

A Veggie Saga

Category: Eating

written by Esther Pottoore | December 6, 2021

When my then-16-year-old daughter announced that she was going vegetarian, I wasn't concerned, as we all liked veggies. And it would be a healthy diet. However, I soon realized there might be an issue—a fairly big one.

You see, not only was Annie giving up meat, fish, and eggs, but she was also lactose intolerant—which meant no milk, cheese, butter, or other dairy products either (she always forgot to take her Lactaid tablet and often had diarrhea). Moreover, her eating was sporadic, so she also suffered constant stomach pains and gastric reflux. She refused to eat the school lunches at her high school, so I had to make her lunch daily. Her lactose-free products could be bought only at Whole Foods and so I felt like I had a hole in my pocket (I thought of the store as “Hole” Foods!).

The next few years were eventful, as I learned to make hummus, kimchi, and all kinds of other vegan foods. It was tough being inventive, but I rose to the challenge—and Annie learned some cooking for the times when I was busy and she was hungry. Smoothies with soy milk to the rescue—and thank God for blueberries and pineapple!

Even so, her PCP reminded her at every appointment that she was underweight, deficient in vitamin D, and anemic. Constant arguments erupted at home, as we were concerned—but she was defiant and stuck to her guns.

Then came Thanksgiving of 2019.

I had cooked turkey, chicken, ribs, fish, and a host of other food. As the extended family sat around the table, Annie filled her plate with veggie *and* non-veggie food. She started eating calmly, as jaws dropped around her. My husband and I looked at each other in wonderment.

When we asked her what was up, she looked at us calmly and said she'd changed her mind.

That was the best Thanksgiving ever!

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