



# A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

## Re-educate eating habits to cut food budget

While waiting in line at the grocery store last week, I began to talk with the woman in back of me. It was a familiar conversation.

Over loaded carts we discussed spiraling food prices and our inability to hold the line on grocery budgets. Each week the bill climbs higher despite the elimination of frills such as snack foods, pop, high-priced cuts of meat and convenience foods.

Although frustrated, we both expressed gratitude that we are not on fixed incomes or, worse, virtually no incomes, a situation faced by increasing numbers in our state as unemployment spreads.

As a wrap-up to the discussion, the woman expressed a common sentiment: Perhaps the only way to beat escalating food prices is to become a vegetarian.

Unfortunately, vegetarianism is not an inexpensive way to eat, either. Fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, cheese — all have kept pace with increasing meat prices. To put these items on the table can be as expensive as meat — or even more expensive.

IN EITHER case, however, it is possible to scale down. What is required is re-education and a change in comfortable eating patterns.

In the case of meat, this can mean learning to

cook "variety" cuts of meat. Chicken feet, pigs' ears, and tails, heart, liver, kidneys, brains, alligators, squirrels, rabbits — all can provide the nutritional equivalents of more common and, therefore more expensive, cuts of meat.

The problem goes beyond that of learning new cooking techniques. A bigger obstacle lies in overcoming the anthropomorphic aversion to eating these readily identifiable animal parts or to eating animals we think of as pets.

Even worse than eating recognizable body parts is the eating of unrecognizable cuts of meat. Imagination takes free rein. Just try asking any man to identify the source of a piece of meat with a suspiciously nondescript name. I can almost guarantee his answer.

THAT BRINGS US to the advantage of a similar shift for a vegetarian. Again, some re-education is needed, some changes in habit are required.

Sardines, high in protein and calcium, might replace higher-priced fish. Those unaccustomed to eating sardines (not a particular species of fish but a variety of tiny, soft-boned fish; in the United States small herring are used), might start out by trying the spread recipe given below from Prevention Magazine.

Prevention suggests that it be spread on slices of crisp, raw turnip or served as a dip — a healthy snack or an unusual addition to a platter of cold hors d'oeuvres. It also makes a nice change-of-pace sandwich filling.

Dried beans might take the place of cheeses or meat or supplement them. With the exception of kidney beans, there are at least no anthropomorphic associations.

### ZIPPY SARDINE SPREAD

- 1/2 cup mashed sardines
- 1 hard-cooked egg
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped onion
- 2 tsp. mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. prepared mustard

In a small bowl combine the sardines and the yolk of the egg. Mash together. Add the lemon juice and

chopped onion. Combine mayonnaise and mustard, mix well and add to the sardine mixture.

Spread the mixture on a small flat serving tray. Garnish with egg white forced through a sieve. Serve as a relish with salad greens or as a dip with vegetable sticks or whole-grain crackers.

### STUFFED PEPPERS

Serves 3

- 3 bell peppers
- 2 cups cooked soy flakes
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup canned stewed tomatoes, diced
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1/2 cup wheat germ
- Salt and pepper to taste

Scoop out the insides of the peppers. Combine remaining ingredients. Stuff the peppers and bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees on a rack above water.



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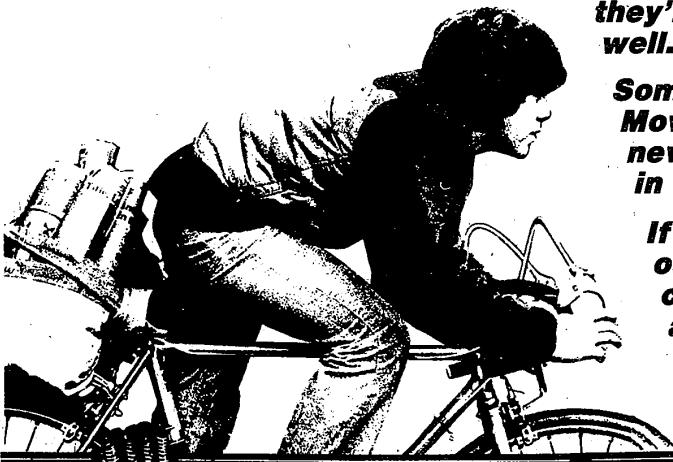
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