

# Prison Vegetarian Project

This material is part of the Correspondence Course sponsored by Prison Vegetarian Project.

Please answer all of the questions below. *The response to each question should be 400 to 600 words – not more, and not less.* Write clearly – we strongly suggest you prepare your answers and write a draft before writing them out to send to us. You can mail your completed answers to us at:

P.V.P. – attn: Correspondence Course  
Cooper Station #57  
New York, NY 10276

*If we cannot read your answers, or if your material is not clearly organized and presented, it will be returned to you for you to revise and resubmit.*

Course participants who *fully, completely, correctly, and clearly* answer the questions will receive a Certificate of Completion along with our permission to teach this course on their own at prison facilities.

Good luck !!



- 1) There are three general reasons people give for being a vegetarian: (1) health, (2) ecology, and/or (3) ethics. Choose one or more of these reasons, and write about how it explains why you are a vegetarian.
- 2) Write about any two major health problems (like cancer, heart disease, diabetes...) and explain how a vegetarian diet can be either helpful or harmful in managing these diseases.
- 3) What are the nutritional elements (like vitamins, minerals, protein...) that vegetarians have to be careful to include in their diets? What foods can give each of these nutritional elements? *(Your answer for this one question can be shorter than 400 – 600 words.)*
- 4) Choose any two current environmental issues (like water shortages, climate change, preserving forests...). Explain how people can help or hurt these environmental issues by eating a vegetarian diet.
- 5) Please tell us about your beliefs – either your religious beliefs or, if you are not a member of a religion, tell us about your personal beliefs. Include in your answer how being a vegetarian either is or is not connected to your personal beliefs.
- 6) *Choose any religion that you are not a member of.* Tell us what religion you are choosing and explain why a member of this religion might decide to be a vegetarian for religious reasons.
- 7) Write about the unique problems that vegetarians in prison have. Write about problems from at least two of the categories mentioned in the first question ((1) health, (2) ecology, and/or (3) ethics).

MICHAEL  
TAKE YOUR  
TIME, ENJOY THE  
COURSE, AND GOOD  
LUCK

PS Please follow  
the directions. We  
only award certificates  
to people who really  
work hard at  
this.

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\*\*\* PRISON STANDARDIZED MENU FOR ~~8/19~~ TO ~~10/18~~ \*\*\*

↳ (11-14-11 to 11-20-11 ; Kosher Menu - week 1-3)

There are three (3) general reasons people give for being a vegetarian 1) Health 2) Ecology and/or 3) Ehtics. Choose one or more of these reasons and write about how it explains why you are a vegetarian.

Great health is one of the most major reasons people spend money, whether it be as a New Year's resolution in people joining the gym, buying vitamins or making a purchase from the most elaborately marketed item(s) of either of the above as seen on TV in the latest infomercial. To me, being a vegetarian is important because of health reasons as, "Meat is the single greatest source of fat in the American diet; and the excessive quantities of fat consumed are now widely credited with the epidemic of heart disease, cancer, obesity, diabetes and other problems in Western societies everywhere." (Footnote No. 1)

On certain days, being a vegetarian is much more difficult than on others. The Prison 'diet' of beans, peanut butter and the daily repeated combination seems to be more redundant each time. I do however feel better and lighter without feeling physically burdened; instead I have a new found buoyancy and am more energetic. There is a noticable change in my spirit and focus level. My mental well-being seems more goal oriented; to be mentally free is a great attribute- especially in prison.

When I 'lapse' however and turn into a carnivore, I feel heavier and my bowel movements are not as smooth. Further, it feels as though my energy is low and I'm more tired and feeling drained and overwhelmed. On an additional note, I am of East-Indian Ethnicity; my Mom is Hindu and my Dad is Sikh. At a younger age, I did not realize how blessed my culture makes me; as I have matured, I now realize that the wisdom of my culture in practicing Vegetinarianism leads to the sense of lightness that people say they achieve when they meditate or pray. This, I guess is where the maturity part sets in because at a younger age, I like many others do not realize what I have or had. Now, I know I must take care of myself, especially in prison, where bad diet produces bad health. Further, if one is in bad health in prison, the medical system makes you worse with 'bad' medications that slow you down and make you gain weight-inhibiting your ability to exercise and to maintain good health even more.

