

Recipes for Recovery

My youngest daughter is a vegetarian. It is not a moral issue for her, she just doesn't digest meat well. She has been a confirmed non-meat eater since she was about 3 years old. She suffered horribly from chronic ear infections as a baby and got her first set of tubes at 10 months old. When she was about 2 1/2 years old, she was put on a course of prophylactic antibiotics for one year. It is my belief that all of those antibiotics changed the normal flora of her tummy and she became unable to digest certain foods; meat being one of them.

While I was pregnant with her, I stopped drinking and using other drugs except for cigarettes. I increased my nicotine use to deal with my increasing anxiety. Cigarette smoking was still somewhat acceptable for pregnant moms, and my addiction to them went out of control. As my anxiety increased, so did my nicotine intake. After she was born, my house continued to be smoke filled as my husband smoked as well.

I ignored the fact that she had a very limited diet and thought of her as a finicky eater. I thought that she would grow out of it. When she was 7 years old I began my journey into recovery from addiction.

My sponsor pointed out to me that I had, in fact, been a neglectful and selfish mother as a result of my addiction. I chose to smoke cigarettes in my home and car while my kids were inhaling my second hand smoke. Research was showing that children of smokers were more likely to have chronic ear infections. Not only did I probably cause her chronic ear problems, but as a result she had a very limited diet and a lack of proper nutrients. It had been easier for me to let her eat grilled cheese sandwiches and KD than to learn how to provide her with what she really needed to flourish. Even though it was hard to hear, I listened to my sponsor. I bought a book on basics for vegetarians. I learned that beans and rice together make a complete protein. I started to experiment in my cooking with tofu and textured vegetable protein. I stopped smoking in the car and shortly after that, I quit smoking altogether.

One of my biggest regrets about my behaviour when I was "using", is that I exposed my children to second hand smoke and its toxins. This was a step 4 issue: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves". As a result of working the steps, I learned to take responsibility for my actions and behaviours. I was also able to make amends as it states in step 9: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others". My learning to cook for my vegetarian child was one of the ways I could make amends.

That was over 20 years ago and we have a lovely relationship. I am grateful for my program of recovery and all it has given me. My daughter is still a vegetarian and as a result I have developed many wonderful vegetarian recipes. Here is one of her favourites.



Asian Tofu Chilli

1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 tbsp finely chopped fresh ginger root
6 green onions, chopped
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 sweet red peppers seeded and diced

2 tsp hot asian chili paste (to taste)
2-3 tsp chili garlic sauce
1 package firm tofu diced
1 28 oz (796) can plum tomatoes, drained and pureed
1 can lentils
1 can lima beans
1 can black beans (if you want to you can sub in a different bean type)

Rinse and Drain the beans

2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp rice wine
1 tsp dark sesame oil
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro

1 heat vegetable oil in a large no stick skilled or wok on med heat. Add ginger, green onions and garlic cook for 30 sec or till fragrant. Add red peppers and chili paste, chilli garlic sauce and cook for a few minutes stirring occasionally.

2. Place the tofu between 2 plates, weight it down with a can of beans and remove excess liquid, then dice.

3. Add tomatoes and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer gently for 30 min or until mixture is quite thick and almost all juices have evaporated.

4. Stir in beans, soy sauce and rice wine. Cook for 10 min.

5. Stir in sesame oil and cilantro .Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.