



Volume 8 Issue 2

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Introduction to New McDougall Book — The Starch Solution

This truth is simple and is, therefore, easy to explain. You must eat to live. But the choice of what you eat is yours. There is an individual, specific diet that best supports the health, function, and longevity of each and every animal. The proper diet for human beings is based on starches. The more rice, corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and beans you eat, the trimmer and healthier you will be—and with those same food choices you will help save the Planet Earth too.

My recommendation for eating starches puts glazed looks on people's faces, and many dismiss me as certifiably crazy. They think of starch as something used in the laundry to stiffen shirts. Starch brings back memories of pasty bland-tasting goop, and white, airy Wonder Bread. Most disturbing is that nearly everyone believes starches are fattening and nutritionally inferior foods. Fortunately, common knowledge is completely wrong and the proof is right before your own eyes.

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Next 5-day
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April 15-19, 2009

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Introduction to New McDougall Book — The Starch Solution

The following article is the first chapter to my new book. Please read it with a critical eye and send your comments back to me at drmcDougall@drmcDougall.com. You are welcome to share this with friends with copyright attached. This version was updated on 3-4-09

The Starch Solution

This truth is simple and is, therefore, easy to explain. You must eat to live. But the choice of what you eat is yours. There is an individual, specific diet that best supports the health, function, and longevity of each and every animal. The proper diet for human beings is based on starches. The more rice, corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and beans you eat, the trimmer and healthier you will be—and with those same food choices you will help save the Planet Earth too.

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The most important evidence supporting my claim that the natural human diet is based on starches is a simple observation that you can easily validate for yourself: All large populations of trim, healthy people, throughout verifiable human history, have obtained the bulk of their calories from starch. Examples of once thriving people include Japanese, Chinese, and other Asians eating sweet potatoes, buckwheat, and/or rice, Incas in South America eating potatoes, Mayans and Aztecs in Central America eating corn, and Egyptians in the Middle East eating wheat. There have been only a few small isolated populations of primitive people, such as the Arctic Eskimos, living at the extremes of the environment, who have eaten otherwise. Therefore, scientific documentation of what people have eaten over the past thirteen thousand years convincingly supports my claim.

Men and women following diets based on grains, vegetables, and fruits have accomplished all of the great feats in history. The ancient conquerors of Europe and Asia, including the armies of Alexander the Great (356 – 323 BC) and Genghis Khan (1162 – 1227 AD) consumed starch-based diets. Caesar's legions complained when they had too much meat in their diet and preferred to do their fighting on grains.¹ Primarily six foods: barley, maize (corn), millet, potatoes, rice, and wheat have fueled the caloric engines of human civilization.

Our DNA Nails It

Based on our anatomy and physiology experts have long concluded that primates, including humans, are designed to eat a diet consisting mostly of plant foods. The natural diet of chimpanzees, our closest relative, is nearly pure vegetarian in composition; made up largely of fruits; and in the dry seasons when fruit is scarce, they eat tree seeds, flowers, soft pith, and bark; with termites and small mammals making an insignificant contribution to their nutrition all year long.

Recently, scientists have proven through genetic testing that we are designed to thrive best on one category of plant food known as starch. Human and chimp DNA is roughly 99% identical, but that 1% difference, which includes genes to digest much more starch, proved crucial for the evolution of humanity's earliest ancestors. Examination of the number of copies of the gene for the synthesis of the starch-digesting enzyme, amylase, has found an average of 6 copies in humans, compared to only 2 copies of this gene in other primates.² This

Starches Consumed Throughout History

Barley – Middle East for 11,000 years

Corn (maize) – North, Central, and South America for 7,000 years

Legumes – Americas, Asia, and Europe for 6,000 years

Millet – Africa for 6,000 years

Oats – Middle East for 11,000 years

Potatoes – South America (Andes) for 13,000 years

Sorghum – East Africa for 6,000 years

Sweet Potatoes – South America and Caribbean for 5,000 years

Rice – Asia for more than 10,000 years

Rye – Asia for 5000 years

genetic difference results in the production of 6 to 8 times higher levels of starch-digesting enzymes in human saliva. The limited ability of chimpanzees and others in the great ape family to utilize starch tied their species to the tropical jungles where fruits are abundant all year long.