The world and it's animals-of all colors, shapes and sizes- are all God's gift to us and each other; to keep them alive-is to respect and honor that which he has and continues to give us and we also recognize the wisdom we have been blessed with in our lives. Everyday, more and more pollutants are contaminating the Earth; the huge B.P. Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico is the prime example that even sea food is not safe and clean or even a decent alternate. Pollution is everywhere, dirtying the land, additives in animals is fattening the Western world while the rest starve. Only shows like The Biggest Loser and Dr. Oz are teaching what is right and how to maintain proper health and nutrition-so one can live a healthful, long, religious and properly sustained life (as most people who live longer are vegetarians.

Write about any two (2) major health problems (like Cancer, Heart Disease and Diabetes) and explain how a vegetarian diet can be either helpful or harmful in managing these diseases.

"These three items--too much fat, too much protein, and not enough fiber - are critical in any discussion of degenerative diseases today." (pg. 54) "Cardiovascular diseases - diseases affecting the circulatory system are the leading cause of death in the United States today..." (pg. 56) "Cancer is rivaled only by heart disease as a cause of death in the Western countries." (pg. 65)

Cardiovascular disease finds its strength from arteriosclerosis which, "hardens" the arteries. The walls of arteries harden after its walls collect 'deposits' in the form of cholesterol and fats. Over time, these collected deposits then form or result in a 'blockade-effect' ultimately forming a clot. This clot slows blood passage to the point that important tissues and organs do not receive the amount of blood to make them operate properly and efficiently, thus 'starving' for blood. This process is the 'prelude' in the journey which results in a heart attack or stroke.

"Cholesterol is also found in all animal foods...As arteriosclerotic lesions get worse and worse, they accumulate fat and cholesterol; and the worse they get, the higher the percent of cholesterol in them." (pg. 59) It is also true that chicken and fish contain about twice as much cholesterol per calorie as beef." (pg. 60)

"Cancer is rivaled only by heart disease as a cause of death in the Western Countries." (pg. 65) "Dietary factors are by far the most important of all the dietary factors associated with the many different forms of cancer... None of the risk factors for Cancer is probably more significant than diet and nutrition." (pg. 65) Cancer is a malignant tumor which is defined as a group of cells which grows mutually exclusive from the rest of the body. Benign refers to a 'stagnant' tumor which stays in place. "Metastasis is when some of the malignant tumor becomes detached from the main 'mass' of the tumor and is carried off to a distant part of the body." (pg.66)

Diet in Cardiovascular disease: the most discussed dilemma is that of cholesterol and fat, "cholesterol-lipoproteins (LDL) is the problem in most heart disease" and "the greater the concentrations of serum cholesterol in the diet, the greater the extent of arteriosclerosis." (pg. 59)  
The simple solution is to cut out all LDL cholesterol, keeping the HDL and cut out as much fat as possible ie. a vegetarian diet heavy with leafy greens. The next issue is the great abundance of protein and lack of vitamin B-6. The resolve on this matter is said to best be found in cutting the meat protein and select and consume food with high H-values (ie. fruits and vegetables) with the descriptive chart on (pg. 61, table 8) "H-values of Some Common Foods"  
The H-value is the ratio of vitamin B-6 to methionine found in the food, times 1000.

The third issue is High Blood Pressure, where the choice of not cutting salt, but cutting meat as, "Studies of vegetarians have shown that vegetarians have lower blood pressure than the meat eating population, and that this is unrelated to their salt consumption." (pg. 61)

Diet in Cancer: to resolve the problem of a steadily increasing caloric intake, one must turn to the solution, which is, "Restriction of caloric intake inhibits the incidence of tumors." (Pg. 68)

The second point of discussion is that, "Obese humans have a much greater chance of getting or dying from Cancer than nonobese humans." (Pg. 68) Another issue is that of protein as, "High protein diets increase likelihood of tumors and that they will be malignant." (pg. 68); to put this issue in its proper course of correction, all one must do is simply-greatly reduce the protein consumption.

As with the issue of fat in Cardiovascular disease, fat is a crucial issue here, as "Laboratory animals on high-fat diets have a greater risk of developing several types of Cancers." (Pg. 69) The remedy here is, just like with Heart Disease, to cut fat.

Another point of illumination is one which encompasses the issue of smoking; that is that a diet which is inclusive of the combination of meat and smoking is seven (7) times more dangerous as shown, "Smokers with high serum levels of cholesterol suffer lung cancer seven (7) times more frequently than smokers with low serum levels." (Pg.69) One would think that from reading this, the true culprit is smoking; although it's very dangerous to smoke, the key to high serum levels in cholesterol is the meat; therefore to combat the high levels, one must cut meat from diet. By the way, cutting smoking will also help you live longer.

