

## Philippine Vegetarian Guide

There are a lot of Vegetarian options in the Philippines. Here is a guide to get you started!

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### Be adventurous and Veg Out with your Girlfriends!

Having been a vegetarian for 14 years, I have seen how much easier it has become to go veg. Back in 1993, it was a treasure hunt to look for vegetarian friendly places especially in UP Diliman where everyone is expected to have a taste of Beach House barbecue and the various street food near the University Shopping Center.

Going out for dinner was especially tiresome. Feeling slightly embarrassed, I would order a dish sans the meat, the seafood, the oyster sauce, the patis, etc. Waiters and friends would look at me in a strange way as if to ask "Anong lasa non?" What's worse is that people assume that a fresh salad is the only vegetarian dish, leaving me hungry all night long.

It was the year 2000 when a major shift happened, perhaps in line with the Wellness Revolution that was taking the world by storm. Due to the number of people choosing healthier options, more and more restaurants and groceries have become vegetarian friendly.

You don't have to be completely vegetarian to enjoy vegetarian food. Make it a once a week affair or order one veg dish to complement your non-veg dishes. Here are a few of my favorite affordable, veggie friendly places.

### Restaurants: Vegetarians Welcome

#### All Veg!!!

- **Greens.** The best time to make that trip is during their vegetarian food festivals and make sure to try their vegetarian isaw, fried shitake, tofu kebabs, and cap your meal with their non dairy chocolate or apple walnut cake. # 09185687649
- **Bodhi in the SM Malls and Evergreen in Glorietta 4 Food Court** --- if you miss Pinoy food, you can get veggie versions of kare kare, menudo, afritada, etc. Try their Bopis! Take some home and make a yummy bopis fried rice! Upside: Fastfood. Downside: Uses corn oil which is not the best oil to use for cooking,

#### Separate Vegetarian Menu

- **New Bombay.** The flavorful Indian food is matched by the graciousness of the owners. This Indian restaurant has its humble beginnings along Buendia near the "riles." Now they have 3 branches, open til midnight. Dela Costa St, Makati # 8192892 / 893750; Wilson St. # 7270737 / 7234135; Columns, Gil Puyat # 9013275
- **Red Kimono.** If you and your girlfriends are craving for modern Japanese cuisine, then this is the place to go. I highly recommend their Kyuri Kani salad and their Crunch

Veggy Maki as starters and their Vegetable Katsu curry for your entrée. For their mouth watering menu, visit [www.redkimono.com.ph/veg\\_menu.htm](http://www.redkimono.com.ph/veg_menu.htm) Tiendesitas # 7061464 and The Fort Strip # 816-6642

- **Queens.** Craving for variety? This is a good place for you. They serve Indian, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Pinoy fusion. At the end of the meal, have their homemade Indian style ice cream. My personal fave is the pistachio. 146-B Jupiter Street, [Makati](#) # 8951316

#### With Vegetarian Options

- **Alba's Spanish Restaurant.** I highly recommend their Paella Verde. Call them in advance if you want other vegetarian food like plain potato croquettes and artichokes in olive oil without the jamon. Makati # 896-6950 Tomas Morato # 925-1912
- **Som's Noodle House.** Feast on their Thai curries! Their vegetarian red curry and tofu in yellow curry is to die for! Pair these dishes with the vegetarian red curry rice. You can also request patis-free Som Tam (papaya salad) to add an ultra fresh dimension to your meal. Algiers St, parallel to Rockwell Drive, # 7578079