Starches were a critical food source for the ancestors of early and modern humans. The ability to efficiently utilize starch provided the opportunity for us to migrate out of Africa—to colonize the rest of the planet (to locations where fruits are plentiful only in summer and fall). Starch-filled tubers and grains act as storage units for concentrated calories that last throughout the winter, are widely distributed geographically, and are easy to gather. Their abundant calories also supplied the extra energy necessary for the brain to evolve from monkey-size to human-size (a three times difference).³

People Are Starch-Eaters

People should be thought of as “starch-eaters;” just like cats are “meat-eaters.” Until recently, except for a small number of wealthy aristocrats, members of the human species have obtained the bulk of their calories from starch. After the mid 1800s with the creation of colossal wealth during the industrial revolution and the harnessing of fossil fuels, millions, and then billions, of people were able to eat from a table piled high with meat, fowl, and dairy, once available only to royalty. Look around you—the consequences are obvious—everyday people appear rotund like the kings and queens pictured in old paintings. Look a little further and you will discover the Starch Solution.

Starch is a “complex carbohydrate” made up of long chains of sugar molecules, stored in the plants’ parts for their future use. During the growing season, green leaves collect energy from the sun and synthesize sugars that are converted into tiny starch granules. The plants use this stockpile for survival over winter, to re-grow the next year, and to reproduce. Starchy plant-food-parts selected by people for eating are simply called “starches.” Tubers (potatoes, sweet potato, cassava), winter squashes (pumpkin, butternut, hubbard), legumes (beans, peas, lentils), and grains (barley, corn, rice, wheat) serve as organs for storing starch.

Green and yellow vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, and asparagus, accumulate relatively little starch, and fruits are made up of simple sugars, not complex ones. All animal foods, including beef, chicken, fish, shellfish, eggs, milk, and cheese, contain no starch at all.

While easily providing the abundance of calories needed for winning marathons, starches do not promote excess weight gain. That is because the human body efficiently regulates carbohydrates from starches, burning them off, rather than storing them, when consumed in excess. How effective is our body's regulation? Obesity has been unknown among billions of Asians with a wide variety of activity levels who have followed traditional diets based on rice. However, these people's immunity immediately disappears when they switch to meals based on meat and dairy foods, because the human body unsuccessfully balances for excess fat consumption—storing these calories in the abdomen, buttocks, and thighs. The fat you eat is the fat you wear.

Starches are very low in fat (1% to 8% of their calories), contain no cholesterol, do not grow human pathogens, like salmonella, E. Coli, and "mad cow" prions, and do not store poisonous chemicals, like DDT and methyl mercury. Outside surface contamination, for example, from cow dung and pesticide sprays, may occur, but that is not a fault with the plants. Starch is clean fuel.

The carbohydrates abundant in starches pleurably stimulate the sweet-tasting sensory buds on the tips of our tongues. Here gastronomic enjoyment and satisfaction begin. Because of their natural rewarding properties—having great taste and nourishing calories—people refer to beans, breads, corn, pasta, potatoes, and rice as "comfort foods." In addition to "clean and efficient, satisfying energy," starches provide an abundance of other nutrients, such as proteins, essential fats, vitamins, and minerals. Some single starches, for example potatoes and sweet potatoes, are "complete foods" and can easily meet all of our nutritional needs alone. Grains and legumes are deficient in vitamins A and C. The addition of a small amount of fruit or green and yellow vegetable easily provides for these vitamins, making a diet based on these seeds (grains and legumes) sound.

Unguided Wealth Stole Our Health

My parents lived through the Great Depression of the 1930s. My mother's family could not even afford to pay the rent on their apartment—the generosity of their landlord kept them from living on the streets of Decatur, Illinois. The sparse diet her family ate during these hard times was made up of turnips, rutabagas, and potatoes. My mother's painful memories caused her to make a promise that her children would never have to suffer as she did.

