to stay as active as possible during the holidays, doing daily chores and activities around the house can help you burn extra calories. Stay on your feet!

3. Don't go for long shopping days without a plan. Spending long hours shopping can make it easy to miss meals. Instead carry healthy snacks in your bag. Try nuts, hummus and crackers, and small fruit like an apple that can easily fit into your bag. This can help you avoid overeating or making bad food choices when



JENNA CAMACHO | JCAM FITNESS

Healthy eating during the holidays should never feel like punishment or exclusion. So, try these tips as you enjoy the Christmas season!"

you find yourself overly hungry. ingredients and using natural sweeteners for example pumpkin, sweet potato or dates to sweeten a dish.

you find yourself overly hungry.

4. Don't starve yourself
Many people think that if they skip meals all day, they can then eat as much as they'd like. This will only result in overeating and overindulgence.

5. Use healthy substitutes when cooking
Try using healthy cooking methods to prepare your food like grilling, baking and air frying. Use healthy swaps in your recipes, examples: low sodium options, whole foods instead of processed

6. Never go to a dinner party hungry

Eat a small meal before going out for dinner so you don't arrive at the dinner party hungry and risk overeating.

7. Eat more vegetables and salad

Try to fill your plate with 50% salad and vegetables. Eat your salad and vegetables before you start your meal.

8. Don't go back for seconds,

Eat slowly and mindfully, enjoy your meal so you give yourself time to get full.

9. Beware of alcohol

Alcohol opens your appetite and reduces your inhibitions making it easier to make bad choices in food. Try to drink water in between drinks to stay hydrated. Use healthy chasers (water, lime and soda) instead of juices and high calorie drinks.

10. Don't forget protein and fibre are more filling and lower in calories

Protein and fibre will keep you fuller for longer. Vegetables are low in calories so treat this as a free food.

11. Save calories for dessert

If you want to indulge in a high calorie dessert then try to eat a lower calorie meal filled with lots of fibrous vegetables.

12. Brush teeth

This may sound silly but if you can brush your teeth after dinner or have a mint this will make eating again less likely.

13. Don't keep temptations at home

Remove all temptations from your pantry. There will be enough temptation when you go out so remove the excess from your home. ■

The Healthy **LIFE**style



The Coffee Corner

My Coffee station is my own little sanctuary, filling my home with the comforting aromas of fresh brewed Coffee and love!"



In this second issue of the magazine, in the spirit of the season, I present this warm, decadent and comforting drink that is the perfect holiday brew!

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED:

Large Coffee Mug, Double Shot of Espresso, Dairy Free Oat Milk, Dairy Free Whipping Cream, Coconut Caramel Sauce, Semi-sweet Chocolate Chips, Mini Vegan Marshmallows

For the Coconut Caramel

- ¼ Cup Coconut Milk
- ⅓ Cup Coconut Sugar
- 2 Tbsp Coconut Oil

Method:

1. Add all ingredients to a small pot on low heat and allow to simmer, while stirring periodically until the caramel thickens and looks shiny and silky. You can test by dipping a spoon into the caramel and if it coats your spoon without running off, it's ready to come off the heat.

2. Set aside and allow the caramel to cool before serving.

For the Whipped Cream

½ Cup Cold Non-Dairy Whipping Cream (I used Flora Professional Heavy Whipping Cream)

Method

1. Add whipping cream to a tall cup or measuring cup and use an immersion blender to blend the cream until it thickens and firms up.

2. Store in the fridge until you're ready to top your coffee.

For the Chocolate Coating

¼ Cup Vegan Chocolate Chips
1 Tsp Coconut Oil

Method

Place chocolate chips in a microwavable bowl and microwave for 30 seconds. Give it a stir then microwave for another 30 seconds. Stir in the coconut oil until the chocolate is smooth and shiny. Spread the melted chocolate on the rim of your coffee cup. It will harden up as it cools.

