

## The power of raw

Last week, Taruna Shah, a housewife in Mulund, gave up meat. It was a vegan meet held by some residents in her area that convinced her to do so. She says, "It was just a small meet-up with a few friends. But why turning vegan was so important was explained so well that I was convinced to take this step."

Shah's suburban neighbourhood isn't the only one to be hit by this green wave. While turning vegan as a way of life became a trendy thing to do in the city and around the world a while ago, organising vegan meet-ups and potlucks in residential colonies to introduce new members to this lifestyle is catching on now.

"Potlucks are held to introduce people to whole food, plant-based diet and create awareness about its health benefit and impact on the environment. Each participant brings a vegan dish that is made without using any animal products. Usually, a few dairy substitutes are used in the preparation," says Samir Pasad, who runs Vegan Bites, which supplies health meals to individuals and corporate clients all over Mumbai.

"The most popular dishes that are made with dairy substitutes are dahi wada, papdi chaat, smoothies, ice cream or some exotic dessert."

In fact, Sharan India, that promotes veganism, has been organising vegan potlucks at various Mumbai neighbourhoods for a few years now. Every area of Mumbai is targeted and generally, one or two potlucks are organised a month. Non-vegetarians are invited as well, to give this lifestyle a try.

The last meet in Ghatkopar saw a turnout of 35, and people were asked to bring a dish prepared without animal products, dairy or honey.

Vaishnavi Mehta, a housewife in Bandra, is organising a vegan potluck for her friends next month. She's already informed them of the vegan specifications for the food they bring.

Ask her why, and she says, "Most lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension and heart problems can be prevented or reversed with whole-food and plant-based diet. Isn't that reason enough to convert?"

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