Growing up I ate eggs and bacon for breakfast, meat-filled sandwiches for lunch, and beef, pork, and chicken were the centerpieces of every dinner. All three of these starch-deficient daily meals were washed down with glassfuls of milk. The effects on my personal health were instructional. For as far back as I can remember, I suffered daily stomachaches and brutally immovable constipation. At age seven I lost my tonsils. I was often sick with colds and flu. My lack of endurance put me in last place in gym class. Oily skin and acne marked my face as a teenager. At age 18 an uncommon incident happened to me—I suffered a major stroke with total left-sided paralysis. My own mother called me fat in my early twenties (I was 50 pounds overweight). When I was 25, the abdominal pains became so intolerable, that I underwent exploratory surgery. My mother's wish was fulfilled; I never suffered as she did.

Her intentions were good ones; she fed our family based upon the best nutritional advice of the times—most of it provided to the public by the meat and dairy industries. Calcium and protein were worshipped as the nutrients most vital to any meal plan. Concerns about the adverse consequences of these animal foods on human health and the environment were recognized in these times, but largely dismissed by food industry-funded scientists as unimportant.⁴

Dietary Change Is Terrifying.

Almost all of us were raised on meat, poultry, milk, cheese, oils, flours, and sugars. These items have provided most of our life-sustaining calories. To give these familiar foods up, in our minds, means starvation. This would be akin to asking us to stop breathing or to go thirsty—unbearable, if not impossible, tasks. I remember well my first experience with foods different from those I was raised on. Mary, my wife of 37 years

now, was pregnant with our first child, Heather, in 1974. We were living on the Big Island of Hawaii at that time. Buzz and Susan Hughes, a couple we had met at our childbirth education class, invited us over for dinner. Susan had prepared a casserole of wheat and barley, a Caesar salad, vegetable side dishes, and a peach pie for dessert. The meal was tasty, but a drastic departure from my usual beef, chicken, cheese, egg, and ice cream menu. Even after second helpings my stomach was still empty of its customary fillings. On our drive home after dinner, I felt unsatisfied and actually believed that I would be unable to sleep through the night without "food." I entered the front door of our house, which led directly to the kitchen with a well-stocked refrigerator. I eagerly opened the bottom bin where the sliced turkey was kept and made myself a Dagwood sandwich. After eating sufficient amounts of fat, protein, flour, and sugar, I slept well.

I adjusted mentally and physically after only a few more healthy eating experiences, and soon learned how much more tasty and satisfying meals based on masked potatoes, bean burritos, mu shu vegetables and rice, spaghetti and marinara sauce, and soups and breads are than meals based on animal muscles and lactation fluids. The Starch Solution is a simple switch: rather than getting calories from fat and protein, the primary fuel for people becomes carbohydrate. Instead of starvation, this change means fuller appetite satisfaction and radiant health. The more meat and dairy you replace with starch the trimmer and healthier you become—this is not an all or nothing proposition. This book is not about becoming a vegetarian or a vegan. However, when you are finished reading, your consumption of starch-deficient foods will plummet, along with excess weight, physical and mental suffering, and need for medications and surgeries.

Expect Economic Shifts

The adoption of a starch-based diet by any sizable share of the world's populations will have major ramifications, because huge profits are at stake and industry will fight back. The food industries' goals have been, and always will be, to entice the consumer to eat more meat, poultry, seafood, dairy products, and processed foods because those are the high profit items. Rice, corn, and potatoes are plentiful, easy to grow, and cheap. Switching to a starch-based diet will not only affect the food industries, but will also drastically shrink the pharmaceutical and medical businesses by preventing and curing common illnesses, including obesity, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and intestinal disturbances ranging from heartburn to constipation.

Implementation of the Starch Solution may appear impossible because the hands of commerce reach into every area of politics, science, and education. The food industry employs to their advantage lobbyists, influence peddling, the revolving door syndrome, and massive agricultural subsidies. Their money corrupts medical doctors, dietitians, scientists, professional associations, and medical journals. With a donation, according to a memo from the American Dietetic Association (ADA), Coca-Cola becomes an "ADA Partner in the Association's corporate relations sponsorship program. The program provides Partners a national platform via ADA events and programs with prominent access to key influencers, thought leaders and decision makers in the food and nutrition marketplace."⁵ The Oklahoma Beef Council (OBC) sponsored several American Heart Association (AHA) events in the spring of 2006 to communicate how lean beef easily fits into a heart-healthy diet.⁶ The newly released 2006 AHA Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations by no coincidence include heart-attack-causing meat as part of a heart-healthy diet.⁷ The American Dietetic Association and the American Heart Association are only two, among dozens, of respectable sounding organizations that you once believed in, who receive funding from food interests—and as a consequence they act as fronts for industry.⁸

