

COOKING

with

HONEY

WHAT LITERARY LESBIANS EAT

Edited by Amy Scholder

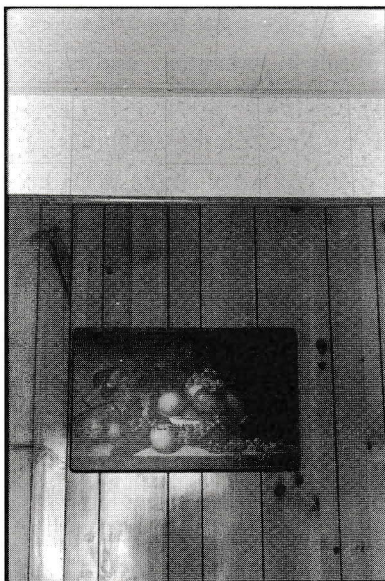
VEG OUT

by Cecilia Dougherty

While living in Los Angeles, I tried to make the most of what my so-called neighborhood had to offer. I frequently ate my main meal at the sushi diner down the street. I ate there so often, I was afraid they might get tired of me as a customer. I thought they talked about me behind my back because I always ate alone, and was always in a weird mood, but that was probably just paranoia. When I ate at home, I usually stood in front of the open refrigerator, picking at whatever could be eaten *sans préparation*. LA has some good health food stores though, and sometimes you can run into an old child actor, or someone you might recognize from one of your favorite Dario Argento films. I saw Brooke Adams, in fact, star of *Susperia*, and co-star with Donald Sutherland in the re-make of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, at a bulk feed and grain health food emporium just across from the Los Feliz Lucky Supermarket. She was frightfully thin.

After I moved to New York I got inspired to start eating right, to stop eating all my meals in restaurants, and to lose that bloated and nauseated feeling I had from all the prescription meds I take. Sound familiar? First, I cut down on the 2400 mgs. per day of Ibuprofen I was taking, and then got rid of all the sugar, salt, bread, pasta and cheese that were dominating my diet. Meat, fish, and birds went out of my diet twenty years ago, but if you still eat that way, my suggestion is to stop the meat immediately, continue with the fish, and do poultry once in a while. Then stop eating poultry, continue with the fish for a little while longer, and then finally stop eating fish altogether. This makes for a friendlier relationship with other sentient beings, a cleaner colon, and less collaboration in the destruction of Earth's ecosystems. This is researchable fact.

I replaced the sugar, pasta, cheese, etc., with fruits, veggies, and other foods. Red and white potatoes, long earthy yams, bright green broccoli, organic red ripe tomatoes, tangy dark green arugula, red onions, big sweet bananas, crunchy almonds, spicy persimmons, raisins and dates, brown rice, basmati rice, sticky sweet white rice, tofu, seaweed, tahini, garlic, hummus, moist sprouted rye "bread," tangy grapefruit and fragrant oranges, tiny red apples, ripe figs with pink centers, avocados, living sprouts, insanely satisfying New York State Concord grapes, and did I mention broccoli? I found out that broccoli and spinach each contain a protein that can wrap itself around a precancerous cell, seal it in like plastic, and carry it right out of your body. Not bad for common greens. And Concord grapes are completely satisfying, but avoid other types of grapes unless they're organic. The United Farm Workers are still trying to get the growers in California to



ease up on the pesticides that are giving farm-worker families leukemia and other forms of cancer. They still have a boycott in effect on California table grapes. Cesar Chavez was a vegetarian, too, which is very cool.

For two months I ate as much of the healthy food as I wanted, never went hungry, and lost ten pounds almost right away. I still drink all the coffee I want, by the way. And I have a glass of Remy Martin cognac, or Napa Valley wine, or a couple

Absolut Cape Cods every now and then. Almost every day, in fact, but that's another story. Don't deprive yourself. Think in terms of all the great food you get to eat, and an occasional vice like a drink at Wonderbar, or some excellent caffeine at Cafe Pick Me Up, won't screw you up too badly.

I heard some guy on WBAI Pacifica Radio talk about food. He said that your body knows what it wants, and if you have a craving, give in to it. Good advice, because in the months I've been eating this way, I'm rarely hungry for anything that's terrible for me, and I actually crave healthy food. When I walk past a bakery, even the fabulous Italian bakeries on First Avenue, I almost faint from the heavy scent of pure sugar that floats out of these places. It's

a sensory assault, basically. Once in a while, it might be important to eat a magnificent sugary confection, or a huge plate of pasta smothered in white sauce and pounds of melted cheese, or one of your favorite San Francisco-style Mexican dishes. But making a health food dinner is easy, and since you're not spending all your money in restaurants, you can afford to buy and eat whatever and as much as you like. Invest in some olive oil, balsamic or apple cider vinegar, and some soy sauce, too, if you don't have these things already.

DINNER

- 1.** Take about 4 red or white potatoes, cut them in quarters, cover them with filtered water, and boil them until soft. Put a tablespoon of hummus or baba ghanouj on each serving.
- 2.** Put 4 yams in the oven after pricking them with a fork a couple times, and bake at 350° until soft.
- 3.** Cut up 2 ripe avocados and 2 ripe tomatoes into bite-sized pieces. Sprinkle with a little soy sauce, a little balsamic vinegar, and crushed sesame seeds.
- 4.** Steam a bunch of broccoli until it turns bright green and a fork goes through the stalks easily. Pour on a little olive oil, squeeze on some lemon juice, and grind black pepper over it.

5. Get out the arugula and mix it with cooked corn, which you have scraped off the cob and cooled. Add raw red onion rings and black olives.

6. Marinate thin slices of tofu in soy sauce, vinegar, water, and spicy fresh red peppers for at least an hour. Put the slices in an oiled baking dish and cover. Put this in an oven heated to 300°, and bake it for about 20 minutes.

7. Cut up 8 or 10 large mushrooms. Cut up a yellow onion and a couple cloves of garlic. Heat the olive oil with oregano, basil, marjoram, thyme, and summer savory in a large frying pan, add the garlic and onions, and then add the mushrooms. Sauté (over high heat) until the mushrooms are cooked, slightly browned, but still firm.

8. This is enough food for at least 4 people. A veritable feast. Have some red wine with dinner, and a cup of rich black coffee afterwards. If you need dessert, try medjool dates, pitted and filled with cashew butter.