Assemble

1. Drizzle the coconut caramel on the inside of the chocolate coated coffee mug, allowing it to fully coat the mug.

2. Add a double shot of fresh brewed espresso, with approximately ¼ cup warm water, then add some warmed oat milk, top with dollops of whipped cream, and finish with a generous amount of mini vegan marshmallows, and an extra drizzle of coconut caramel. This is comfort in a cup! ■



Maple Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies

RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

- 3½ Cups Oat Flour (grounded oats)
- 2 Cups Whole Oats
- 3 ½ Cups Slivered Almonds
- 1 Cup Brown Sugar
- ⅔ Cup Dried Cranberries or Cherries
- ½ Cup Chocolate Chips
- 2 Tsp Baking Soda
- 1 Tsp Cinnamon
- 1 Tsp Salt
- 1 Cup Maple Syrup (or sub with coconut sugar syrup, agave or date syrup)

½ Cup Coconut Oil

¼ Cup Coconut Milk (or any other non-dairy milk)

METHOD:

1. Add all of the dry ingredients to a mixing bowl and stir until well combined.

2. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix well until properly combined.

3. Scoop the batter onto 3 non-stick or lined baking dishes (lined with either parchment paper or non-stick liners). Use

your hands to shape and flatten the cookies.

Note: You can wet your hands to help shape the cookie dough.

4. Preheat the oven to 350°F and bake for 12-15 minutes until golden brown.

5. Allow to cool before serving.

Storing: You can store these cookies in the fridge, but you can also store the batter, or the baked cookies in the freezer for prepping purposes over the holidays or anytime of year.



Profile of a Vegan with Andrés

How long have you been vegan?

Andrés: It's been two years now, and the way I feel about this lifestyle only gets stronger with time.

Why did you become vegan? Tell us a little bit about your journey?

A: Back in Venezuela, there's a saying for people like me that goes: "criao a punta e'parrilla"; which means "raised next to a grill". I was fishing and hunting since I have memory. My brothers are hunters, and my grandfather on my mother's side was a bush man. Honestly, I never felt quite comfortable with who I was or the things I did. Although in my teen years I mixed alcohol with fishing and it was mostly fun, I knew, deep down that what I was doing was wrong...In my mid-twenties I fell ill...I was told not to eat canned nor processed foods, deli was entirely off the menu and dairy was strictly prohibited. Gluten and sugars were also part of the prohibited foods.

After coming to Tobago, I started working nonstop in the food industry. I became a student,

I decided to unlearn everything I thought I knew about cooking and fill my brain with the local cuisine. There was a time in my life when at least five days a week, I was filleting fish and chicken, peeling shrimp or cleaning lobsters...But, as all things in life must come to an end, one day my left knee just gave up on me and I had to quit my job before the surgery. After that, I spent some months in recovery trying to do some work on myself ... I became really curious on why cooking was feeling wrong, and to a certain point, even my own food was making me sick... I already knew there were documentaries out there; I was just never open to watch them because: "UGA-UGA (caveman voice), men eat meat...That was my programming until I called myself out... "how can I call myself an animal lover if I'm actively part of an industry where we kill...animals that feel exactly the same way as my dog? Or maybe I'm just too much of a (explicit) to watch it?" That last thought hurt my ego... I couldn't believe I was insulting myself. I couldn't be wrong; I couldn't be scared of what I was about to watch. So, after I "manned up" and sat in front of the tv, I played Earthlings (free to watch on youtube)... Maybe

I could've just answer with: "I think I'm vegan since maybe September 2019". I think what has kept me on track is my constant learning. Not only about food, but about what it really means to be a man.

What is an example of a day's menu for you?

A: Before breakfast, my wife loves the ritual of juicing oranges, beets, cucumber, turmeric and ginger. I usually drink the whole glass in one go because it feels like, I don't know, drinking life? It feels amazing. If cars could feel, it would be like getting an oil change. Your whole body, your organs, your limbs and your skin... everything feels sublime. After that, I make myself a smoothie...Homemade coconut milk, oats, chia, flax, frozen local bananas, peanuts, barley grass and spirulina powder.