Major universities, such as Harvard and Tufts, are also funded by food interests, and they perpetuate industry-favoring lies that keep the consuming public from making correct decisions about their diet.⁸ For example, Tufts University's nutrition department (which receives funding from Procter & Gamble and Kraft Foods) tells the public, "Plant protein sources, although good for certain essential amino acids, do not always offer all nine essential amino acids in a single given food."⁹ The scientific truth is all single starches and vegetables contain all eight essential and all twelve nonessential amino acids in amounts and arrangements that always meet human needs. The nutritional falsehood about "amino acid deficient plants" spread by industry-supported universities causes people to add artery-clogging meats and dairy products to their diet in order to get "complete protein." Almost no one can be trusted because so much money taints them.¹⁰

The food industries win over the public by an advertising campaign that convinces us that "a well-balanced

diet" is best. Meaning that almost anything and everything that is sold in the supermarket should be part of the human diet. People should select from cat food (meat) to calf food (milk) and foods you would never feed your favorite pets, such as cakes, donuts, and candy bars, according to the food industry. They also divert our attention away from proper eating and the dangers of their products by providing unattainable solutions, like "exercise more" and "eat less" to lose weight. The rising epidemics of obesity and sickness worldwide, under the tutelage of the food industry, prove a more truthful answer is long overdue; and that is for the world's peoples to obtain the bulk of their food from one or more healthy delicious starches.

We Know Better

Despite the deafening drone from big businesses, since the 1950s there has been sound advice to eat more vegetables, fruits, and grains, and to eat less fat from meat and dairy products. In the introduction to the 1977 report issued by the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, Dr. Mark Hegsted of the Harvard School of Public Health said: "I wish to stress that there is a great deal of evidence and it continues to accumulate, which strongly implicates and, in some instances, proves that the major causes of death and disability in the United States are related to the diet we eat. I include coronary artery disease, which accounts for nearly half of the deaths in the United States, several of the most important forms of cancer, hypertension, diabetes, and obesity as well as other chronic diseases."¹¹

In 2002, the World Health Organization published a report on how the nutrition transition towards refined foods, foods of animal origin (meat and dairy products), and increased fats is causing the current global epidemics of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases and predicted that by 2020 two-thirds of the global burden of disease will be attributable to diseases mostly from diet.¹²

Because of our inability and unwillingness to respond to the truth we are now suffering the greatest health crisis ever known to humankind. Worldwide, 1.1 billion people are overweight and 312 million obese, 18 million people die of heart disease annually, more than 197 million have diabetes, and half of all people following the Western diet develop life-threatening cancers.¹³

The Western Diet Is a Planet-killer.

The stakes are greater than a few billion fat, sick people. Marching side by side with mounting levels of human sickness are escalating environmental catastrophes due in large part to abandoning our diet of starches for livestock at every meal at every dinner table. According to the report, *Livestock's Long Shadow – Environmental Issues and Options*, released in November of 2006 from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, livestock emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to every one of the most serious environmental problems.¹⁴

For thirty-two years I have believed people would rise up and take action once they realized that the vast majority of human sickness and suffering in developed countries is due to eating animal and junk foods, and that the simple solution is to switch to a starch-based diet. The masses have remained quiet. For the past decade I have witnessed the growing epidemic of childhood obesity—a misery caused largely by the fast food giants. All this time I have waited for informed citizens to rise up in protest, or at the very least, to boycott the perpetrators of this child abuse. The sellers of easily procured beef burgers and milk shakes thrive, successfully uncontested by a single one of us.

Until now, inaction meant other people and their children became fat, sick, and died prematurely—somehow, we have been able to live with those immoralities. The truth is that most human beings find the destruction of fellow human beings, even little ones, acceptable. You can assume these same people will sit idly by and let the entire earth be destroyed. But we cannot let this happen, because this is our world, too. This time, failure to act means that we and our children will be lost, along with those who do not seem to understand or care.