- **Lai Lai.** They can make a vegetarian version of your much loved Chinese dishes. Just tell the manager and they'll prepare it for you. Request them to skip the MSG. I highly recommend this place for your weekend family gatherings. It's worth the trip. 839-843 Ongpin Street, Binondo, Manila.
- **Sonya's Garden.** When you go to Tagaytay, this is the place to go. They have a fantastic dressing for their freshly picked salad. And don't forget to ask for the tarragon tea in the end. Before you leave, get chocolate cake from their bakery. (with eggs though!) # 09175329097, 09175335140 for reservations.
- **Likha Diwa.** The restaurant opened after I graduated from the UP, Diliman. Located at the former Gulod, Likha Diwa serves creative Pinoy vegetarian alternatives like kare kare and tofu in coconut milk. For people on the go, try the vegetarian wraps, similar to burritos. If you like Durian, they have a yummy durian milkshake. 1 Lot J. Francisco St. Brgy. Krus na Ligas, UP Diliman Quezon City # 925-5522
- **Zaifu.** Request for vegetarian miso ramen with lots of vegetables – definitely a spot hitter. Powerplant Mall, Rockwell
- **Isshin.** If you miss dumplings, they can serve vegetarian gyoza! You can also request for vegetarian miso ramen. 1024 Arnaiz Ave, Makati., # 844-1512
- **Zong.** Order the vegetable fried rice and the steamed broccoli with garlic. Ask for some ginger in oil on the side. You can also request them to make vegetarian fried string beans without the Malaysian shrimp paste. Great for family style dining. The Fort Strip
- Any Italian Restaurant should be able to prepare a vegetarian pasta dish. My favorite is the angel hair Pomodoro with mascarpone cheese in **Pasto** at the Fort and the spicy Contadina with fresh homemade pasta in **Bellini's** at the Marikina Shoe Expo in Cubao, # 9132550

#### Vegetarian Groceries for all your veggie needs

- **Polomi.** It's on the corner of San Marcelino and Quirino. There are no signs so it's easy to miss but still worth the trip. They have a wide selection of veggie meats. I highly recommend the soy based smoked sausage which my husband and I fondly call soy-sage. They also have soy based "chicken" in sesame oil or brown sauce, citrus "spareribs", and black peppered "steak."
- **Assad Mini Mart.** This is a good place to get your Indian spices. # 5265034
- **The Taj.** Aside from spices, they have preservative free heat and eat versions of your favorite Indian food.

Bagtikan St., San Antonio Village., Makati. # 8900558 / 7573992. For people in the South, visit their branch in Alabang # 8093417

- The international food sections in **Rustans** and **Shopwise** have some Asian vegetarian sauces. It should say so on the label so please take time to read the fine print.
- **Healthy Options** has both instant and traditional imported vegetarian ready made food. A bit pricey so I can't say that I've tried them all.
- **Your neighborhood Japanese Korean Groceries** sell the best tofu, firm and fresh. They also have vegetarian dumpling in their frozen food section. Just ask them for assistance if you can't understand the labels.

#### New Discovery

- **Goldilocks** can make eggless butter cake. Perfect for birthdays and parties. You just have to request it!

#### Veggie Good Tips

- Want home cooked Pinoy Vegetarian food? No problem! Be creative. Use Japanese seaweed or spirulina powder to flavor your Pinakbet. There's also a fantastic Pinoy Vegetarian recipe book called Gulay by Nona Lema (available in Powerbooks and in Greens). It's a great addition to foreign veg cookbooks which may be limiting due to ingredients that are not readily available in the Philippines.
- Spice it up. Contrary to popular belief, vegetarian food is anything but bland and boring. Just use the right spices, sauces and condiments. Invest on a no-salt alternative spice mix for your pasta and rice dishes. (available in Rustan's or Healthy Options) Make sure that you store them in a dry place away from sunlight to ensure freshness.
- Just like chicken, Tofu absorbs the taste of sauces and marinades. Poet and dancer Nerisa Guevara once made me a tofu version of her hometown's favorite chicken inasal!
- Most veg places use either soy based or gluten based veggie meat. It's good to ask first in case you are sensitive to gluten.
- Always remember that if you are going to an expensive restaurant, they have chefs who are willing to prepare a vegetarian option for you. All you need to do is ask!
- If you go to a Chinese restaurant, make sure you tell them to cook your vegetables in soy sauce instead of oyster sauce unless they have vegetarian oyster sauce.
- My husband, a non veg, has learned through the years to avoid comparing the vegetarian version of a meat dish to the real thing. Enjoy the food as it is to have the full veg experience. Like him, you might be pleasantly surprised!  
Have a great veg out experience, girlfriends!

