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Potluck here is only vegan

June 25, 2012 | By Barkha Kumari | DC

Tags: vegan food, veganism

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When it comes to food and different cuisines, our metros have it pretty much all covered. But there's a stumbling block as far as vegan food goes. When one has to eschew all animal products from one's diet — this not only means meat, but paneer, milk, ghee, butter, eggs etc. — it becomes pretty difficult thinking up menus. Cue for Hyderabad Vegans to enter.

This group of animal lovers and vegans from the city are looking at ways to make vegan food a viable alternative. They approach city restaurants to include all-vegan delicacies in their menus prepared the correct way and also meets every month to share vegan recipes and cooking methods. These potluck sessions were started by Sejal Parikh, 29, five months ago. "When I came to Hyderabad from Delhi, I was surprised that there were no potlucks happening here. It's a norm in other cities. Potlucks are basically when people gather and contribute food items," explains the ex-telecom executive.

From dishes made from the milk extract of grains, nuts, coconuts and jowar to ice-creams made from frozen bananas, the potluck sessions are definitely innovative and not to mention, gastronomically invigorating. The members, however, assert that veganism is not a cultural fad but an alternative lifestyle, a "healthier one" to be precise.

While the group's Facebook page has 102 members, it's usually 15-20 people who turn up for the sessions and deliberate on the importance and misconceptions that surround veganism. Interestingly, nobody in the group is a vegan by birth but has become one over the course of time. Satish Reddy, a software professional, Peta volunteer and animal-lover, is a case in point. "Everybody in my family is a die-hard non-vegetarian and so was I initially. But, one day, when I was in Class VII, I found that my rabbits were missing. I was told later that I had eaten them for lunch. I was shattered. And that's when I swore to give up food derived from animals."

There are more than one reason to turn a vegan, points out another member and software professional, Pulkit. "The first reason is to stop cruelty to animals which eventually become our food and the second is for our health. The third reason is the negative impact on the environment unleashed by slaughtering these animals."

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The vegan movement is going fast and furious! Here are two uplifting videos to help everyone understand why the number of vegans has doubled in less than 3 years and why so many are making this life affirming choice: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKr4HZ7ukSE> and <http://www.veganvideo.org>



Rukmini Kalyanam was staged by Devulapalli Uma and team at Ravindra Bharathi on Sunday morning. The narrative was presented through the medium of Kuchipudi.

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