An amazingly simple win-win opportunity stares us in the face: a global switch to a starch-based diet will solve the diseases of over-nutrition and put a big dent in global warming with one U-turn—since the up-to-now insatiable appetite for foodstuffs made from livestock (cows, sheep, pigs, and chickens), with abandonment of starchy plant foods, are at the root of both disasters. We must implement the Starch Solution.

Quick Paybacks with Starch

A switch back to the kind of diet followed by most people who have ever walked this earth would have enormous and widespread benefits. The Starch Solution could prevent more deaths in one year than have been prevented by all the antibiotics, diabetic pills, cholesterol-lowering statins, and blood pressure pills prescribed over the past half century. Not one case of type-2 diabetes has ever been cured with insulin, nor has any patient with coronary artery disease been cured by heart surgery; yet a switch to a starch-based diet has been proven to stop and reverse these as well as most other chronic diseases. The net toll on human lives saved in the first decade of implementing the Starch Solution would be greater than the lives lost by all wars fought in the 20th century in Western countries.

Abandoning meat and dairy foods would overnight result in more savings in fossil fuels than all the solar farms, windmills, and nuclear plants that could be built in the next three decades. Consider that most vegetable produce requires about two calories of fossil-fuel energy to cultivate per one calorie of food energy; with beef, the ratio can be as high as 80 to one.¹⁵ Because livestock products account for 18% of greenhouse gas production, compared to 14% for all transportation, this simple, long-overdue diet change would have a greater effect on the rapidly approaching environmental apocalypse than would removing all cars from the highways worldwide.¹⁴ For everyday food choices, consider that growing four pounds (1200 calories) of potatoes generates 14 times fewer greenhouse gases than producing a pound of beef (1200 calories).¹⁶ Potatoes also provide much more food, health, and appetite satisfaction than beef at the same time.

Individuals can expect an immediate personal financial payback. The average daily cost of eating all 3 meals at fast food restaurants is about \$14 (US). On a starch-based diet you can easily feed yourself for \$3 or less a day. Your medical expenses can be eliminated in most cases and your personal productivity will skyrocket overnight.

Truth Is The Solution

We are prevented from solving problems ranging from acne to species extermination by false information. Starch as our food source must no longer be vilified. Meat, poultry, fish, and dairy can no longer be exalted. Currently, past the age of 30, in Western countries, almost everyone is overweight, on medications and/or has risk factors, like high cholesterol or high blood pressure, which predict premature disability and death. Fat, sick people will have much greater difficulty solving the health, environmental, financial, and military problems threatening our existence. In addition to the obvious mental and physical impairments caused by their illnesses, their own dinner plates blind them to the right answers. Once a person learns the truth and switches to a starch-based diet then the solutions become clear. The solutions are so simple and easy to explain that a 7-year-old can understand that the cure for heart disease and restoring the oceans back to life are the same.

The goal of this book is to provide you with one big simple solution—a starch-based diet. That's all there is to it. You don't have to think "good" thoughts, worship weekly, run marathons, be blessed with hardy genes, or carry around lucky charms to solve your health problems and to make a sizable contribution to reversing the accelerating trends of environmental ruin. All you have to do is change the composition of the foods on your plate and eat. That's the Starch Solution.

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Don't miss our next advanced study weekend to be held September 11 to 13, 2009 in Santa Rosa, CA. Guest speakers so far will be Robert Pritikin, former director of the Pritikin Program in California, Jane Hightower, MD, author of *Diagnosis: Mercury: Money, Politics, and Poison*, and Luigi Fontana, MD, PhD, Division of Geri



atrics and Nutritional Sciences, Center of Human Nutrition, Washington University, who will talk about aging and a healthy diet.

If you are interested in learning the McDougall Program or enhancing your enthusiasm about diet from the McDougall staff, then attend our next 5-day Program, April 15 to 19, 2009 (no medical care). And remember, when you are ready to get serious about recovering your lost health and stopping all unnecessary medications, the 10-day program is the place to be. Here Dr. McDougall will personally care for you. The next programs begin March 27th and May 15th. Also consider having some high quality fun with us on the July 8 to 15, 2009 Costa Rica Adventure.