## Shopping and Eating out

**Alabang Organic Market** in the small open parking lot fronting the mall entrance where you can find Powerbooks. Thursday 7am-4pm.

**Assad Mart** IJK Midtown Executive Homes, United Nations Avenue, Paco Manila Tel 5261349, & 126, Eurocrest Building, Jupiter Street, Bel Air, Tel 897 2543.

**Organic Market** in the Rustan's Supermarket, Rockwell Mall, some available in San Antonio and Makati branches also. Open everyday 9am-8pm.

**Organic Sunday market.** Legaspi village. Located on the parking lot between the Corinthian Plaza and the Legaspi Park fronting Gamboa St. Every Sunday 7am-2pm.

**Palomi**, 1963 San Marcelino St, Cor Quirino Avenue, Malate, for vegetarian meat and products made from soya. Tel 536-3575 Open 9 to 6pm everyday.

**Salcedo Market**, Salcedo village. Saturdays 7am to 2pm.

**Varona's**, 2008 Leverisa St, Pasay City, for vegetarian meat and products made from soya. Open 7-6pm Monday to Sunday (Fri open to 5pm only). Closed Sat tel 5250389.

Check out the following website for more information on organically produced products and availability: <http://www.organic.ph/>

### Places to eat

**Bliss Café**, located in Elizabeth Hotel, Baguio City.

**Bodhi** is found in most SM mall foodcourts, and at Greenhills mall, (though beware the gluten which some people may have a reaction to!)

**Daily Veggie**, on Corner of Banawe Avenue/Calamba St, Quezon City.

**Greens** restaurant, on Scout Castor, off Tomas Morato, Quezon City.

**Red Kimono** Fort Bonafacio (32<sup>nd</sup> Street), Taguig-Westgate Alabang, SM-Megamall, UP-Ayala Techno Hub (Quezon City). Japanese inspired food which offers a vegetarian menu! Tel 8166642

**Kong Tiak Vegetarian Restaurant**, 27 Macopa St, S.M.H Quezon City, Banawe, (02) 742-7762, (02) 739-1917, (0917) 900-4424 (run by Buddhist monks)

## Recipes

Here are some recipes and ideas that will help you start. For more ideas check out the following websites:

- <http://www.sojournercafe.com>
- <http://www.vegsoc.org/cordonvert/recipes/easy.html>
- <http://www.vrg.org/recipes/index.htm>

### Ginger carrot and apple juice

Serves 3 to 4 people.

Fresh juices are a great way to start the day! Try this one for starters then invent your own. Sugar syrup is not required as apples provide a natural sweetener.

2 eating apples.  
3 carrots, peeled.  
1 inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled  
Juice of half a lemon

Put all the ingredients through a juicer. Dilute with water to taste and serve immediately.

### Roasted Pumpkin soup

Serves 4–5

- 2.5 pounds pumpkin, skin removed, and cut into 3/4 inch pieces
- 2 red onions, chopped finely
- 2 teaspoons of dried thyme or a tablespoon of fresh thyme leaves, stalks removed.
- 1.5 tablespoons vegetable oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom

Optional: 2/3 cups cream.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Toss pumpkin, onions and thyme in olive oil and spread mixture onto one or two large baking sheets. Season with salt and pepper and roast for 20–30 minutes until tender, stirring once or twice. Remove from oven and transfer to a large pan. Add stock and cardamom and simmer for 10 minutes. Puree the soup in a blender until smooth and transfer to a clean saucepan. Adjust the seasoning. When ready to serve, bring back to simmer. Remove from heat and whisk in cream. From: the whole foods Market Cookbook [wholefoodsmarket.com](http://wholefoodsmarket.com)

### Lentil soup

Serves 5 people

1 tbsp oil  
2 tsp cumin seeds.  
1 onion finely chopped  
2 carrots diced  
1 potato diced  
400g red lentils, soaked for 30 minutes  
1 tbsp tomato puree or 1 can of tomatoes  
1.5 litres of water

Fry the onion in the oil, and when softened the sauté carrots and potatoes with the cumin seeds. Drain the lentils and add them to the pan with the rest of the ingredients. Bring to the boil and simmer for 30 mins or until the lentils are soft. You can also cook this quickly in a pressure cooker. Skim any froth from the liquid and discard and liquidize. Add lemon juice and soy sauce to taste. Serve piping hot.