For lunch, we always stick to basics. Cassava, brown rice, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, fresh salads, beans of all kinds that I season a certain way depending on my mood that day. I could fry cassava every day and not get bored. I could also eat pasta and black beans 5 days a week and not be bothered by it.

Dinner is basically the same as lunch, we might add banana ice cream or another kind of dessert, but, beans and root vegetables are so versatile, that I can cook 5 or



AGED CASHEW CHEESE FROM THE VEGANZUELAN CATERERS



PHOTO COURTESY THE VEGANZUELAN

6 different recipes in one week. We don't live by the belief that to be vegan you have to eat the same every day.

Beans and root vegetables are so versatile, that I can cook 5 or 6 different recipes in one week."

Sometimes, we indulge by consuming our own products. I mean, it's difficult enough to have a fridge full of vegan cheese, but also a freezer full of sausages, bean burgers and tempeh, and not take a bite once in a while. And of course, we make a lot of pizzas, arepas, lasagna, sushi, rice wraps, cabbage wraps, tacos... you name it, we cook and eat it.

Any tips for someone trying to go vegan?

A: No tips, no advice. I always answer this question with the truth. Watch Earthlings, Dominion, What the Health, Fork over Knives and Seaspiracy...Before trying going vegan, inform yourself. See with your own eyes how your food is made. Don't just rush into it because of society, trending, or because you are trying to impress a girl or a guy. This; this is for the animals...See how you feel, if you feel good, start looking fresh, skin clears up, hair looks different, sleep improves... try for another month. Who knows, maybe you'll like it. But inform yourself. Do it with a purpose. If not for them (animals), do it for yourself.■

Festive Spinach Stuffed Bread

This spinach stuffing can fill approximately 2 - 3 loaves of bread using a standard vegan bread recipe. For a gluten free version you can try the Flour Bag Baking Company Gluten Free Bread Mix.

For the Spinach Filling

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Pack of Frozen Spinach (1000 g), thaw and squeeze to remove excess liquid
- 2 Tbsp Olive Oil
- 1 Cup diced Red Onions
- 1½ Tbsp Minced Garlic
- ½ Cup diced Pimentos
- 2 Tbsp Capers
- 1 Tbsp Paprika
- 1 Tbsp Parsley (Flakes or Fresh)
- 2 tsp Dried or Fresh Thyme
- ½ Cup sliced Green Olives (I used Manzanilla Stuffed olives)
- ½ Cup roughly chopped Cranberries
- Salt to taste

METHOD:

1. Using a large pan, place on medium heat and coat with olive oil.
2. Toss in the onions, garlic and pimentos and saute for 2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add the spinach, parsley, paprika and thyme, and cook for another 5 minutes, stirring in between.

Note: Make sure to properly squeeze out the liquid from the spinach after thawing. You need the spinach to be as dry as possible before cooking.

4. Mix in the olives, capers and cranberries and cook for another minute or two until the flavours are well combined. Add salt to taste, remove from the heat and allow to cool completely before filling your bread.



For the Spinach Stuffed Bread

METHOD:

1. On a lightly floured surface, roll out your dough into a rectangle approximately ½ inch thick.
2. Add 1 cup of spinach mixture and evenly spread to within 1/2 in. of the edges.
3. Roll it up starting with a long side and tucking in at each roll, then pinch the seam to seal.
4. Place seam side down in a bread baking pan coated with Vegan butter or olive oil, and tuck the ends under.
5. Place in your microwave or oven (turned off) to proof/ rise a second time before baking, making sure to follow your bread recipe method.
6. Preheat your oven to 350°F.
7. Bake for approximately 30 - 35 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pan to a cooling rack and let it stand for approximately 10 minutes before slicing.

Note:

If you would like to make this Stuffed Bread ahead of time; simply bake for less time approximately halfway through the baking time, then allow to cool completely and place in a freezer safe bag or dish.

Store in the freezer for later and when you're ready to use your bread, remove from the freezer, allow to thaw partially and place in a 350°F preheated oven. Bake for another 20 - 25 minutes until warm and fully cooked.