Unsolicited Comments about the February 20 to 22, 2009 Advanced Study Weekend

I really enjoyed the weekend, as I was able to bring my friend Don Robins. After years of me telling him about everything he finally got it. Saturday night walking back to the room he turned to me and said, "It's so clear, isn't it. It's just really clear. I get it now." SH

Thank you for an enriching and inspiring weekend. Dr. Nedley was very impressive. Even though he managed to sneak in a few Bible verses and even Mrs. White - I did not find it offensive. I didn't realize that Dr. Campbell was such a towering presence in nutritional circles. He certainly added gravitas to the occasion. AK

I so enjoyed the weekend and getting jazzed again. What great speakers, food, and just plain fun! Thank you and Mary...and I will say Tiffany is a jewel. My friend, Cindy, loved the weekend and was so impressed with you. She is the one that bought me your book when I was so ill two years ago. BB

I don't know how you do it; you keep raising the bar! Once again I have to say this was the best Advanced Study Weekend yet! What an opportunity to hear the best of the best: the top nutrition researcher in the world, probably the most knowledgeable dietitian, a world-class mental health expert, and a terrific activist/lobbyist for better health. You're not going to top this one, but then I've said that before. I took your challenge and attempted to gain weight over the weekend. After gorging on three delicious meals a day plus snacks between meals, I was amazed to find out I LOST two pounds! Can't wait till September and the next Advanced Study Weekend. BW

First, it was really great seeing you and Mary and the kids and everyone.....and thanks for another great "booster shot". Dr. Nedley was really interesting and Dr. Campbell is one of my heroes, after you of course. I especially liked the presentation on what you would do as Surgeon General. I have one thing to add that I think would go a long way to solving the health crisis in this country.....I would require every restaurant, especially fast food places and chains like Applebee's, to offer at least one equally appetizing healthy menu item in each category of their menu. I would require that it be equally priced and served. I would also require equal advertising for that item. OE

It was a great weekend! Thank you. I have missed attending the Advanced Study Weekends... I would love to stay better connected with this community/support group. AB

It was a great pleasure to finally meet you and Mary. Duane and I had a wonderful time, learned a lot and reinforced previously heard information. Also, opened up new avenues of interest with the information from Neil Nedley, Pam Popper, Douglas Lisle and Jason Wyrick - all whom we hadn't met yet. Of course, add in T. Colin Campbell and Jeff Novick, already favorites, makes your program and our list of favorites very impressive. That was the first seminar of full days of lectures that I have been to and was able to maintain alertness, attentiveness and energy backed up with the delicious food prepared by Mary's and your instructions. We did not go hungry on any account. We are looking forward to return for another session when the opportunity presents itself. BM

We'd like to thank you again for a wonderful weekend. It was BY FAR the best so far. They're all good, of course, but this one was absolutely superior. The food just keeps getting better and better, and the speakers, especially Dr. Nedley, were riveting. Dr. Campbell's book (we got 3 copies) is enthralling. Dr. Nedley has me convinced to investigate his residential program. I really don't want to take prozac the rest of my life. Pam Popper is very energetic and aggressive and we'd like to have her on our side in a dispute! Your "regulars," Jason, Doug and Jeff, were interesting as usual. Hope I didn't miss anyone. We enjoyed our weekend in Santa Rosa very much. Learned a lot and now I think I know what I have been doing that has kept me from progressing with the weight loss. Maybe by this time nextyear, I'll be a STAR! You'll be the first to know! BB

It went too fast for me to take notes. Are there CD's of Jeff's talks? Enjoyed the Oklahoma internist (Nedley). Lots of new-to-me ideas. I'm listening more to our classical records and less to Ella - altho' I'll never give up Ella totally. I want to BE Ella. Except for the weight. And the fact that she's dead. JH

Featured Recipes

Triple Lentil Dal



I have always made dal using split mung beans, but I have been unable to find them in my local market lately. This version uses channa dal (split baby garbanzo beans), plus red lentils and split yellow peas. If you can't find channa dal, you may be able to find another kind of split pea dal or split mung beans and they could be used instead. Otherwise just make this with the red lentils and split yellow peas, either way it is very complex and delicious. Serve rolled up in a tortilla or on naan bread, topped with chopped green onions and Sriracha hot sauce.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Servings: 6-8

