



TUV HASHAVUA: Best of the Week

Mark Bittman Says You Can Be a Part-time Vegan by Glenn Yoder

Six years ago, Mark Bittman was faced by his doctor with two unsavory choices in order to address a smattering of health issues related to being overweight: surgery or drugs. Another physician recommended going vegan, but The New York Times columnist and host of Cooking Channel's "The Minimalist" decided to compromise, building a flexible vegan diet that fit his lifestyle. In the first six weeks, he lost 15 pounds. In the next six weeks, he reduced his cholesterol and blood sugar level, cured his sleep apnea, and shed another 15 pounds. "The emphasis is on changing the proportions of what's in your diet. Then everything else kind of follows from that," Bittman says. "Obviously, there are political and environmental and larger implications of all of this, but I wanted to do something that didn't confuse the issues, that said, 'If you want to have a sort of personal food policy that's going to improve your health, reduce your carbon footprint, probably make you feel better, this is the way to think about it.' The science is pretty clear and this is a strategy. There are a lot of other strategies but this is a strategy that seems to be working." On April 30, he released his latest book, "VB6: Eat Vegan Before 6:00 to Lose Weight and Restore Your Health ... For Good," detailing his experience and showing how to follow a similar path.

Q. *There are a lot of common diet mistakes people make. Why is this easier to commit to?*

A. Well, I think the cheating is built in. One of the first questions people ask me is "Can I put milk in my coffee? I can't live without putting milk in my coffee." And the fact is, I put milk in my coffee and I break the rules all the time. But it's a common-sense thing. There's a big difference between a teaspoon and a tablespoon of milk or cream in your coffee and two cheeseburgers or a large order of fries. Science says that we should be eating more foods from the plant kingdom and less processed food and fewer animal products. That's pretty much clear. So this is a strategy for doing that. If you follow it 100 percent, then obviously it's more effective in executing what we think needs to be done, but if you follow it 60 percent, you're probably still eating twice as well than if you're eating a sort of standard American diet. So there's a lot of wiggle room in here and I think people need to look at the strategy and say, "How do I

Mark Bittman's "The Minimalist" column ran in the Dining section of the New York Times for more than 13 years. He is a Times Opinion columnist, the lead food writer for The Times Magazine, and a columnist for the Times Dining section. Glenn Yoder writes about food and health for Boston area publications, including the Boston Globe.

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[A] WHAT'S IN THE BOX?	
Hakurei Turnips	FRUIT SHARE
Carrots	
Escarole	
Green Romaine	
Gai Lon Broccoli	
Green Peppers	
Cilantro	
Baby Red Kale	
Tomatoes:	
Beefsteak Plum	
	Apples: Elstar, Red Delicious
	Pears: Bosc
	NOTE: <i>Herb shares have ended for the season</i>

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make this work in my life and how strict do I want to be?" Obviously if you break every rule five times a day, then you're not doing it. So there's got to be some adherence to the principles of the strategy, but it doesn't seem right to say, "Do this or it doesn't work."

Q. So this plan isn't a gateway to eventually eating vegan full time?

A. I don't see that. For anyone who wants it to be, great, but it's not for me and I don't think it's going to be for a lot of other people. I'm getting hostile e-mails and phone calls from real vegans, shall we say, instead of part-time vegans, who say, "Being part-time vegan is like being a little bit pregnant, it doesn't exist." But I disagree with that. You can eat however you want to eat and I think the goal is to eat less junk and fewer animal products and if you want to eat no junk and no animal products, fine with me, but I wouldn't ask that of people and I don't think it's necessary. But let's bear in mind you could be a full-time vegan and be eating really terribly. Coke and fries are vegan.

Q. So does eating healthfully before 6 p.m. increase your food awareness and reduce your risk of splurging in the evening?

A. I think that what seems to happen to people is that they are more conscious about the choices they make, as they feel better about eating more plants and less of other stuff, their dinners become more moderate, too. I mean, that's what happened to me and that's what seems to happen to other people. I think "VB6" is fairly moderate, it's pragmatic, and it's not extreme. But when people change their diet even moderately, they find that they're more conscious of stuff, they find that they have fewer cravings for junk and for animal products, a lot of people just stop eating dessert or they have it once a week. It sort of makes sense intuitively.



GAI LON & CRISPY GARLIC

Weaver Hallow, epicurious.com | Serves 4

2 tbsp vegetable oil
 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
 1 1/2 pounds Gai Lon, tough stem ends trimmed
 3 tbsp rice wine or dry white wine
 2 tbsp tamari (or dark soy sauce)

Heat a large pan or wok over high heat. When hot, add oil and swirl to coat bottom.

When oil is hot but not smoking, add the garlic and red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring constantly, until the garlic is golden, about 3 minutes. Do not overcook the garlic or it will be bitter.

Remove the garlic to paper towels to drain. but keep the oil in pan.

Add the gai lan and 2 tbsp of the wine and cook, tossing and stirring to prevent scorching, until tender, about 5 minutes.

Add the tarmari and the remaining wine; cook 1 minute. Transfer to warm serving platter and sprinkle with the reserved garlic.

HAKUREI TURNIP SALAD

Mary Fayth Preyer, Portland Examiner | Serves 2

1 bunch (6) thoroughly cleaned Harukei turnips, with greens
 2 scallions thinly sliced, white and green parts
 1/2 pint Sungold or other sweet small tomatoes cut in half

Vinaigrette

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
 1/8 cup Dijon mustard
 1/8 cup white wine vinegar
 salt and pepper, to taste

Prepare vinaigrette by whisking or shaking the ingredients together.

Slice turnips into 1/2-inch rounds and gently tear greens and chop stems into bite-sized pieces. Toss with scallions, tomatoes and vinaigrette.

ESCAROLE BRAISED WITH GARLIC AND LEMON

Tyler Florence, foodnetwork.com | Serves 4

1 head escarole, about 1 pound
 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 1 tbsp unsalted butter (optional)
 4 garlic cloves, sliced
 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
 2 bay leaves
 1/2 lemon, cut in thin slices
 2 cups water or chicken broth
 Pinch sugar
 Kosher salt, to taste
 Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Break off the leaves of the escarole and wash them individually, taking care to remove any soil at the base of the stems. Shake the leaves dry, stack them up, and slice the escarole crosswise into ribbons about 1 - 2 inches wide.

Place a large deep skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil and butter. Toss in the garlic, red pepper flakes, bay leaves, and lemon slices; cook and stir for a couple of minutes, tossing to combine.

Nestle the escarole into the pan and sauté, until the leaves begin to wilt and shrink down, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle escarole with a pinch of sugar and season with salt and pepper. Pour in the water, cover the pan and simmer till the escarole is tender, about 20 minutes.