Sustainability & Fashion, featuring **Bene Caribe**

We had a lovely chat with Abby Charles, the founder and pioneer of Bene Caribe and learnt just how “good the brand is for the Caribbean” as its name proclaims and what sustainability in fashion is all about. This beautiful brand is making a difference in the Caribbean through outreach while striving to be good for the environment with ethical practices.

Tell us about your brand.

BC: I started Bene Caribe in 2015 when I was in Trinidad. I live in the US and at the time, there was a lot of negative news that I was hearing coming out from the Caribbean. Most

times, the news would be about crime or you might hear a lot of negative stories related to politics. But as someone who is very connected to different communities and organizations on the ground in T&T, I know that there is a lot of good also happening in the Caribbean. So, I wanted to create a brand that could highlight some of the great news and the people who are doing good on the ground in the Caribbean. The name ‘Bene Caribe’ means good for the Caribbean and with a brand name like that, our goal is to highlight all that is good for the Caribbean, do good for the Caribbean and do good in fashion. As such, we try to be

as ethical as possible, and we are constantly learning how to be a better ethical brand.

Who is the Bene Caribe woman?

BC: The Bene Caribe woman is a woman who is proud of her Caribbean heritage or is really interested in being connected to Caribbean communities, highlighting those communities and their unique work in her clothing. She makes an impact wherever she goes and loves to do that in her bright, Caribbean-inspired clothes. She is a person who gives back to her community, recognizing that she is responsible for her community as well.

We love the fact that Bene Caribe has included donating to charity into the ethos of the brand. What charities do you support?

BC: We try to highlight organizations that are doing good work and give back to them, especially small organizations that don’t have a lot of resources. We’re not a large brand (as yet), but we try to give as much as we can every year. Over the years, we’ve donated (mostly one-time awards) to many different types of organizations such as, The Backpack Project, The Voice of Lupus Foundation, The Caribbean School of Dance, Conflict Women, Mo’ Girls, which is a training program for young girls to become entrepreneurs and East Yard, which is a program for young people interested in the arts led by Kevon Foderingham. We’ve also given a scholarship to assist a student and then last year during the pandemic, there were so many calls to donate computers and other items, which we tried to fulfill.

For those who may not be familiar with what sustainable fashion means, can you briefly explain?

BC: Sure. Well, there’s no one definition for sustainable fashion. I don’t really think there is actually such a thing as sustainable fashion. While I think it’s possible to be sustainable and to have a circular system (in a way that everything that is used is somehow replaced), I have just not seen this being done in the fashion industry

as yet. This is why I tend to use ‘ethical’ when I describe Bene Caribe because there are practices that we do that are not sustainable. But, in general, sustainable fashion practices encompass using natural

We are constantly learning how to be a better ethical brand.”

fabrics, for example, as the natural fabric biodegrades much easier. Using polyesters in your production is less sustainable as it could take upward of 200 years for polyester and plastics to begin to decompose into the Earth, though there are many recycled fabrics that are polyester. In addition, some fashion brands produce a lot of waste when sewing. There’s a lot of fabric that gets cut and just tossed in the bin. So, especially in countries like Trinidad and Tobago, where we have a large amount of waste, trying to be ‘no waste’ and using every piece of that fabric to produce something in your clothing line is a sustainable practice. Whether you’re using the extra fabric to make pillows or jewelry or accessories or scarves or quilts, finding ways to repurpose those fabric ends into other products is a sustainable practice. Using organic cotton and other such fabric is also an ethical practice

as there are fewer pesticides used in the growing of the cotton as compared to regular cotton. Another example would be to use fabrics that don’t take a lot of water to produce.

Now our brand doesn’t use only organic cotton. However, we use primarily natural fabrics and we are also a ‘slow’ fashion brand, which means we produce small amounts of clothing and small runs of clothing. This is more ethical than ‘fast’ fashion, which produces large volumes of clothing of which much of it goes to waste. We try to be ‘no waste’ as much as possible and we strive to be more sustainable in all our processes.