6 cups water
¾ cup yellow split peas
¾ cup red lentils
¾ cup channa dal
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon turmeric
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tomato, chopped
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
Dash sea salt

Place the water in a large pot with the split peas, lentils and dal. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 45 minutes. Uncover and cook for an additional 60 minutes, stirring occasionally until quite thick. Turn off heat and let rest for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Place the cumin seeds in a dry non-stick pan and toast for about 1 minute. Add the chopped onion and garlic; sauté, stirring frequently until onion softens and browns slightly. Do not add water. Stir in the coriander, turmeric and cayenne and continue to cook for a minute or so. Add the tomato and cook until softened slightly. Add this mixture to the dal and mix well. Cook for an additional 2-3 minutes before serving, then add the cilantro and salt. Let rest for about 2 minutes. Serve warm.

Wheat Berry Vegetable Soup

I have had a container of wheat berries sitting in my pantry for quite some time now waiting for some inspiration as to what to do with them. It's been quite cool and rainy here in Northern California this past week, so a hearty vegetable soup seemed to be just the right fit. There is also a wonderful recipe for Wheat Berry Stew in the Quick & Easy Cookbook on page 110 using a slow cooker.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Soaking Time: 1 hour

Cooking Time: 3 ½ hours

Servings: 6

1 cup hard winter wheat berries
6 cups water
1 cup vegetable broth
1 15 ounce can chopped tomatoes
1 onion, chopped
3 stalks celery, sliced
2 carrots, sliced
½ pound cremini mushrooms, quartered
2 cups shredded cabbage
1 15 ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 teaspoon basil
2 tablespoons parsley flakes
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon sambal oelek
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Place the wheat berries in a medium bowl. Bring 2 cups of the water to a boil and pour over the wheat berries. Let soak for 1 hour. Drain and place in a large pot with the remaining 4 cups of water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and cook for 30 minutes. Add vegetable broth, tomatoes, onion, celery, carrots and mushrooms. Simmer for 1 hour, then add the cabbage, beans, basil, parsley flakes and freshly ground pepper. Continue to cook for an additional 1 ½ hours. Add the sambal oelek and the lemon juice and cook an additional 30 minutes until wheat berries are tender.

Beany Minestrone Soup

One of our newsletter subscribers sent me a recipe for a Minestrone Soup from the Sacramento Bee newspaper. What I found interesting about the soup was that it used refried beans as a thickener, so the resulting soup is very thick and rich without having to cook all day. Since I almost always have some leftover smashed pinto beans in my refrigerator, I decided to incorporate the beans into my version of Minestrone Soup.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour

Servings: 8

1 onion, chopped
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 stalks celery, sliced
2 carrots, sliced
6 ½ cups vegetable broth
1 15 ounce can fire-roasted chopped tomatoes
1 8 ounce can tomato sauce
6-8 fingerling potatoes, sliced
1 ½ cups fat-free refried beans
1 bay leaf
2 tablespoons parsley flakes
1 ½ teaspoons basil
1 ½ teaspoons oregano
Several twists freshly ground black pepper
1 15 ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
¾ cup frozen corn kernels
½ cup uncooked whole wheat elbows
2 cups chopped Swiss chard
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar

Place the onions, garlic, celery and carrots in a large pot with ½ cup of the vegetable broth. Cook, stirring frequently for about 5 minutes, until onions are softened. Add the remaining broth, tomatoes, tomato sauce, potatoes, refried beans, bay leaf, parsley, basil, oregano and black pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally to smooth out the refried beans. Add the kidney beans, corn and whole wheat elbows. Continue to cook for 20 minutes. Stir in the chard and balsamic vinegar and cook an additional 10 minutes until chard is softened. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Hint: If you do not have leftover beans in your refrigerator, substitute one 15 ounce can of fat-free refried beans.