### Miso Salad Dressing

Makes 3 cups

- 1/2 cup roughly chopped red onions
- 1/2 pound extra-firm tofu, drained
- 1/4 cup white miso
- 1/2 cup vinegar (preferably cider)
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley
- 1 cup water

Place all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Process until smooth and creamy. Refrigerate.

From The Whole Foods Market Cookbook

### Zucchini and mint soup

Serves 5

Delicious chilled, warm or hot and very easy to prepare.

500gs of fresh zucchini, sliced thinly  
2 oz of butter or oil  
1 litre of vegetable stock  
Large bunch of fresh mint, with stalks removed

Gently fry the sliced zucchini in butter until soft. Then whiz in a blender with vegetable stock, yogourt and fresh mint. Serve immediately.

### Miso soup

Serves 6

Miso can be bought in most Japanese stores and is made from fermented beans or grain. It is good source of protein but don't boil the miso otherwise it destroys some of the nutritional benefits.

2 tsp of vegetable oil, preferably sesame oil.  
175g finely chopped vegetables, eg carrots, turnips, cabbage  
2 tsp grated root ginger  
1 litre of water  
4 tablespoons of miso paste  
2 tablespoons of fresh cilantro leaves chopped  
A few small pieces of seaweed soaked in water for 5 minutes to soften.

Heat the oil in a heavy pan or wok. Add the vegetables and ginger and gently fry for a few minutes. Add the seaweed and water and bring to the boil and simmer for about 10 minutes then remove from the heat. Mix the miso with a small amount of soup and stir into the pan. Serve at once with cilantro garnish.

### Muesli – breakfast cereal

Serves 4 people.

50g raisins, or apricots or mixture of both  
2 eating apples coarsely chopped  
250g rolled oats, (unsweetened, unflavoured!)  
3 tps runny honey  
2 tbsp chopped nuts eg almonds  
2 tbsp dried or fresh coconut  
2 tbsp sunflower seeds.  
Milk, soya or yogurt to serve.

Mix all these ingredients together. You can either soak this overnight in the milk and add more milk to taste in the morning, or add milk to the mixed ingredients and eat immediately. Try it both ways. Add unsweetened natural yogourt to taste and serve with fresh fruit.

## Baked lemony Tofu

Use as a snack, sandwich filling or add to salads to bump up the protein.

Serves 2 to 4 people

14 ozs extra firm tofu (1 'cake')

Marinade: 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice  
2 tbsp soy sauce  
2 tbsp vegetable oil  
Half cup water  
¼ cup fresh coriander leaves or minced fresh herbs (eg. rosemary, basil)  
1 fresh green chili or 1 tsp hot chili sauce  
Fresh black pepper

Blend the marinade ingredients together until smooth. Put half in the bottom of a ceramic or oven proof dish and place the tofu on top. Pour the rest of the marinade on top of the tofu.

Bake in the oven for 45mins to 1 hour until brown. Serve at any temperature. Will keep in the fridge for up to 5 days if kept in an airtight container.

### To use in a pita bread:

Finely chop the cooked tofu and toss with diced red peppers and finely chopped onion.

In a blender, combine 1/4 cup coconut milk, 1/2 tbsp of fresh minced ginger root, 1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice, 1 tbsp peanut butter and a dash of soy sauce. Pour this dressing over the tofu mixture and toss well. Serve in a toasted pita bread with shredded lettuce, avocado, and tomato slices.

