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Traditional Meat Entrees Get a Makeover: Going Meatless

By Sylvie Charrier

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If you're trying to watch your carbs, meat typically isn't a problem. In fact, meat is actually one of the low carb dieter's best friends. But, what do you do if you are vegetarian who wants to go low carb? Until now, your low carb vegetarian "cuisine" was limited to the number of ways you could blend your tofu with your peanut butter.

But, with a little creativity, you can put the gourmet back into your meals with vegetarian and low carb ingredients. But, if you do, don't be surprised when you hear friends and family exclaim, "This can't be vegetarian!" Here are three traditional meat-based classics where we've taken out the meat and the carbs to make a believer out of you.

VEGGIE "HAM" QUICHE

Real men might not eat quiche, but hungry people everywhere are going to eat this delicious Veggie Ham Quiche. Quick and easy to make, this crustless creation takes the best of your traditional quiche and makes it better. With only 3 grams of net carbs per slice (4 slices total), you might just want to make two—yes, it's that good! Simply preheat your oven to 350°F and spray a large quiche or pie pan with your favorite nonstick cooking spray. Shred 1 cup each of mozzarella and cheddar cheese and sprinkle into the bottom of your pan. Top the cheese with a ½ lb. of chopped veggie ham and ¾ cup chopped broccoli. If broccoli isn't your veggie of choice, substitute any of your favorites. If you go with the traditional spinach, be sure to drain it very well or you'll end up with one mushy quiche. In a separate bowl, mix together ½ cup heavy cream, ½ cup water, 5 eggs, and salt, pepper, dill, and dry mustard to taste. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown and center is firm. This amazingly tasty treat is best served hot, but is equally tantalizing when served cold.

LOW CARB "BEEF" STROGANOFF

There are few dishes meatier than the traditional beef stroganoff which makes it a perfect candidate for a low carb vegetarian transformation. With only 5.4 net grams for a 1.3 cup serving, you'll quickly find this traditional dish becoming a new classic. For best results, use vegetarian beef tenderloin or

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beef-style seitan (gluten). Cut your veggie beef in strips about 1/4 inch wide and 2 inches long, put them on a large plate, and lightly sprinkle with salt and pepper. With a damp paper towel, wipe 12 ounces of small-button mushrooms clean and trim off the hard ends of stems. Heat a large, heavy skillet on medium-high and 2 tablespoons of coconut oil. Quickly brown the veggie meat in the hot oil on both sides, about 2 minutes total, and then remove meat to a holding plate. Return the skillet to the stove and lower heat to medium-low. Add 1 ounce of butter and mushrooms and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Add 3/4 cup beef-style stock or broth to deglaze the skillet. Then, add 2 tablespoons of Wondra flour, stir into the broth, and simmer for 2 minutes on low heat. Add the veggie meat and 3/4 cup sour cream and heat through. Adjust the seasonings to your liking, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of parsley, and serve immediately. To complete the dish, serve over any type of low carb pasta or converted rice.

BAKED "SALMON" ITALIANNE

You can transform any meat dish into a low carb vegetarian specialty, including fish! For a delightful, easy-to-make fish dish, try a Baked Salmon Italianne. Decadently dressed faux salmon topped with veggie bacon is a simple, yet extravagant entrée. Serving up at only 5 grams of net carbs per serving of 5 oz. salmon steak and 2 strips of bacon, it's time to reel this meal into a kitchen near you. To get started, preheat your oven to 400°F and spray a casserole dish with your favorite nonstick cooking spray. In a mixing bowl, combine 1/4 cup sugar-free mayonnaise and 2 tablespoons of ketchup to make your own Russian Dressing. In a microwave-safe bowl, combine 6 pieces of sun-dried tomatoes with enough water to cover them. Heat the tomatoes until they plump. Lay salmon pieces in your dish and completely cover with Russian Dressing. Cut up the tomatoes and lay them top of the dressing. Then, sprinkle the entire dish with 1/4 cup chopped onion and 4 strips of veggie bacon, cooked, and cut into 1" pieces. Bake your masterpiece for 20-25 minutes and then place under your broiler for just a few minutes to brown up the top. All that's left to do now is enjoy!

