



SHARAN

Sanctuary for Health And Reconnection to Animals and Nature



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Special Feature: Global food shortages... what's the connection to health, animals and the environment?

The rising cost of food is making headlines across the world. In the space of one year, the cost of corn has risen by 31%, rice by 74%, soya by 87% and wheat by 130%! The effects are being felt in countries that import food who are experiencing shortages, while producing countries are restricting exports to protect their own stocks, further driving up prices.

Several reasons are given for this crisis: poor harvests resulting from extreme weather in exporting countries, rising demands in countries with growing populations and rising incomes, and the use of food crops for the production of biofuels. Other reasons include low food stockpiles and hoarding in fear of further price increases, a lack of long-term agricultural investment, low farm productivity and the use of unsustainable farming practices.

This is a good time for us to reconsider what we eat and how our food choices affect natural resources and the environment. Consider these facts:

To produce 1 kg of meat, it takes 10 kg of plant protein and 100,000 litres of water.

1 acre of land produces 113 kg of meat – or 4535 kg of green beans, 13,607 kg of carrots or 22,679kg of tomatoes.

The world's cattle consume a quantity of food equal to the caloric needs of 8.7 billion people – more than the entire human population on Earth.

Over 70% of the food grains produced in the US are consumed by cows and pigs for the production of meat.

7 billion livestock animals in the US consume 5 times more grain than the amount directly consumed by the American population. If the grain fed to livestock were directly consumed by people instead, the number of people who could be fed would be nearly 800 million.

When we take a closer look at these figures, we realise that eating more plant-based foods means a more efficient use of land, water and food resources, and as a result, more food for more people.

The current food crisis is good opportunity to think about how we can make a difference through our own food choices, and diversify our diets. This will make a difference not only to the environment but also to our own health, as a diet rich in plant-based foods is ideal.

What you can do

Eat more plant-based foods – go vegetarian, or better yet, [try vegan](#). Need some recipe ideas? Try the recipe below, or for other ideas, check the [recipes](#) on our website.

Eat food that was grown locally. If you buy food that was grown locally, it will be fresher and less energy will have been wasted for transportation and cold storage. Also, less packaging is required.

Buy organic whenever possible. You will be saving the resources and energy used in the production, packaging and transport of pesticides and fertilizers which are used in conventional farming methods. Organic food also tastes better and offers more health benefits.



Fact or Fiction?

Meat is the best source of protein. FICTION!

Though meat is high in protein, it is also high in unhealthy saturated fat. Luckily, meat is not the only source of protein: almost all plant foods contain protein. As long as we eat enough calories, a diet made up of a variety of plant foods can give us all the protein the body needs. Some good sources of protein from plant-based foods include whole grains, peas, beans, lentils, almonds, cashews, sesame seeds, tofu and other soya products. Carnivorous diets are often too high in protein. Excess protein consumption from meat has been linked to high cholesterol, kidney stones, heart disease and cancer.

Recipe

PAD THAI

This popular Thai dish is delicious and quick and easy to make!

Ingredients:

- 4 tbs. veg oil
- 2 tbs minced garlic
- 4 oz. Jasmine rice stir fry noodles immersed in boiling water for 2-4 minutes
- 1 tbs brown sugar
- 1 cup bean sprouts
- 3 tbs chopped peanuts
- 3-4 scallions, diagonally cut into 1" pieces
- Lime wedges and fresh coriander for garnish
- Chopped veggies



Heat oil in a large wok on high heat. Add the garlic and stir fry until light brown - do not burn. Add veggies and stir fry for 3-5 minutes.

Add noodles, separating them slightly with a fork to prevent sticking. Reduce heat and add sugar, stirring and tossing the noodles well to combine. Add bean sprouts and chopped peanuts and serve immediately with lime and coriander.

(Photo courtesy of Kin Ming Ho)

For other exciting recipe ideas, visit the [recipes page](#) on the SHARAN website!



Dr Nandita Shah's popular Peas vs. Pills workshops have inspired others to take responsibility for their own health by making lifestyle changes which have made positive differences to their health and well-being. For the past 3 years, she has presented workshops to over 750 participants in India, Ireland, Italy, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

7 Peas vs. Pills workshops were held at the Quiet Healing Centre in Auroville between December 2007 and April 2008, with 40-55 participants attending each workshop. 2 workshops were held in Bangalore, in November 2007 and March 2008, and due to positive feedback and high demand, a 3rd is in the planning stages. In May and June 2008, Peas vs Pills travelled to Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Switzerland.

Upcoming events:

Dr Nandita Shah has been invited to speak at the 38th IVU World Vegetarian Congress 2008 in Dresden, Germany taking place from 20th July to 2nd August.

The next Peas vs Pills workshops will be held in Calcutta, Bangalore and Mumbai in September 2008, and Chennai and Delhi in the near future.

For more information, visit the [events page](#) on the SHARAN website. if you're interested in hosting a workshop in your area or to keep informed of upcoming workshops and events, contact info@sharan-india.org.



What is SHARAN?

We are a non-profit organization with the goals of spreading holistic health awareness, and an ecologically sustainable compassionate lifestyle. We believe that all life on the planet is interconnected. By reconnecting we can heal ourselves and our earth.

Visit our website: <http://sharan-india.org>

Contact us: info@sharan-india.org

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