



A new school of thought

HSUS workshops bring plant-based meals to dining halls across the country

IT WAS SEPTEMBER 2005. I'd just begun college, and I was learning that the dining hall's vegetarian options were both minimal and in frequent rotation. I ate one dish—a lackluster take on pasta arrabiata—so often that even today, seeing the dish's name on a menu makes me a little queasy.

Had I been vegan at the time, the pickings might've been even slimmer. That's why I've always appreciated the Humane Society of the United States' work to expand plant-based options at schools, hospitals and dining facilities across the country—and around the world. And it's why I was excited to talk with Carl Lovett, vice president of culinary for Fresh Ideas, a food service company with more than 40 accounts—including quite a few colleges—in the United States. This year, Lovett's team set a first-of-its-kind goal in the food service industry: to roll out one plant-based dish for every animal-based dish they serve. To help meet this goal, Fresh Ideas launched a new line of 90 plant-based menu items, developed in collaboration with the HSUS culinary team.

Lovett joined forces with the HSUS after meeting our dining services team at a conference. He was



intrigued by the chance to develop new, healthy options that would add variety to his menus and help animals. Traditionally, he says, veg dishes at many dining halls were set off from the rest, available only in a specially labeled corner. The HSUS suggests a different approach: Offer flavorful plant-based selections in all dining stations (grab-and-go, salad bar, buffet) and make them enticing so they appeal to diners of all dietary persuasions. A recipe and development session with the HSUS gave Lovett and his chefs a chance to try some new recipes. The response was nothing but positive. A presentation at Fresh Ideas' annual conference, where employees sampled the dishes, sealed the deal. "It was just so good that no one was focusing on that it was vegan or vegetarian," says Lovett. "It was just good food."

As a chef, Lovett says he gets satisfaction from cooking for others and seeing them enjoy their meals. He also likes experimenting with plant-based meat alternatives such as jackfruit and playing with seasonings to create new flavor profiles. And although I can't help but wish that the chefs at my college had been similarly adventurous, I'm glad today's diners have tasty, animal-friendly options to try. —*Kelly L. Williams*

Braised jackfruit tacos

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup diced yellow onion
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 40 oz. jackfruit in brine (not syrup), drained, rinsed and chopped (available at many grocery stores, often shelved with the canned vegetables)
- ½ cup vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon chili powder (or to taste)
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ¾ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- 8 6-inch tortilla shells



Optional toppings:

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| Pico de gallo | Vegan sour cream |
| Shredded cabbage | Fresh cilantro |
| Sliced avocado | Lime zest |

1. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions and garlic and sauté for about 5 minutes, until the onions have softened and begun to brown.
2. Add the chopped jackfruit, broth, brown sugar and spices to the pan and cover. Reduce heat and let it simmer for about 5 minutes, until the jackfruit softens slightly and about half the liquid is absorbed.
3. Using a potato masher, smash the jackfruit to create a shredded texture. If it's soupy, cook it longer; if it's too dry, add a splash of vegetable broth.
4. Place jackfruit onto a sheet tray sprayed with vegetable oil and braise in an oven set to 350°F for 5-8 minutes, tossing occasionally.
5. Place a scoop of braised jackfruit into warmed tortilla shells and garnish with toppings of your choice.

Makes 8 tacos. Per taco (not including toppings): Calories: 156; fat: 5 g; protein: 4 g; carbohydrates: 24 g; sodium: 577 mg



Jackfruit is most commonly found in cans at your local grocery store.

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