As you can begin to see—and taste—transforming your traditional meat-based dishes into low carb and vegetarian delights just takes a little creativity. The proof is, as they say, in the pan!

YUMMY PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE

If you still have room for dessert after eating any of these amazing low carb vegetarian entrees, you'll want to whip up the world's easiest and easily the world's best Yummy Pumpkin Cheesecake. With only 4 grams of net carbs per slice (serves 8), you'll wish you'd skipped right to dessert. With this recipe, it doesn't get much easier than this. Blend. Bake. Cool. Eat! Repeat. Preheat your oven to 350°F. In a mixing bowl, blend together 3 eggs, 8 ounces of cream cheese, and 4 packets of Splenda® and 4 packets Sweet n' Low. Then, add 1/3 teaspoon maple extract, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, and 1/2 can pure pumpkin. Keep mixing as you add, 1 teaspoon ginger, 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg, 2 teaspoon cinnamon, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Mix until creamy, and then pour into a 9" pie pan. Bake for 30 minutes or until knife comes out clean and finish off by chilling in the refrigerator until fully set. You'll want to keep this one all to yourself!

Sylvie Charrier is the author of the revolutionary new book "Living La Vida Low Carb: The Vegetarian Way". As a busy work-at-home mom, she discovered simple ways to get more results from her low

carb diet. She shares her recipe makeovers and health tips on her website <http://www.VegetarianLowCarb.com/Makeover.html>

Vegetarian Does Not Have To Be "All Or Nothing"

By Melanie Mendelson

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Many people contemplate becoming a vegetarian at one point or another. Some consider a meatless diet because they feel sorry for the animals. Others think a vegetarian way of eating will improve their health.

However, out of those well-intentioned people very few actually follow through and change their way of eating. The idea of completely giving up meat forms a big stumbling block for most.

For some reason, when it comes to vegetarian cooking, most people only see the "extremist" approach: either give up meat completely or you might as well include the meat in every meal. This "all or nothing" thinking becomes a mental barrier that keeps a lot of people from eating more vegetarian meals.

How about finding a happy medium? Drastic changes to one's diet never last. Do not beat yourself up for eating meat. There is no need to give it up completely. Just try eating a little less of it, that's all.

Start right now by making one meatless dinner every week. Keep everything else the same. Eating just one vegetarian dinner every week is definitely doable and easy. It will be just a nice change instead of deprivation!

If you think going meatless one day a week would not make a big difference, consider these simple numbers: if everyone ate vegetarian meals just one day a week, it would save one out of seven animals. Out of 92 million animals that are consumed in the United States alone every year, over 13 million animals would be spared. This is a huge impact!

In addition to doing good for our planet, you'll enjoy great health benefits by including more fruits and vegetables in

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your diet. Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, nutrients, anti-oxidants and fiber – all the things that are good for us. They can help with weight loss and prevent diseases. Numerous studies show that diets high in fruits and vegetables reduce the risks of deadly diseases such as

cancer, heart attack and stroke.

Also, by trying out new dishes, you will break your food routine and discover new tasty recipes and food combinations. It's really nice to eat something different once in a while instead of being stuck in a food rut.

This simple shift of mindset from "all or nothing" to a happy middle ground will do wonders. Vegetarian eating does not need to be a full-time commitment, sacrifice and strive for unattainable perfection. Just do what you can to eat a little less meat, have fun trying new vegetarian meals and enjoy the benefits.

Melanie Mendelson is the author of "Vegetarian Main Dishes –Yummy Recipes That Even Meat Eaters Will Love". Visit her website at <http://www.vegetarian-recipes-cookbook.com>



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