

# Happy Christmas ... Everyone!

Seasonal joy for older vegetarians and vegans



Vegetarian  
...for Life 

Christmas is always a busy time – especially in the kitchen. It is also the season of goodwill and kindness. And kindness means a lot to vegetarians. Older vegetarians realise how hectic life is for those catering for them, but they really appreciate your efforts in making the festive season just as enjoyable for vegetarians as for meat-eaters.

It needn't cause a lot of stress, especially with a little forward-planning. Here are a few tips to help. And these are followed by a 'gift' from Rose Elliot, VfL's patron: recipes for a 3 course Christmas Meal, which is both easy to prepare and delicious too!

## Christmas Dinner

By far the easiest approach is to give vegetarians and vegans essentially the same meal as everyone else – just substituting for the turkey and

any other non-veggie foods. But, remember: it's easy to have a lovely Christmas meal with very few or no animal products.

### \* Starters

There are lots of easy vegetarian starters that are universally popular, and many can be prepared in advance. Dozens of soups are meat- and fish-free, but nicely complement Christmas food. VfL's website includes *Carrot & Coriander*; *Parsnip & Cinnamon*; and *Carrot, Cashew Nut & Sage Soups*. Alternatively, how about melon, *Waldorf Salad* or *Walnut Pate*? For soups, please avoid using meat stock, and don't top with cheese or thicken with cream or milk for vegans.

### \* Main Course

This is easy! Just roast the potatoes and parsnips in vegetable oil, make the gravy with vegetable stock or vegetarian gravy granules, and avoid

stuffing that is not vegetarian. Then all you have to do is substitute the turkey and sausages with veggie alternatives. Find out individual preferences in advance: some veggies love vegetarian 'roast turkey' and vegetarian sausages. Others prefer not to have substitutes that look and taste like meat, so you could try the *Easy Nut Roast* from our website or, if you want to be a little more adventurous, the *Mushroom Pate En Crouete*, another Rose Elliot recipe.

### ❁ *pudding*

Traditional Christmas puddings use suet, a form of animal fat. But it's easy to buy vegetarian suet or ready-made Christmas pud. Please be careful for vegans: regular custard or cream won't do, but vegan creams or ice-creams are easy to get. Many older people may prefer a lighter dessert after a Christmas meal, and what better than fresh fruit salad including satsumas and other seasonal favourites?

### ❁ *Ready Made*

There will be lots of ready-made Christmas dishes in the supermarkets. Bigger supermarkets and health stores stock vegetarian 'roast turkey' and sausages, and specialist vegetarian brands like Cauldron, Quorn and Redwoods may have seasonal offers. If you want to make your life really easy, the Christmas range from Wiltshire Farm Foods home delivery service always includes a vegetarian option.

## Other Seasonal Foods

Overflowing bowls of nuts and fresh or dried fruits suit everybody. Mince pies can be made with vegetarian mincemeat, and it's easy to buy vegetarian mince pies or 'sausage' rolls. Vegetarians are as likely to love chocolate as everyone else, but please remember that milk chocolate is unsuitable for vegans.

## In Summary

Just use these simple tips and plan well ahead, including that all-important communication on individual preferences. Then it's easy to make Christmas happy for vegetarian and vegan residents or service-users. And what's more rewarding than bringing pleasure to others in the 'season of giving'?

But remember: it's probable that meat-eaters will like the vegetarian options too, so give them the choice – and make plenty! Finally, if you'd like to give everyone a real treat, why not try these new recipes from our Patron, Rose Elliot?



We wish you all a very  
happy Christmas.



# Rose Elliot's Vegetarian Christmas Dinner

## DEEP-FRIED BREADED MUSHROOMS WITH GARLIC MAYONNAISE

A lovely treat for a special occasion.

Serves 4

- 300g baby button mushrooms
- 1 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- Flour, for coating
- 75g (3 oz) dried breadcrumbs
- Vegetable oil for deep-frying
- Salt and pepper

To serve

- a few sprigs of watercress
- Plamil egg-free mayonnaise with garlic (or your choice of mayonnaise)

Wipe the mushrooms with a damp cloth, then put them into a bowl with the lemon juice, vinegar, olive oil and salt and pepper to taste and mix gently.

Dip each mushroom into the beaten egg, then into flour, then into the egg again and finally into the breadcrumbs, to coat all over.

Deep fry in oil heated to 180–190° C (350–375° F) or when a cube of bread browns in 30 seconds, for about 4 minutes, or until they are

crisp and golden brown. Drain on kitchen paper and serve at once, garnished with watercress and accompanied by the mayonnaise.

### *Vegan variation*

Replace the beaten egg with 3 tablespoons cornflour mixed with enough water to make a thick paste.

## CHESTNUT ROAST WITH ONION GRAVY

Delicious hot or cold. It slices well and is popular with meat-eaters as well as vegetarians (it goes nicely with their turkey!). It freezes well either before or after cooking.

Serves 4

- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 x 200g packet whole chestnuts roasted and ready to use (eg Merchant Gourmet)
- 2 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce (eg Kikkoman)
- 2 tablespoons dried breadcrumbs
- Vegetable oil for roasting
- Salt and pepper

Fry the onion, celery and garlic over a gentle heat in a covered pan for 10-15 minutes, until tender.

Put into a food processor with the chestnuts, lemon juice, soy sauce and some salt and pepper to taste and whiz until mixture is fairly finely-chopped and holds together in a ball.

Turn out onto a board sprinkled with the dried breadcrumbs and form into a loaf shape, pressing it together firmly.

It can be frozen at this stage, or cooked straight away. Heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Pour a thin layer of vegetable oil into a small roasting tin and heat in the oven until smoking. Put in the chestnut loaf and turn it to coat all sides with the oil. Then cook, uncovered, for 30-45 minutes, turning once or twice, until crisp all over. Serve in thick slices with onion gravy and all the Christmas trimmings.

## ONION GRAVY

Serves 4

- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 rounded tablespoon flour
- 1 rounded teaspoon marigold vegetable bouillion
- 600ml (1 pint) hot water
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce, eg Kikkoman
- Salt and pepper

Fry the onion in a medium-large saucepan for about 10 minutes, until soft and lightly browned.

Add the flour and stir for a minute or two over the heat.

Dissolve the bouillon powder in the hot water, then pour into the pan. Bring up to the boil then leave to simmer for about 5 minutes. Or if you want it thicker, let it simmer a bit longer.

Add the soy sauce, salt and pepper to taste.

## CHRISTMAS SYLLABUB

This is rich, but lovely for a treat. It's good on its own, but also goes well with Christmas Pudding and mince pies! For a vegan version, use a plain vegan cream cheese (such as Tofutti) instead of the cream.

Serves 4

- 300ml (1/2 pint) double cream
- 3 tablespoons caster sugar
- Finely-grated rind and juice of 4 clementines
- 2 tablespoons cointreau or other orange liqueur

To serve

- 1 clementine, cut into very thin slices, to decorate

Put the cream, sugar, clementine rind and juice and liqueur into a bowl. Whisk gently until very thick and billowy.

Divide between four small bowls and decorate with the clementine slices.

[www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk](http://www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk)

Vegetarian for Life is an advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegetarians and vegans throughout the United Kingdom.

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