

Vegan food centre stage at Shores community event

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There was no shortage of food at Taking Root, the annual community event held by Shores.

"We're a grassroots group dedicated to promoting the values of sustainability that are inherent in Judaism," said Sabrina Malach, Shores's director of community engagement.

The food was centre stage as people mingled and fussed on a variety of vegan dishes provided by the 20 food and beverage sponsors of Snack and Schmooze.

In at what could be called a giant vegan cocktail party, craft beer and kosher ice-wine flowed, but alcohol-free beverages like kombucha and assorted cold-pressed probiotic shots were also on tap.

People feasted on hummus, pea soup, pickles, pasta salad, baked tofu, mushroom dumplings, cashew-based cream cheese, black-bean sliders and vegetarian sushi. There were also sweet and savoury snack items like nachos, kale

chips, chick-pea trail mix, pink-salt popcorn, macaroons, chocolate, cookies and cupcakes.

Many of these vegan dishes were also nut-, soy- and gluten-free

Malach stressed that a plant-based diet is good for the environment. "What we choose to eat can have a huge impact on the health of the planet."

She pointed out that even the traditional foods consumed on holidays are in sync with the seasonal produce grown in eastern Europe, North Africa and Israel. At Rosh Hashanah, honey and apples, the traditional holiday foods, coincide with the fall harvest.

She said Ashkenazim eat latkes at Chanukah because potatoes, onions and apples (for apple sauce) are foods that can be stored and were available during the winter in eastern Europe, where many Ashkenazim trace their roots.

The following vegan recipes were selected from several local kosher cookbooks: Chickpea Stew, comes from Ami Stopnicki's first book, *Kosher Taste: Plan,*

Prepare, Plate (Feldheim Publishers, NY, 2016); Ena Segall contributed her Scalloped Eggplant recipe to *A Tam to Remember: Recipes and Recollections from the Terraces of Baycrest*, (Toronto 2015), edited by Norene Gillet; and Vegetable Barley Salad can be found in Daniella Silver's *Silver Platter: Simple Elegance* (ArtScroll, NY, 2016); ■



Scalloped Eggplant

- 2 to 3 tbsp. margarine
- 2 tbsp. chopped green pepper
- 2 tbsp. chopped onion
- 1 medium eggplant, peeled and cut into small pieces
- 2 cups chopped fresh tomatoes (or canned tomatoes, drained and cut up)
- salt, pepper, basil and oregano to taste

Topping

- 3/4 cup bread cubes or croutons
- 1 tbsp. melted pareve margarine

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 7 x 11-in. baking dish or spray with nonstick spray.

In a large skillet, melt margarine until sizzling. Sauté green pepper, onion and eggplant 8 to 10 minutes, until tender and golden. Add tomatoes and seasonings and mix well. Cook 2 to 3 minutes longer.

Pour mixture into prepared baking dish. Top with bread cubes and drizzle with margarine. Bake uncovered 20-25 minutes, until golden. Makes 6 servings.

Vegetable Barley Salad

- 3 cups lightly salted water or vegetable broth
- 1 cup pearl barley, rinsed and drained
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and shredded
- 1 red bell pepper, halved and sliced
- 2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- 2 baby cucumbers sliced
- 2 cups shredded kale
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1 pint yellow cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- kosher salt
- freshly ground black pepper

In a covered saucepan, bring water to a boil. Add barley, simmer covered for 40 to 45 minutes. Transfer barley to a large serving bowl and cool completely. Add carrots, bell pepper, celery, cucumber, kale, basil and cherry tomatoes to the barley. Add oil, lemon zest and lemon juice to the salad. Toss to combine. Season salad generously with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate until serving time. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Chickpea Stew

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 Chinese eggplant, cubed
- 1/2 cup water, or more if needed
- 1 19-oz. can chickpeas, washed and drained
- 5 mini-potatoes, boiled and cubed
- 1/2 tsp. turmeric
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- 1 tsp. curry powder, or more to taste
- salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil to a medium-high temperature in a medium-large saucepan. Sauté onion until transparent. Add eggplant and water and cook for 6-8 minutes or until eggplant is soft, adding water if necessary. Add chickpeas and potatoes. Stir well. Add turmeric, cumin, curry, salt and pepper and combine. Stir mixture occasionally as it cooks on low heat, partially covered, for 10 to 15 minutes, or until mixture softens. Makes 4 to 6 servings.



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