Ginger Dressing

We just returned from a fun-filled week in Costa Rica with 78 McDougall Adventure travelers. The food served on the trip was all McDougall-style low-fat plant foods with plenty of items to choose from. I will be sharing some of the recipes from the trip over the next several months. The Ginger Dressing that they made is one of my all time favorite dressings. I put it on salads, rice and vegetables and so did a few other travelers that I noticed. This is easy to make in a blender and keeps well in the refrigerator. Try this on fresh spinach leaves, with some grated carrot and thinly sliced onions and mushrooms.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Servings: makes 1 cup

1/3 cup chopped red onion
¼ cup rice vinegar
¼ cup water
3 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
2 tablespoons ketchup
2 tablespoons soy sauce
½ teaspoon crushed garlic

Place all ingredients in a blender jar and process until very smooth. Pour into a covered container and refrigerate until needed.

Pea Guacamole

During the July 2009 McDougall Adventure trip to Costa Rica we had an opportunity to enjoy some richer McDougall-style foods, such as desserts and guacamole every day!

Many of you enjoy eating guacamole but, realizing it is a high-fat plant food, are always asking me for a healthier alternative. This recipe first appeared in the Maximum Weight Loss book many years ago. I have modified it slightly for an even fresher taste. This tastes so much like the real thing that most people won't be able to guess what it is made from.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Chilling Time: 30 minutes

Servings: makes 2 cups

2 pounds frozen green peas, thawed
1 teaspoon crushed garlic
¼ cup fresh lime juice
½ teaspoon ground cumin
1 tomato, chopped
4 green onions, chopped
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
1/8 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
Dash sea salt

Place the peas, garlic, lime juice and cumin in a food processor and process until smooth. Then place in a bowl and stir in the remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow flavors to blend.

Tofu Cream Cheese

This is a rich and creamy sandwich spread.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 1 minute
Chilling Time: 2 hours
Servings: makes 2 cups

1 pound firm tofu (not silken)
4 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
¼ cup finely chopped green bell pepper
¼ cup finely chopped green onion
¼ cup finely chopped celery
¼ cup finely chopped radish

Place the tofu in a saucepan with water to cover and bring to a boil. Boil for 1 minute. Drain. Place the tofu in a double thickness of cheesecloth and draw the ends together forming a sack. Twist gently, squeezing out all the water. Place the tofu in a food processor with the lemon juice, onion powder and garlic powder. Process until smooth. Scrape into a bowl and mix in the remaining ingredients. Refrigerate for 2 hours to allow flavors to blend.

Advanced Study Weekend Recipes

The McDougall Advanced Study weekend, held February 20-22, 2009, was attended by over 160 people interested in learning more about great health and nutrition. Our guest chef for this weekend was Jason Wyrick, founder of The Vegan Culinary Experience, the only vegan culinary magazine in the world. If you would like a free subscription to this online magazine, go to www.veganculinaryexperience.com and sign up on the home page. Jason prepared some delicious recipes for all of us to sample during the weekend. I've included two of them here.

Pappa al Pomodoro

By Jason Wyrick

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Servings: 6

1 onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, sliced
2 pounds tomatoes, chopped
2 cups water
¼ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper (optional)
6 cups coarsely chopped rustic bread
1 cup loosely packed chopped basil leaves
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Place the onion in a large non-stick pot and sauté over medium high heat until lightly browned. Add the garlic, tomatoes, water, salt and optional red pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer until tomatoes are soft, stirring occasionally to smash the tomatoes. Add the bread and continue to simmer until the bread has absorbed the liquid. Remove from heat and stir in the basil and pepper.

Hint: You can make this soup in about 10 minutes using a can of crushed tomatoes instead of making your own tomato base. Use one 28 ounce can crushed tomatoes and only 1 cup of water. Use a hearty fat-free whole wheat bread in this recipe for best results.

Hopi Corn and Chili Stew

By Jason Wyrick

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Servings: 8

1 onion, chopped
1 ½ cups vegetable broth
3 carrots, chopped
3 Yukon Gold potatoes, chopped
2 ears corn
6 tomatoes, chopped
1 15 ounce can pinto beans, drained and rinsed
¼ cup diced green chilies
3 large dried New Mexico mild chili peppers, crushed or ground
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Chopped fresh cilantro (optional)

Place the onion in a large non-stick pot and sauté over medium high heat, stirring occasionally, until browned. Remove corn kernels from cobs. Add vegetable broth to the pot and bring to a boil. Add corn kernels and all the rest of the ingredients. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes, until all vegetables are tender. Garnish with some fresh chopped cilantro before serving, if desired.