



■ Exploring Toronto's Vegetarian Palate ■

by Jaelene M. Mannerfeldt

Toronto is a city with a distinctive vegetarian appetite. With forty vegetarian restaurants and forty more with significant vegetarian options, Toronto offers much for which the vegetarian tourist can be thankful. Ethnic neighborhood restaurants demonstrate that vegetarianism is an international diet. Indian, Greek, Vietnamese, and Thai restaurants provide delicious choices. Little Italy, the Kensington Market, and the five Chinatowns in the city offer other options.

Adventists are not the only vegetarians who will visit the city this summer. Right after the General Conference session ends on July 8, the World Vegetarian Congress arrives for its meetings from July 10 to 16.

Both groups have chosen a city that is clearly pro-vegetarian. In May 1998, the *Toronto Star* ran a full-page debate on the issue of vegetarianism. The phone-in poll that followed received calls from 1,300 readers who were pro-vegetarian, in comparison to 892 who favored meat in their diet.

The Toronto Vegetarian Association's website <www.veg.on.ca> provides a virtual tour of the city's vegetarian restaurants. The association also publishes the *Toronto Area Vegetarian Directory*, which lists a wide variety of natural food stores, as well as restaurants that have exclusive vegetarian menus and those that offer vegetarian options.

Of restaurants that are exclusively vegetarian, I recommend Le Commensal, 655 Bay Street (entrance off of Elm street). Upon entering, you will immediately see a buffet of familiar and exotic vegetarian choices.

Food is sold by weight, but for less than ten dollars, including dessert, you can easily satisfy your hunger. The atmosphere is friendly and groups are easily accommodated.

For a dining experience quite different, try the Marche, 42 Front Street, located in the BCE Building beside the Hockey Hall of Fame. This is the flagship restaurant of Switzerland's Movenpick group and promises something for every taste. As you enter this restaurant, which can accommodate groups of one to many, your host will give you a brief tour of various eating stations. Marche is not exclusively vegetarian, but the choices for vegetarians are numerous.

You are free to roam and collect food from any station after finding your seat. Just remember to keep your ticket, otherwise, you may find yourself washing dishes to pay for your food. If you don't like washing dishes, the option is to pay \$100 for the lost ticket.

Another option in Toronto is to pick up food for a picnic and head by ferry to the Toronto Islands for an afternoon in the Toronto Harbor. You can find many quiet places to relax, enjoy your picnic, and view the Toronto skyline from a distance.

No dining experience in Toronto is complete without a trip to the various ethnic restaurants. This is the only way to explore the multitude of cosmopolitan flavors available.

I always return to Indian Flavour, 595 Bay Street (in the Atrium on Bay, at the corner of Bay and Dundas, just north of the Eaton's Centre) for at least one meal when dining in Toronto. The vegetarian lunch buffet is an excellent value at about ten dollars, with the dinner buffet ringing in at around fifteen dollars. Here you will find a variety of Indian foods that are tasty, varied, and moderately spiced.

If you enjoy Asian food, most Thai restaurants have vegetarian curries. One Thai restaurant, which I have often visited, is the Salad King Restaurant, 335 Yonge Street, across from Ryerson Polytechnic University. Salad King offers a meal that you can acquire for less than ten dollars. The vegetarian choices are tasty and satisfying.

For the adventurous, Toronto's Greektown on the Danforth is home to restaurants with traditional and nouveau Greek cuisine. Enjoy a traditional Greek salad at a sidewalk table or explore other gourmet offerings at Myth, 417 Danforth Avenue. In my experience, anything I've tried on the Davenport has proven satisfying and left me wanting to return. I find myself coming back to this part of Toronto not only for the food, but also for the cultural experience.

If you want to explore the area around the University of Toronto, I would recommend walking west of University Avenue on College Street. On the south side, there are a number of quick lunch spots that offer vegetarian burgers or falafels. When you reach Spadina Avenue, turn north toward Bloor Street. Tucked into a little corner at 673 Spadina Avenue is Café Elise. The chef here offers a daily change of menu items, including various vegetarian options with a European twist.

During your walks around Toronto you will notice the multitude of sidewalk hotdog vendors. These barbecue grills on wheels offer vegetarian hotdogs with condiments. Some vendors carry more than ten toppings, and you can judge the quality of the stand by the assortment. For a quick lunch distinctively Toronto in flavor, try one of these hotdogs. The vendors will also provide you with a beverage and chips to finish your meal.

Vegetarian Toronto leaves you salivating with pleasant memories.

Jaelene Mannerfeldt attended Andrews University and has an M.D. from the University of Calgary. She is completing a residency in OB-GYN, and lives on an acreage with her husband, two children, and the requisite horse, dog, and cats.

Web Sites to Visit

Toronto Vegetarian Association

www.veg.on.ca

An extensive listing of Toronto's vegetarian restaurants highlights this site, along with links to other veggie sites worldwide.

Tourism Toronto

www.torontotourism.com

Discover things to see and places to eat, stay, and meet in Toronto and check out Toronto's daily weather forecast.

City of Toronto

www.city.toronto.on.ca

The official municipal government site features interactive maps of Toronto, a virtual tour of the Toronto Music Garden, and a guide to summer recreation.

All You Need to Know About Toronto

www.toronto.com

Check out a live traffic map or send virtual Toronto postcards from this site, which is a partnership of Canada's largest newspaper, the *Toronto Star*.

General Conference 2000

www.adventist.org/gc2000

On the official G.C. site find a schedule of meetings and satellite uplink broadcasts, as well as transportation, lodging, and dining information relevant to the G.C. session.