## Tofu stir fried with buckwheat noodles (soba) for 4

120g buckwheat noodles  
1 tsp sesame oil  
400g firm tofu, cubed.  
1 carrot cut into fine slices, lengthways  
4 cups of chopped vegetables (bok choy, snow peas, sweetcorn).  
200g shredded cabbage  
2 cloves of garlic  
1 chili  
2 tbsp soy sauce  
1 tsp cornflour  
2 tsp chili sauce.

Cook the noodles in boiling water as specified on the pack. Drain and set aside.

Heat a non-stick frying pan and add some sesame oil, adding tofu when hot. Fry for 10-15 mins until slightly crisp. Remove from the wok. Add the carrot, vegetables, garlic and chili with 1 tsp water and toss for 2 minutes until wilted. Add the soy sauce.

## Pan-Fried Sesame Tofu

Serve with steamed bok choy or broccoli, sautéed watercress, spinach or eggplant, and brown rice.

- 14 ounces extra-firm tofu
- 1/3 cup honey
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped, peeled root ginger
- 2 tablespoons vegetable/sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 cloves finely chopped garlic
- 1–2 teaspoons red chili flakes
- 1/4 cup cornstarch or flour for dusting
- Canola or corn oil for frying
- 1/2 cup sesame seeds, lightly toasted
- 1 bunch green onions, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces

Wrap tofu with paper towels and place on a cutting board. Put another cutting board or heavy plate on top to press out liquid. Set aside for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, put honey, soy sauce, ginger, sesame oil, vinegar, garlic and chili flakes into a small saucepan and bring just to a simmer. Keep warm.

Dry drained tofu with paper towels and cut into cubes. Dust very lightly all over with cornstarch or flour. Heat 1 inch of oil in a deep pan over medium high heat until very hot. Fry tofu until golden brown, then transfer to a large bowl and toss with 2/3 cup of the warm sauce. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and green onions and toss gently. Serve with remaining sauce for dipping, or drizzle over vegetables on the side.

From: The Whole Foods Market Cookbook

## Moroccan vegetable stew with couscous

Serves 4-6

200g garbanzo beans soaked overnight in 1 liter of water  
225g couscous  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 clove garlic finely chopped  
2 red onions finely chopped  
2 tsp mustard seeds  
2 tsp cumin seeds  
2 potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped into ½ inch cubes  
2 red peppers deseeded and chopped  
2 zucchini halved and roughly sliced  
1 cup of roughly sliced pumpkin, bite-sized pieces.  
2 carrots cut into thick slices  
1 large can of canned tomatoes, roughly chopped  
50g raisins  
1 tsp vegetable stock powder or ½ a cube.  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 tbsp Chopped cilantro and mint.  
Grated rind of 1 lemon.

Drain the garbanzo beans and cook in a pan of water for 1-1.5 hours. Alternatively cook in a pressure cooker. Drain and set aside.

Heat oil in a large pan and sauté the onions and garlic till transparent with the cumin and mustard seeds. Cook until spices are fragrant. Add potatoes and cook until they begin to soften. Add the vegetable stock and rest of the vegetables, garbanzos and raisins. Simmer for about 20mins until the vegetables are cooked. Add more water if necessary

Meanwhile put the couscous into a bowl and add 1 litre of boiling water stirring briefly. Cover and leave to soak up the water. When water is absorbed, stir with a fork to separate the grains. Add cilantro and mint, salt and pepper and lemon rind.

Serve immediately!

## Ideas for merienda

- Fresh seasonal vegetables stir-fried in soy sauce with grated fresh ginger, served over steaming brown rice
- Baked potato topped with steamed vegetables, butter and cheddar cheese.
- Grilled eggplant (brush slices with oil and put under hot grill until browned) and red peppers, with feta cheese, pesto and beansprouts on wholewheat bread.
- Grilled mushrooms with cheese, grilled onions, tomato, sprouts, pesto and mayonnaise on wholewheat bread.
- Avocado with lettuce, sprouts, tomato, red onion with mayonnaise on wholewheat bread.