Do you think sustainable fashion is something that our vibrant fashion industry in the Caribbean is discussing?

Yes. In some of the training programs that I have been in with Fashion TT, many of the webinars have discussed sustainable



JEUNESSE AND ARIANN WEARING BENE CARIBE



JEUNESSE AND ARIANNI WEARING BENE CARIBE

fashion practices. I remember attending one session on how fashion businesses could be marketable to the international world, and sustainability was a big part of the presentation. The presenter talked a lot about how to recycle fabrics as part of your process, ensuring that you have opportunities for people to return clothing to mend those pieces or return clothing that you as the designer then can repurpose into something else as a circular practice, which is really good. There is definitely an increased focus on sustainability as a practice for fashion brands, with more of them having something related to slow fashion or ethics or sustainability as part of their language. But sustainability is still something we could always hear more about and continue to strive toward.

As a small fashion brand, it's more challenging to access very costly fabrics that are organic. I think many brands in T&T and the Caribbean, have a desire to be as ethical as possible,

but sometimes the cost creates some restrictions. There is also a need for additional capacity building, technical assistance and support for groups to be able to essentially afford to be sustainable as it is more costly to be a sustainable brand, to be ethical and to use sustainable fabrics. For a young person or a small new brand especially, people question the cost of the pieces. So, there's an interesting dynamic that I think people have to play with, which is why you might not see that many brands talking about using ethical fabrics, but I've definitely heard it more over the years.

What tips do you have for consumers to be more eco-conscious when shopping and choosing pieces?

In T&T, if you are thinking about shopping ethically, one idea is to shop local. Shopping locally is a very ethical practice because there are fewer costs related to shipping. Every plane that has to fly from another country to T&T means that more carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming. So, the concept of shopping local means that you are buying products that are already there which will help to reduce the carbon footprint that each of us has.

Another way to shop ethically is to find out about the brand and shop the brands that are slow fashion producers, producing small numbers of pieces, compared to shopping

at locations or brands that have hundreds of stock of every piece of clothing. I also think shopping ethically is paying attention to the material from which the product is made, the quality of the product and how the item is packaged. Are they using eco-friendly materials or recyclable packaging?

Shopping ethically is also shopping for materials that are long-lasting and that people don't have to throw away shortly after. For example, purchasing tools that help people be more sustainable throughout the year. So, for the holidays, purchasing gifts like glass or bamboo straws or stainless-steel water bottles to help reduce plastic consumption. Also, instead of wrapping paper for the holidays, purchase something that the person can reuse to wrap your gift in such as a piece of fabric or a beach wrap and get creative with how you wrap your products as well. Wrapping paper is just paper that goes to waste.

One more thing about shopping ethically, is to reduce overconsumption. Overconsumption drives overproduction waste and is one of the drivers of pollution and environmental degradation. Purchase fewer, high quality pieces that can be worn or used multiple times, in multiple ways and that will last for years in your wardrobe or home. Shop for items that add value to your life for the long haul. ■

Hibiscus Gin Fizz

Yields 2 Cocktails

Add a little Gin-gle to your holidays with this Festive Hibiscus Gin Fizz. A twist on a classic, it's a little sweet, floral and fruity, with just the right amount of kick from the Gin. This pretty cocktail is simple to make and perfect for the holiday season.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ Cup Hibiscus Kefir Water
- 1½ Oz. Gin (adjust to taste)
- 2 Orange Wedges



METHOD:

1. Using a rocks glass, add ice cubes, gin, and pour over with cold hibiscus kefir.
2. Squeeze an orange wedge, drop into the glass and garnish with the other wedge.
3. Sip and enjoy!



