

## VEGETARIAN FOOD.



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food of all kinds, and to confine ourselves to a non-flesh diet; and they endeavour to convince us that if we did so we should be much healthier, and should live a much more natural and more enjoyable life, because, as the result of the use of plain vegetable food simply prepared, our blood would be purer, our brains clearer; we should lose the taste for stimulating drinks, and we should not have one tithe of our present difficulty in connection with the cost of living.

There is no doubt that so far as expense is concerned this is true. If we were all to make up our minds to live on vegetable foods alone we should find it much more economical. Yet I am not a vegetarian. I should never dream of saying that I believe it would be well for man to try to live on a purely vegetable diet. I agree with Professor Lankester that it is just in proportion as people get good animal food properly cooked that they are strong and able to do their work. Indeed, I should be quite prepared to subscribe to the opinion that it is vain to expect a man to get through intellectual or physical labour without an abundant supply of the material of thought and of physical power, and also that animal food is one of the readiest means of affording this supply. At the same time, I am inclined to think that we should benefit if we were to adopt the methods of the vegetarians in a modified form. By doing this we might not only save expense, but we might also effect an improvement in our health. Vegetable foods are more easily digested than animal foods, and there is no doubt that numbers of people who now suffer from dyspepsia, indigestion, and all their attendant evils, would find half their difficulties vanish if they were to lessen their allowance of animal food. Vegetarians are doing a good work, because at the present day the tendency is to rely too much on animal food and to undervalue vegetable foods. On all sides we hear the demand for a flesh diet. Domestic servants think they are badly treated if they do not have animal food three or four times a day; and in one of the monthly periodicals Lady John Manners has shown that the rich and fashionable fall into exactly the same error. In all questions of conduct like this people are so apt to go to extremes, whereas moderation should be the rule. It is a mistake to give up animal food altogether, just as much as it is a mistake to think we cannot get nourishing food apart from it. Yet as there are numbers of reasonable folks who would be glad to adopt partially the vegetarian diet if they knew how to cook the foods, I propose to-day to describe how some of the vegetarian dishes should be prepared, and what are the vegetarian methods, so far as I have understood them. I hope the information thus given will be of use.

Although vegetarians entirely exclude all flesh from their calculations—flesh of fish, beast, and fowl—their choice of foods is by no means limited. They have all vegetables and fruit at their disposal, all cereals, such as wheat, oats, barley, rye, rice, maize, sago,

tapioca, arrowroot, cornflour, maizena, semolina, &c.; peas, haricot and other beans, lentils, potatoes, turnips, carrots, artichokes; Italian pastes, such as macaroni and vermicelli; eggs, milk, cheese, and butter; tea, coffee, cocoa, &c. They seem to place special value on peas, beans, lentils, oatmeal, barley, eggs, and milk, as substitutes for meat. It cannot be denied that these foods supply much of what is needed, and in a cheaper form than could be obtained from meat. It is, therefore, very desirable that we should know how to cook them.

Oatmeal and peas every one knows what to do with; but lentils, haricot beans, and maize are comparative novelties. Of late years vigorous efforts have been made to induce people to use lentils and haricot beans, yet, it must be confessed, with only partial success. Everybody acknowledges their value, and authorities tell us that they are the most nourishing of all foods; and yet most people are glad when allowed to leave them alone.

The most usual way of serving lentils is in the form of soup, and there are two ways of making this soup, both of which are excellent. The first way—the ordinary way—is to soak the lentils in cold water overnight; then boil them in four times their bulk of water, with carrots, turnips, onions, and celery till quite soft; rub them, and the vegetables boiled with them, through a sieve; boil again; add a cupful of milk, if liked, and serve. A great many persons like this soup exceedingly; others cannot tolerate it at all. I wish those who are not partial to it would try the second way of making it, and see if their opinion does not alter. Some German friends of mine make it in this way, which I consider a great improvement on the other. With shame and humiliation I confess that I do not like ordinary lentil soup. I know that I ought to do, but I do not. Yet German lentil soup I highly approve. It is made as follows:—