What are the nutritional elements (like vitamins, minerals, protein) that vegetarians have to be careful to include in their diets? What foods can give each of these nutritional elements?

Protein: there is an assumption that I had once held myself—that is that their is not enough protein in a vegetarian diet; this could not be farther from the truth as a diet would be short of calories before it is short of protein the the vegetarian world. Protein is very easy to get, as a matter of fact you can, unless famished, get enough protein, "Through a careless selection of foods, one might develop deficiencies of iron, vitamin A, or vitamin C; but it's almost impossible to develop a protein deficiency on a calorically adequate diet... There is nothing inferior about either the quality or quantity of plant protein." (Pg. 24)

"1 gram of protein = 4 calories, 1 gram of fat = 9 calories, 1 gram of carbohydrate = 4 calories; Example: a 100 gram potatoes contains 76 calories and 2.1 grams of protein." "2.1 grams of protein represent 8.4 calories (since each gram of protein contains 4 calories); and by dividing 8.4 by 76, we discover that 11% of the calories in the potatoe are protein." "...that corn has 15% of it's calories in the form of protein, that broccoli has 45%, that carrots have 10% etc." (Pg.25) This just goes to show that previous misconceptions are false when it comes to the protein value of foods; instead of protein lacking, it's the 'right' amount as opposed to 'too much' which has caused other issues"ie.. osteoporosis.

"The body does not need just any kind of protein, it needs specific amino acids. Most of the 22 amino acids required for protein synthesis can be manufactured by the body. Eight cannot; these eight "essential amino acids" must be supplied by the diet. If even one of these amino acids is absent, protein cannot be synthesized and the other seven essential amino acids go to waste." (Pg. 27-28) "Corn and wheat have been shown to be adequate sources of protein." (Pg. 29) "When rice was used as the sole source of protein, the rice protein alone maintained nitrogen balance, even when rice provided only 2/3 of the required daily calories." (Pg. 29) In fact, "Potatoe protein is just as good as egg protein, and in fact is better than beef protein or the protein of tuna fish." (pg. 29) "Virtually all vegetables, lengumes, grains, nuts and seeds contain more than enough protein to sustain the growth and maintainance of body tissues." (Pg. 29)

Vitamin B-12: is the most commonly discussed after protein because it is, "erroneously believed that vitamin B-12 can only be obtained from animal foods." "Commercial laboratories often use the bacteria to produce vitamin B-12 to use in their vitamin tablets." (Pg. 34) No problems arise with Lacto-Ovo-Vegetarians as, "dairy products and eggs are generous suppliers of vitamin B-12." (pg. 34) Vegans do have issues (as numerous as they are, we'll only discuss B-12) however, "The primary cause of vitamin B-12 deficiency is due to it's inability to absorb the vitamin, as in the case of pernicious anemia." (Pg. 34) One need not worry, as plenty of non-animal sources exist for vitamin B-12, "1) environmental contamination, 2) from various plant foods: roots and stems of tomatoes, cabbage, celery, kale, broccoli and leeks, 3) bacterial synthesis within the body: the source of B-12 is bacterial growth in the mouth, around the teeth and gums, 4) Vitamin supplementation or fortification: when such a supplementation is added to foods such as soymilk, breakfast cereal, nutritional yeast, etc., then we have a genuine source of vitamin B-12. Multivitamin supplements may have problems because some other vitamins will interact with the B-12 and degrade it over time, changing it so it's no longer B-12" (Pg. 37) The best remedy is to simply purchase and take vitamin B-12 as a single supplement.

So as you can see, there is really no concern when it comes to either protein or Vitamin B-12, as plenty of righteous and solid sources exist to assist one in their endeavor of a vegetarian diet.

As far as any other concerns, "There are not as many controversies surrounding the many other nutrients necessary for human health." (Pg. 39) "A large number of vegetables are excellent sources of vitamins and minerals, and if you consume a good selection of these foods, you will have little difficulty in getting all of the necessary vitamins and minerals." (pg. 42)

"So good rule(s) for nutrition of vegetarians is to get a variety of vegetables, especially fresh vegetables. And some of the best nutritionally speaking, are the dark green leafy vegetables, kale, collards, broccoli, turnip greens, spinach, parsley, and watercress. Calorie for calorie, dark leafy vegetables provide - more calcium than milk, more iron than beef, about as much vitamin A as carrots, more vitamin C oranges, generous quantities of vitamin B-1 (thiamine), vitamin B-2 (riboflavin), vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine), folacin, zinc, magnesium, panthothenic acid, niacin, and various other minor nutrients too numerous to mention." (Pg. 45)

One variation that may be different is when it comes to expectant Mothers and/or infants which makes the requirement for iron a little more. For infants breast-milk is the best and for pregnant mothers they need several times more iron. Vitamin D can be obtained by sunlight. So as one can see, smart choices can easily make up for any 'perceived' shortcomings, even though they may not even exist. In short, enjoy being a vegetarian and eat alot of leafy greens and you'll be fine.