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Trini (Caribbean) Black Cake

Yields approximately:
5-6 (6inch) cakes

For The Soaked Fruits:

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ Lbs. Raisins
- 1½ Lbs. Prunes, pitted
- 1½ Lbs. Currants
- 6 Ounces Citron (preserved minced rinds from citrus fruits), this can be purchased in most groceries in the dried fruit section.
- 3 Cups Maraschino Cherries, roughly chopped (syrup drained)
- 1 Bottle (750ml) Rum
- 1 Bottle (750ml) Cherry Brandy

METHOD:

1. Add raisins, prunes and currants to a food processor, and pulse together until the fruits are minced. **Note: If you blend too much, it can result in a paste.**
2. Add the minced fruits to a glass jar with the citron and chopped cherries. Using a metal spoon, mix everything together until all the ingredients are well combined.
3. Pour the cherry brandy and rum over the minced fruits, and mix well to properly combine the alcohol. Or, you can add half the alcohol, allow it to sit overnight, then stir in the remainder of alcohol the following day.
4. Allow the jar of fruits to soak and marinate in the alcohol for a minimum of 2 weeks. **Note: Because the alcohol acts as a preservative, these fruits can stay sealed, and stored on the counter for long periods of time. There is also a quicker version where you can simmer your fruits in the alcohol, if you need them right away. Also, the alcohol acts as a preservative, so these fruits can stay sealed, and stored on the counter for long periods of time.**

For The Cake:

INGREDIENTS

- 6 Cups All Purpose Flour
- 4½ Cups Brown Sugar
- 2 Tbsp Baking Soda
- 3 Tbsp Baking Powder
- 2 Tsp Salt
- 1½ Cups Almond Milk (or sub for another non-dairy milk)
- 2 Cups Coconut Oil
- 1½ - 2 Cups Browning For Cakes (burnt brown sugar) see note below
- 2 Tbsp Apple Cider Vinegar
- 1 Tbsp Almond Extract
- 1½ Cups Chopped Walnuts (or sub for almonds, cashews or pecans)

METHOD:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Add milk and vinegar to a bowl, and allow it to sit while you get the other ingredients ready.
3. In a separate bowl, sift flour with baking soda and baking powder and set aside.
4. Using a large mixing bowl, add brown sugar, oil, almond extract, and browning, then stir until well combined.
5. Fold in the soaked fruits, milk and chopped nuts, and mix together until properly combined. **Note: I reserved a 1/2 cup of the soaked fruits to use for decorating the finished cakes.**
6. Fold in the dry ingredients (flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt) to the fruit mix, a little bit at a time until it's properly combined.
7. Prepare your baking dishes by lining them with parchment paper, or grease them with coconut oil and a dusting of flour.
8. Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes then reduce the heat to 300°F and bake for approximately 25 minutes or more. You can check to see when they're ready by sticking them with a toothpick. When the stick comes out clean, the cakes are fully baked and ready to come out of the oven.
9. While the cakes are still warm, gently poke them with a toothpick, and pour them with amaretto (or choose a substitute, or mix rum and almond extract together). Allow to cool before removing from the pans.
10. To decorate the cakes- I used the soaked fruits that I reserved, and mixed it with maple syrup, pecans, sliced cherries and extra raisins, for a festive look. You can also use marzipan for decorating your cakes.



Shop Local for the holidays

Trinidad and Tobago is overflowing with talent, innovation and creativity and there are lots of beautiful and high-quality items made locally! Over this holiday season, there are many items to be found created by local artisans that can become the perfect gift for your loved ones. Buying from these artisans means that the products purchased are locally sourced, creating a smaller carbon footprint than the products that we order online for delivery from the international market. The negative environmental impact caused by Christmas shopping alone is something that people don't often consider. I think we can all address this issue on an individual basis so that collectively our carbon footprint can be lessened.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”-Margaret Mead”

Personally, the holiday season is a time that I'm most aware of my selections when shopping. I can't say I do this perfectly every time, but, I do try to stay conscious while choosing items for the people on my list. Weighing my options, I try to consider:

Packaging

This is one of the first things to which I pay attention. Whether I'm shopping at the grocery store, food establishments, clothing stores, toy stores or online, I try to avoid individually packaged items (especially ones heavily packaged in Styrofoam or plastic). Instead, I browse for items that come in alternative packaging made from paper, glass, recycled, eco-friendly, or minimal materials.