*German Lentil Soup.*—Soak a breakfast cupful of German or green lentils in cold water all night, and take away any that float. Next day pour off the water, and wash them again, for these are generally very earthy; look them over carefully also to see if there are any small stones among them, as there frequently are amongst German lentils. An easy way of finding this out is to drop them, a few at a time, on a plate; the stones will then sound differently to the lentils. Put them into three quarts of water, and boil them for about three hours, till they are quite soft. During the last half-hour add about a pound of potatoes which have been peeled, and cut into pieces convenient for serving. Melt a slice of butter in a separate stewpan, and mix an ounce of flour with it. Add gradually about half-a-pint of the soup, and then stir the mixture in with the rest. Boil all up together; add plenty of salt and pepper, and serve. If liked, a basinful of mixed vegetables—turnips, carrots, celery, and onion—may be cut up small, and boiled in the soup, instead of, or as well as, the potatoes. The flour and butter are added to bind the ingredients together. Unless they are used, the soup will be thick at the bottom and thin at the top. When potatoes are used they will answer the purpose partially; but it is better to employ a little flour as well, because so many potatoes would have to be boiled in the soup if it had to be thickened entirely with them, that the flavour of the lentils would be lost.

Of late years authorities have been accustomed to recommend that Egyptian, or red, lentils, should be used instead of German, or green, lentils; and it has been said that the Egyptian lentils are the more nourishing of the two. The consequence has been that the German lentils have almost been driven out

of the market, and there is now so little demand for them that they are twice as dear as the red variety. This is unfortunate, because really the green ones are the more agreeable in taste, and as far as nourishment goes there is not much difference between the two sorts. However, advertisers have been so hard at work, that it is quite possible that green lentils will not be procurable in certain districts. Where this is the case the red lentils may be used instead, and the same recipe followed. In the same way peas or haricots may be taken instead of lentils, or if preferred, the beans may be rubbed through a sieve to form a purée.

So highly do the vegetarians esteem beans that they obtain their substitute for beef tea from them. They stew half a pint of kidney beans in the oven in a quart of water for some hours, strain off the liquid, season it with pepper and salt, and use it as required. Very often bean-tea, after being long stewed thus, is considered too rich, and has to be diluted with water to make it palatable. It should be made in small quantities as required.

Peas, beans, and lentils may be cooked in other ways besides being made the basis of soups. I give a few of the vegetarian recipes.

*Boiled Lentils, or Windsor Beans.*—Soak the lentils and wash them overnight as for soup. Pour off the water and boil the beans in about three times their bulk of water. When they are quite soft drain them. Melt an ounce of butter in a stewpan, and throw in a small onion finely chopped. Mix in smoothly a teaspoonful of flour and gravy, or milk, to make a thick sauce. Put in the lentils, simmer them gently till hot through, and serve. Haricot beans may be prepared in the same way.

*Baked Haricots.*—Soak and boil the haricots in the usual way till soft. Drain them, and put them in a pie-dish; pour over them a tablespoonful of oil and a tablespoonful of water, and set them in the oven till hot through.

To make variety, boiled haricots may be served with parsley sauce, flavoured with lemon juice poured over them, or they may be mixed with one quarter of their bulk of onions which have been parboiled, then chopped, fried in butter till lightly browned, and stirred into brown sauce.

Haricot beans and lentils which have been cooked and left over are improved by being warmed up a second time, or they may be tossed in oil and vinegar and served as a salad. Haricot bean salad is excellent with tomatoes, either raw or baked, put round them. Or boiled beetroot may be substituted for the tomatoes.

Boiled lentils, haricots, or peas which have been beaten to a paste in a mortar, flavoured with mushroom powder and a very little grated cheese, seasoned with pepper and salt, and mellowed by the addition of butter, is used as a substitute for potted meat as a breakfast relish or in making sandwiches. The appearance of the preparation will be improved if it is pressed into a potting jar, covered with clarified butter and garnished with parsley.

The number of vegetarian soups which may be made is almost endless. Almost all roots and all vegetables may be converted into soup by simply frying them in butter to make them tasty, stewing them in water and rubbing them through a sieve. According to this method may be made carrot soup, parsnip soup, turnip soup, celery soup, green-pea soup.