Choose any two current environmental issues (like water shortages, climate change, preserving forests...) Explain how people can help or hurt these environmental issues by eating a vegetarian diet.

The weight of a meaty diet goes to more than just our own waistlines; It extends to the environmental arena as well. Eating meat hurts our health as well as our environment. By converting to a vegetarian diet, we can 'save' the planet and its resources for many future generations to come. "Forests are a critical natural resource. In the developing world, over 80% of the people rely on wood for energy, and the use of wood as fuel is increasing steadily." Further, "The demand for cattle grazing land remains the primary enemy of forest land in many parts of the world today, especially in North and South America. Forests are being reduced not only by agriculture, but by greed, carelessness, and economic necessity." This clearly shows that use is consumed by more greed than anything; the greed to do more, have more and be more: "keeping up with the Jones is costing us the planet."

"Forests affect climate in a number of ways. Several observations suggests that forests are a factor in increasing precipitation. Rainfall on a forested area in Tennessee was significantly greater than that of a nearby area which had been denuded of vegetation by smelter fumes, even after the wind variability had been taken into account." This clearly shows the effect of forests and their effect on the climates of the local area." (Pg 96)

Forest also influence the oxygen / carbon dioxide in the air. For example, we as humans breathe in air and breathe out carbon dioxide; oppositely, trees breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. The more trees we eliminate by greed and / or carelessness, the more our short and long term health will suffer, "If present trends continue, the global temperature could rise by 5 to 7 degrees Fahrenheit in the temperate zones by the middle of the next century." (Pg 97) As the world heats up, the rise in world wide temperatures will ultimate cause melting of the worlds ice caps and glaciers, which will in effect raise the level of water, resulting in flooding of low level areas. e. imagine how weak Hurricane Katrina would've been if the oceans would've been lower water levels. The importance of trees can't be stressed enough as, "Trees incorporate 10-20 times as much carbon per unit area as crops or pasture. The amount of carbon released into the atmosphere annually has been calculated between 1.8 and 4.7 gigatons - 80% of this due to deforestation." (Pg. 97)

As the world grows in population exponentially, the use of raw materials will be consumed even quicker. For example, "In 1900, there were about 509 million acres of non federal forest land in the U.S., but by 1950 this land declines to 420 million acres, and in 1975 it had declined to a further 376 million acres." (pg. 97) If no other numbers startle one to reality, this can clearly awaken the environmental giant that we all have within us; we are literally eating the world of forests quicker than we are livestock. "Before 1970, the U.S. was a net exporter of wood; but since then it has become a net importer, with trade deficit in wood reaching several billiondollars per year by the late 1970's. "The Global 2000 Report" estimated that by the year 2020 - if deforestation continues at it's present rate - virtually all of the physically accessible forests in the less developed countries will have been cut." (Pg. 97)

We are consuming so much, so quick, that we might as well cut to the chase and just BBQ wood and eat it - as we are indirectly doing right now at an alarming rate anyway.



The world is known to be 2/3 water; we are known to be over 90% water. So with these popular stats, why aren't we more careful with our water usage? It's very important to know, "Water may well be the most vulnerable resource affected by modern agriculture. The problem with water isn't so much that there's not enough of it, but that there isn't enough of the right kind, in the right place, at the right time." (Pg 101) We have what we need but we need to have it when it's most required.

"If the U.S. were to adopt a vegetarian economy, irrigated agriculture would become completely unnecessary, thus solving one of the greatest problems of the American West." (Pg 101) Basically, this would be the best chunk taken out of really unneeded and wasteful usage. "It has been estimated that 80% of the total water requirements for the average daily food intake in the U.S. goes for animal products (meat, milk, etc.) with 11% going for fats & oils, and only 9% for plant food products. A pound of wheat contains more calories than a pound of beef; but the beef requires from 40-50 times more water." (Pg 101) It is akin, to spending 1,000 dollars just to save \$100.00.

