Vegan and loving it!

DC | Priyanka Praveen | 27th Dec 2012

Turning vegan was never on Nina Oswald’s agenda. But this German who moved to Hyderabad in 2009 did exactly that one and a half years ago and is “loving it”.

Vegans don’t use any animal-based products, something that’s quite tough in India as milk products are used in abundance. But Nina says, “It’s surprising how fast one can get used to new habits. It just takes two to three weeks to get accustomed to a new diet.”

The freelance organic food researcher adds, “Turning vegan was due to health reasons.” She says that veganism is a perfectly healthy lifestyle choice. “In fact, I turned vegan for that very reason! I wanted to adopt a healthier lifestyle and I did!”

She is currently finishing her book on organic food. “Initially, eating out would be difficult, at least in a country like India, but I found that it was very easy to customise your order. And once you do so, you think before ordering and you are aware of what’s going inside your stomach.”

Nina, however, doesn’t force her views on her friends. “The best way to show people the good things about veganism is through food. Food is what makes a conversion into a vegan easier.”

Nina shares two of her favourite recipes for our readers and hopes that they have a healthy year ahead.

**Foxtail Millet Tabbouleh**

Tabbouleh is a Middle Eastern salad dish that is traditionally prepared with bulgur (broken wheat). It's a great alternative to traditional Tabbouleh which includes rice. 

**INGREDIENTS**

- 2 cups foxtail millet
- 2 cups cold water
- 1-2 cups mint leaves
- 1/2 cucumber, diced
- 1 cup tomato, chopped
- 1/4 cup parsley
- 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice

**METHOD**

1. Rinse the foxtail millet in cold water and then boil it until tender.
2. Dice the cucumber and tomato and put them in a bowl.
3. Add the cooked millet, mint leaves, parsley, and pomegranate seeds.
4. In a separate bowl, mix olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper.
5. Pour the sauce over the salad and mix well.

Serve cold and enjoy!
indigenous millets are a local alternative that tastes very similar and has a higher nutritive value than wheat.

Ingredients
125 gm foxtail millet, whole grains (kangni/ korra/navane/thinnai)
75 gm cucumber
150 gm red tomato
30 gm onion
15 gm fresh coriander leaves,
15g mint (substitute some of the herbs with parsley if you can find it)
1-2 garlic cloves
½ tsp rock salt
1/4 tsp ground black pepper
1/2 green chilli
2-4 tsp freshly squeezed lime juice
1-2 tbsp black sesame

Method
*Cook the millet grains in 1 ½ -2 times water, till firm to the bite. Do not overcook or the grains will become mushy.
*Chop the vegetables finely and mix with the spices, crushed garlic and the cooked millet.
*Serve with hummus.

Hummus

Ingredients
½ cup chickpeas soaked overnight, and washed (the washing makes the chickpeas easier to digest)
Juice of 1 lemon
½ tsp salt
1 tbsp sesame butter
2 cloves of garlic.
olive oil
Pinch of chilli powder or paprika
Parsley (as a garnish)

Method
*Cook the chickpeas in a pressure cooker till soft with just enough water in the cooker.
*Rinse in clean water several times.
*Blitz chickpeas, lemon juice, salt, sesame butter, and garlic in the blender, adding water as needed to make a thick, almost smooth paste.
*Place in a bowl.
*Dress with olive oil, a sprinkling of red chilli powder or paprika and parsley.

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Thanks for the story! Delicious vegan food is one reason why the number of vegans has doubled in less than 3 years. Here are two uplifting videos that will help people understand just some of the implications of this lifestyle: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKr4HZ7ukSE and http://www.veganvideo.org