It must always be remembered, however, that when soup is made of materials which are not of a starchy nature, such as peas, beans, and certain garden vegetables, something must be added to them to give them consistency and bind them together. Unless this is done, the thick part of the soup will sink to the bottom of the tureen and the liquid part will



be at the top; and the result, altogether, will be eminently unsatisfactory. Anything which serves to bind together the different materials of which soups and sauces are made is called a "liaison." It may consist of flour, eggs, sago, cornflour, arrowroot, &c. When grain is used as a liaison it should be washed separately, sprinkled gradually into the stock when boiling, and stirred well the whole time, then allowed to boil till cooked. When flour or meal is employed it should be made into a smooth thin paste, with a little cold water, milk, or broth, according to the nature of the dish for which it is required. A little of the boiling soup should first be put into the basin with the paste, which should then be poured through a strainer into the rest, and the soup should be stirred without stopping while the addition is being made, after which the soup should be allowed to boil. When a liaison of egg is used for soup the egg should first be beaten separately in a basin, and the boiling soup should be taken off the fire and cooled a minute or two before the eggs are introduced. After they are put in, the soup may be stirred over the fire again till the soup nearly boils, but not quite. Unless these precautions are taken the eggs will curdle.

*Onion Soup* is excellent. It is made as follows:—Peel half-a-dozen good-sized onions, slice them, and fry them gently till they are yellow. Pour about three pints of water over them and stew them gently till quite soft, and press them through a sieve. Put with them their bulk in fine bread crumbs which have been soaked in milk. Season with salt and pepper, and serve very hot. This soup will not taste nearly so strong of onions as one would expect. The bread crumbs will tone it down, and it is very strengthening and wholesome. Most people will consider it an improvement to sprinkle in a spoonful of grated Parmesan (to be bought in bottles at the grocers') at the last moment.

*Rice Soup* is also to be highly recommended. Wash two tablespoonfuls of Carolina rice in one or two waters and then boil it in a quart of water till soft. Pass it, liquid and all, through a sieve, and if the rice should collect in lumps beat these out carefully with the back of a spoon. When the mixture is quite smooth, then put it back into a saucepan and make it hot once more. Beat in a bowl the yolk of two eggs, and add pepper and salt and a little cream or milk. Let the soup cool slightly, put a little of it with the liaison, return the whole to the stewpan, stir all together over the fire for a minute, and serve.

*Green-pea Soup* is so very delicious, so elegant, and so nourishing that it deserves to have a recipe all to itself. Take a pint of freshly shelled peas and throw them, with a small handful of spinach and a sprig of parsley, a few young onions, a lump of sugar, and a few mint leaves, into a pint and a half of boiling water. The colour of the soup will be improved if very young peas are used, and when this is the case some of the best of the shells may be boiled with the peas, because when rubbed through a sieve they will furnish some of the green pulp required for the soup. Of course the lid must not be put on the pan whilst the peas are boiling. When the peas are tender rub them and the shells through a sieve and throw away what cannot be passed through. Boil the pulp and the water together again, stir in gradually a tablespoonful of arrowroot which has been made into a paste with cold water, cook a minute or so longer till the arrowroot is incorporated with the liquor, add pepper and salt to taste, and serve. In this recipe the spinach is put in to help the colour of the soup. It is scarcely possible to

say exactly how much water should be taken, because some peas are more solid than others. There need not be much difficulty, however, if it is remembered that the soup should be of the consistency of good cream. Authorities disagree very much about whether or not cream should be added to green-pea soup. M. Francatelli, whose opinion always commands respect in such matters, says that its introduction is improper. Other very clever cooks say it is an improvement. When people who ought to know differ in this way, humble individuals generally feel at liberty to do as they please. I would advise my friends, therefore, to make the soup both ways, try which method they like best, and follow that.

*Vegetable Soup*.—Into three pints of water slice five good sized potatoes, two carrots chopped small, three large onions which have been cut into dice and lightly fried, and four tomatoes and a crust of bread; simmer gently an hour and a-half, pass through a sieve, add pepper and salt to taste, and serve. A little celery or a little chopped cabbage will improve this soup, which will, however, be spoiled if material be thrown in indiscriminately just because it happens to be there. The mistaken idea about vegetable soup is that you can put in anything—it does not signify what.

*Barley Soup* (Vegetarian Recipe).—Wash three ounces of barley, put it into a stewpan with water to cover it well, boil it for ten minutes, then strain off the water and throw it away. This will make the barley clean. Put it into an enamelled or well tinned pan, add an ounce and a-half of bread crumbs, and boil it gently from two to four hours. Half an hour before it is to be served add an ounce and a-half of chopped parsley and a little pepper and salt.