"Agriculture is the most widespread cause of nonpoint source pollution", according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Livestock agriculture can pollute water in two ways: through livestock wastes and through the wastes produced by slaughterhouses." While they are a combined pair of disastrous pollution, "Slaughterhouses can be a significant local problem, but in aggregate they produce only about 1% of the water pollution that livestock wastes do.... Livestock agriculture is responsible for virtually all of the water availability problems in the U.S. It is responsible, as well, for a hefty percentage of the water pollution problems. An agricultural economy stressing meat is going to be vastly less efficient with water supplies than a vegetarian economy." (Pg. 111)

The two most prominent and key issues as we turn through time, in regards to resources and consumption, is the forests and water. As you can see, misuse and greed has led to a quickened pace of wasted elements that must soon stop; if not then in the future, we will not be afforded the chance to change from meat to vegetarian. Right now Mother Nature is imploring us to 'change our ways', for if we don't the misuse and eventual usage and resources: water and forests combined with the hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and other natural disasters will lead to the near extinction of our human race. (if not complete extinction).

Please tell us about your beliefs - either your religious beliefs or, if you are not a member of a religion, tell us about your personal beliefs. Include in your answer how being a vegetarian either is or is not connected to your personal beliefs.

I was born East Indian, One parent, Mom is Hindu, and my Father is Sikh; I very gladly accept both. Being a vegetarian is very connected to Hindu belief system and cultural, and religious practices. One huge difference - is than for East Indians our religion is not simply going to church one day a week. There is a prayer alter within the house where puja - prayer is done. Being a vegetarian is an everyday part of the ritual. For the Hindu who does eat meat, beef is the true no no; for the Sikh, pork is the forbidden meat. Hindu is a polyisyc religion while Sikhism is a hybrid-believing in reincarnation, while accepting the Islam belief of one God.

"According to the Hindu doctrine, animals as well as human beings have souls. Hindus worship some Gods in the forms of animals." (World Book, letter H, No.9, Pg. 236)

I believe in reincarnation: which is the continuous process of being reborn and I also believe in karma: how each action has influence over how the soul will be born in the process of reincarnation. I believe that each of the Hindu Gods is a different incarnation / manifestation of God at a different time. To take this belief further, I believe that just as each culture has it's own language to communicate with each other, each culture has it's own religion to communicate with God. I believe that all different names that God is called by - is really a different name for the same God; that they are all the different pieces to the same puzzle of life, humanity and all of the creations.

Further, after reading this book and learning things that I did not know before such as, "Crowding is the worst problem. Indeed it is the main cause of the high mortality rate among many factory farm animals...Chickens are probably the most abused animals...and have no more space than a sheet of notebook paper to stand on. This inevitably leads to feather-pecking and cannibalism - the chickens attack and even eat each other. The manufacturer's response to this is debeaking- cutting off most or all of the chickens beak. Of course, this causes severe pain in the chickens beak. A similar problem arises when pigs are kept in confinement systems. Pigs, under the stress of the factory farm system, bite eat other's tails. The solution, of course, is tail-docking, whereby the tail is largely removed." (Pg. 144-145)

Prior to prison, I abstained only from beef and pork. After my incarceration I started eating 'just beans' which definitely did not last long, then for years, 'just to survive' I ate that the state provided. Since making the transfer to vegetarianism, as of August 11th, 2010, while working on this project, I have been feeling really great. My energy and focus and even spiritually is at a higher level, I feel well.

In sum, I am a proud vegetarian whose embracement of this has really made me glad to simultaneously embrace an aspect of my culture and religion that I had never embraced before. I have read the Bhagavad Gita a few times and really look forward to doing it as a vegetarian, as I definitely know that I will 'absorb' more of what it has to offer.

Choose any religion that you are not a member of; Tell us what religion you are choosing and explain why a member of this religion might decide to be a vegetarian for religious reasons.

The religion I am choosing for this essay question is: Jainism. As discussed in the book, there are many religions in Indian: Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism and Islam. Each religion is part of a very rich tradition which sprang up a different times. "The Jain religion came into existence at about the same time Buddhism did - around the sixth century B.C. Jainism shares several ideas with Hinduism and Buddhism; it accepts the ideas of reincarnation, karma and nonviolence." (Pg. 158) In essence, it is a branch of the tree of Indian history that has grown and continues to this very day.

