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EDITOR'S NOTE



Going meatless

BY FOON RHEE / foonr@newsreview.com



Vegetarians can pick from a bounty of fresh produce at the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market in San Francisco.

PHOTO BY FOON RHEE

I've thought more about doing so, however, since becoming editor here because I read every week about all the ways in Sacramento to be vegan. While Shoka and her V Word column left SN&R last month after nearly nine years, we will continue to cover vegan restaurants and trends in our Planet V feature.

With all those stories in mind, I jumped at the chance to take a cooking class last month centered on a visit to the Ferry Plaza

Farmers Market and its astounding variety of fruits and vegetables.

Divided into teams, the class went on a scavenger hunt to find the ingredients for our menu: asparagus and spring onion soup, vegetable slaw, salmon sliders and a dessert of lemon curd, blueberries and strawberries.

The San Francisco Cooking School is becoming more focused on vegetables and less on meat, with far more fish on the menu, said Chef Margie Kriebel, our instructor.

We learned how to highlight farm-fresh produce in recipes and substitute ingredients that are in season—or at least that was supposed to be the lesson. Given my lack of kitchen skills, I count it as a success that I didn't slice a finger or do anything too embarrassing. At least I have more ideas to make vegetables a bigger part of my diet.

And apparently I'm not alone. The plant-based protein trend is picking up steam. Fast-food places, including Burger King, are rolling out meatless options. And the Wall Street success of companies that produce meatless alternatives has other big corporations playing copycat.

While it would be a huge shift in American society, eating more vegetables and less meat would be healthier for us and better for the planet. □

We can add another reason to go meat-free.

Doctors have warned for a long time that eating too much red meat raises the risk of heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers and other health problems. How animals are raised and slaughtered makes a lot of people squeamish.

More recently, scientists have shown the impact on climate change. Livestock—or more to the point, their poop and belches—are major emitters of carbon dioxide and methane.

And now, there is growing concern about the use of antibiotics in livestock production leading to resistant bacteria in people, the Center for Food Integrity reported recently.

I certainly didn't need more convincing.

I stopped eating red meat in 1992, mostly for health reasons. For the first few months, it was tough driving home past the Char-Grill, with the aroma of burgers cooking on an open flame.

I gave up pork in 1996 after a reporting trip to a huge hog farm in Eastern North Carolina. The farmer and industry flack were giving me the grand tour and bragging about how technology reduced the smell from open waste lagoons.

Then the wind shifted. Let's just say it took days to get the stench out of my clothes and hair.

Ever since, I've only eaten chicken, turkey and fish. And I'm trying to limit those as I get older. But I'm not disciplined enough quite yet to go entirely meat-free, or even stop eating animal products altogether.