*Hotch-potch* is a very favourite dish with vegetarians. It may be made as follows:—Put two quarts of water into a stewpan and set it on the fire to boil. Meantime, prepare a good quantity of vegetables, say a pint basinful of mixed carrots, turnips, and cauliflower which has been broken into sprigs. Take also two good sized onions, half a pint of Windsor or broad beans, a pint of freshly shelled green peas, and half a lettuce cut small. Put the various ingredients, excepting half of the peas, into the boiling water, and boil gently for two or three hours. When the vegetables are nearly ready, add the rest of the peas, salt, pepper, and a little sugar. This soup should be quite thick, and the peas which were first put in should be reduced to mush. If dried beans and dried peas are used they should be soaked overnight. It is a good plan to throw the tenderest vegetables in last. Mr. Kettner says that English people have an idea that barley should be put in; but that this is a mistake, for hotch-potch will accept almost any addition except barley.

In speaking of good nourishing soups which can be made without meat, the great difficulty one has is in knowing when to stop. It would, however, be incorrect to convey the impression that vegetarians live only on soups; indeed, some vegetarians disapprove of them, as they think overmuch liquid food unwholesome. Ordinary fruit pies and puddings, and omelets are of course open to them, however, and these may be made to furnish great variety. In order to increase their list of savoury dishes many use vegetable pies, in which onions, herbs, potatoes, mushrooms, and a mixture of vegetables form the contents, and a plain crust, made usually of bread dough, with very little butter, is put over the top in the ordinary way. I have been told that potatoes, carrots, turnips, and a little onion to supply flavour, make a good pie, as do also potatoes with a little

onion and tapioca. It cannot be expected that these preparations will be very tasty; but then one of the ideas of the vegetarians is that the desire for tasty dishes is factitious, and that "to live a sweet healthy life implies the use of simple nutritious food, cooked in a plain simple manner, and as nearly in its natural relations as possible."

The stricter vegetarians object, I believe, even to the use of butter, or grease of any sort, and they say that these foods produce biliousness. They think it right also to confine themselves to three, and in some cases to two meals per day, and one of their rules is the rule of "Not too much." They hold that the object of eating is the attainment of health and strength, and that "full feeding and other voluptuous habits" tend to weaken the intellectual, moral, and physical powers.

One lesson which they try to teach us is exceedingly valuable: it is that certain vegetables are excellent eaten alone. The French know this well, and they make most appetising dishes from artichokes, French beans, asparagus, haricot beans, tomatoes, peas, cauliflowers, mushrooms, &c., &c. With one or two recipes for preparations of this sort, out of many which might be given, I will conclude.

*French Beans*.—Procure young beans, and, without cutting them, boil them in the usual way. Drain them thoroughly and put them into a stewpan with two ounces of butter, the juice of a small lemon, and a little pepper and salt. Shake them over the fire for about ten minutes, and serve. Green peas may be served in the same way.

*Cauliflower with Parmesan*.—Boil a cauliflower in the usual way. Trim the outer leaves from it, and either put it on a dish whole, or divide it into sprigs and lay these on a dish. Make a sauce by melting into a small stewpan half an ounce of butter, mixing half an ounce of flour smoothly with it, adding gradually a quarter of a pint of cold water, and stirring the same till it boils, when a little salt and pepper, a tablespoonful of cream may be added, and, off the fire, an ounce of grated Parmesan. (This Parmesan may be bought ready grated in bottles, price 6d.) Lay the sauce over the cauliflower, sprinkle another ounce of Parmesan upon it, brown the preparation before the fire, and serve. It will perhaps be remembered that *macaroni*, boiled till tender, may be treated in the same way; and this also makes an excellent vegetarian dish, and most nourishing, served alone. Dried peas, haricot beans, and lentils are all good, boiled till soft, then shaken over the fire in a little butter, pepper, salt, and lemon juice, as the beans were; or served with parsley and butter sauce, onion sauce, white sauce, or plain melted butter to which an egg has been added off the fire.

*Stewed Mushrooms*.—Pick and peel half a pound of fresh mushrooms. Wash them well and put them into a stewpan, with milk to cover them, till they are quite tender. Season with pepper and salt, and if approved, with a little mace also. Thicken the milk with arrowroot or flour, stir it carefully till it boils. Simmer a minute or two longer, and serve.

There is still one more article in the vegetarian creed which is worth knowing. It is that fruit should be eaten freely by people who are troubled with difficulty of digestion, especially for breakfast. "The introduction of ripe, stewed, or preserved fruit at breakfast," a vegetarian teacher tells us, "will be an improvement both to the appearance of the table, and the healthfulness of the meals; while an orange or a ripe pear, eaten first, is far preferable to a pill, and often much more effective."