"The idea of **ahimsa**, or nonviolence, is heavily stressed by the Jains, and it has far reaching implications. Forbidden to the Jain are meat, alcohol, honey, or any kind of five kinds of figs. Vegetarians will be pleased, then, to find that there is at least one major religion which unequivocally enjoins vegetarianism for all of its adherents. Their vegetarianism does not arise so much from the discovery that animals are worthwhile beings worthy of respect as from the necessity of purifying the soul of its attachments to matter." (Pg. 159)

There is borderline issues with respect to eating meat in Jainism; you simply are not permitted to do so if you choose to be a follower of this Indian religion as this is the key pillar.

"This is not to say that they would not make an issue of kindness to animals; undoubtedly they would. But the ultimate object is denial of the body and purification of the soul, as a necessary step to win the soul's release from matter." (pg. 159)

The main point of communication at this juncture is attachment to 'things' and having the discipline to break free from the cycle of what Western society has conditioned us to believe is correct or acceptable.

"Probably the Jains, or groups like them, are what Buddha had in mind when he rejected asceticism." (Pg. 160) Now we come to ~~wonder~~, what is asceticism. It is defined as: **asceticism**: a person who renounces the comforts of society and leads a life of austere self-discipline, esp. as an act of religious devotion"-taken from, (American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd Edition, College, Pg. 132)

"Vegetarianism is a very strong force in all three of these religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism). Certainly there are more vegetarians among the ranks of Hindus, Buddhists or Jains than there are among any religion of the West." (Pg. 160)

History, tradition and culture have most definitely helped to shape these schools of thought in regards to vegetarianism; this demonstrates that history is a great teacher of some of what we should be following today.

Write about the unique problems that vegetarians in prison have. Write about problems from at least two of the categories mentioned in the first question: (1) Health, (2) ecology and/or (3) ethics )

When it comes to dietary matters, for most, it simply comes down to health or their religion. The main difficulty as a vegetarian is to break the redundancy of the basically 'same three meals a day'. The vegetarian diet offers three main choices that are repeated i) beans, ii) cheese, iii) peanut dinner and that's just the dinner. To officially become a vegetarian, you must go to the chapel and request a vegetarian diet, where upon you are 'issued' a card stating that you are vegetarian. Upon arriving to the chowhall during mealtime, you present the card at the window. Mainly, the vegetarian is served the very same meal as the non-vegetarian except, that the meat item is simply replaced with beans, peanut butter or cheese with a small scoop of rice.

Vegetarians get less food than the general meat tray; therefore it is better to strategically receive a 'regular' meat tray and then 'trade' the meat item for the / a non-meat item. For example, during evening meals (hot dogs, burger, or chicken patty) simply trade that item for the beans, or salad or vegetables on the tray. This way you, the vegetarian, end up getting more food, as most people who are carnivores, happily pursue meat (as I used to) and ignore the salads, some vegetables and beans. This way you make a better meal for yourself and you 'barter' a better way of getting full on a limited supply of food.

The budget also plays a role in what we are fed. For example the Kosher and Halal meals for Jewish and Muslims, respectively, are also considered 'special diets' and the cost of these meals ends up reducing the 'pool' of money spent on the food purchased for the rest of the non-specialty diet inmates.

For lunch, instead of the daily 'lunch meat' it is replaced with peanut butter and a slice of cheese. It is very hard to recommend any type of change to the prison vegetarian diet program, as the state is currently in a budget crisis, and getting the most food for the fewest dollars is the objective as the state has over 175,000 inmates. In regards to fruits, mostly it's apples, sometimes bananas or plums and on the rare occasion the almighty cantalope; vegetables in order of frequency, mixed vegetables, carrots and peas, corn peas, green 'string beans'; as far as beans, again in order of frequency; baked beans, pinto beans, blackeye peas.

Ecologically, water is a limited resource. Currently, there are shower meters here, where one is limited to only a five minute shower; also toilets have flush-o-meters which limit the flushes to three for every fifteen minutes. Both of these measures limit the wastewater that is put out by this institution. Prior to the implementation of the two items, the water in the community surrounding the prison was being polluted by the wastewater. This has solved the problems for all involved; but this does illuminate the ecology issue with water a truly precious element.

The one unintended benefit of being vegetarian is the support of those who eat with me during chowtime. Most of the time, once people know that I am a vegetarian, they gladly offer their beans, vegetables, or bread (whatever they are not or will not eat) during that particular meal. It is definitely appreciated and I let them know I appreciate their courtesy and for those who consistently assist me, I usually give them the 'favorites' of dinner, i.e. the occasion ice cream, or 'good cake'.

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