Labels and Materials

When shopping, I also check what the item itself is made of, looking for whether the material is recycled where possible and whether the company



GAIA ENJOYING THE SHOPPING IN JUNCKOLLAGE

is environmentally conscious. Two brands that I usually go to for eco-friendly toys for my kids are “Melissa & Doug” toys which are made from wood and “Green Toys” which are made from 100% recycled materials. Another thing you can look for is the cruelty-free or vegan label before purchasing. That's the little bunny or cruelty-free symbol at the back of cosmetics, body and household products. This label certifies that the product was not tested on animals. You may not see this label on local products as much, but you can still read the info on the packaging or contact the manufacturer to confirm. Pausing to check the label first is really quick and there are many cruelty-free products available for everything you need.

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HANDMADE, PAINTED WOODEN SIGNS FROM JUNCKOLLAGE

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Support Local

I've had several conversations with friends over the last few years and they shared that shopping online on international websites is just simply more convenient. Also, it is sometimes hard to find a specific item sold locally and therefore, ordering from international stores seems unavoidable. That being said, I still really try my best to buy from local artisans, manufacturers and items found in local shops first. Thankfully, nowadays (especially since the pandemic began), a lot more of the local stores are offering online ordering and delivery, which helps with the convenience issue.

Supporting our local artisans and stores helps to boost our local economy and the environment at the same time. One of my favourite stores to visit and shop for presents is Junckollage, a store that stocks a variety of locally sourced or made items. I've been shopping at Junckolage since they first opened at 'One Yoga' and now relocated to 'Akasha Studio' on Long Circular road. The founder of this small business, Rayya, shared her story and mission for opening the store:

“Junckollage has been open in many different phases and stages for a decade (wow! Can't even believe that myself). It started as a bookbag business at school where I made my whimsical, quirky jewelry for friends, and then it turned into an every weekend pop up (I was DE market banton!) and then when I hit the road backpacking through Central and South America, my pieces funded my travels along the way. Finally, it became a physical shop and it's been almost 4 years.

My goal or mission for the original Junckollage, was to create dreamy bits and bobs that I could dress myself or my room up with. Usually using found objects or upcycled stuff that brings a wide smile when fellow browsing dreamers recognize what the items were made with. Sharing twinkly eyes was probably the first aim.

As for the current form of the business, I really wanted to provide a solution to ... **Continued on pg 32**

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Design by Ariann Mehta
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space - high expense, higher demands on time. So, Junckollage is here to help provide a solution to this, turn the dreams into reality, create an outlet for all the creative expressions and form a vendor family...It's the Pop-Up that stays up!"

I can assure you that you will find some beautiful and thoughtful gifts, any time of year at this store. I love the magical vibe, handmade touch and local love. With many people supporting these types of businesses like Junckollage and avoiding ones that do not stock eco-friendly products and don't have local items in the mix, I hope we can all encourage the latter types of businesses to follow suit. Without a doubt, it is our responsibility to try where and when we can to do the best for our beautiful country and planet.

"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it." - Robert Swan

all the problems we local artisans/ small business owners face. Artisans sometimes don't have the tools or avenues to have a permanent physical



FROM PLANTS TO PLATES GALLERY

Vegan for the holidays! For many, the best holiday get-togethers include time with family and friends and delicious food! Christmas dishes usually consist of a combination of sweet, savoury and aromatic flavours. Featured here is a festive luncheon starring the magazine's co-founder, Jeunesse and Kevon Samuel [@kevonsamuelofficial](https://www.instagram.com/kevonsamuelofficial), where Kevon was experiencing a full vegan holiday menu for the first time! They enjoyed

some festive dishes, showcasing the possibilities of recreating traditional holiday dishes with plant-based ingredients complete with the festive flavours that we all love. We hope these images above, along with the recipes in this issue, inspire you to have fun creating an all plant-based holiday menu for your celebration, moving you to volunteer to bring one or two yummy dishes to your next family get-together. Without a doubt, the dish you make is sure to be a hit! ■



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