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FOOD

Eat it raw

Class makes Thanksgiving dinner with no oven



Alyssa Brown garnishes a "not turkey" nut loaf with cherry tomatoes. Angel Roy photo.

By Angel Roy
aroy@hippypress.com

On a recent Friday night, the kitchen in Alyssa Brown's Manchester apartment was filled with people working together to create a holiday meal. Each was given a task — grating carrots, chopping celery, peeling and chopping onions, running the food processor or washing dishes.

The only direction absent from the recipes was what temperature to set the oven to, which didn't make any difference because Brown's stove is unplugged and sits facing the wall next to her refrigerator.

She said she would put it outside if she could.

Brown's recipes call for dishes to be placed into a dehydrator, which is about the size of a standard microwave — there isn't one of those in Brown's kitchen either, because she lives a "rawdacious" lifestyle.

After she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at age 27, Brown said her whole world came crashing down and she decided to take a leave of absence from her job as a social worker in Vermont. When a doctor mentioned a diet that had been successful for others suffering from the disease, Brown, still angry about her diagnosis, refused to look into it once she found it would prohibit her from eating cheese. Six months later, the doctor's words resounded in her head and she started researching the diet. Brown fasted for a few days, then gave her diet a complete overhaul, stopped smoking and stopped drinking cold turkey. She cut out processed foods, sugars, dairy and red meat but continued to eat chicken and fish.

"It was a process of really listening to my body," Brown said.

Brown has since earned her Raw Food Chef Certification from the Sunfired Culinary

nary Institute and now works as a raw foods educator and chef, helping others make the transition.

"I'm not saying any diet is perfect for everyone; this works for me and my body," Brown said. "I love it and want to teach people how to have it at any level in their diet."

Now, Brown said, all signs of multiple sclerosis (blindness, numbness in her limbs, exhaustion) and other symptoms that later made doctors question whether she had a pituitary gland tumor are gone.

"I don't believe in medicine anymore.... People should obviously talk to their doctors about it before they try it, but it was an amazing experience for me," Brown said. "I felt such a high level of clarity and well-being."

Raw-food diets, Brown said, have been shown to help with many ailments including diabetes, asthma and mental health issues.

"But even if someone has no health problems now — who would say that they don't want to be healthier?" Brown said.

In early May, Brown began conducting two or three "Rawdacious Living" programs a month, offering courses with names such as "Raw Foods 101" and "Healing with Raw Foods." She also runs a free "Raw Friends" support group to discuss healthy living at the Millyard Hub in Manchester. She would like to open her own raw foods café or restaurant.

Brown's most recent class, "Rawkin' the Holidays," brought four foodies to her kitchen.

"I heard you made a raw meal," Brown said after greeting a middle-aged couple from Goffstown as they entered her apartment.

Terrie Bourque told Brown that the couple recently purchased three books on the subject, including *Raw Foods for Dummies*, and had made cheeseless dip with red peppers and zucchini pasta with marinara sauce.

The Bourques began attending Brown's classes last month after Marc Bourque was diagnosed with diabetes. "I read that eating a more raw diet could really help that," Marc Bourque said.

"He is not on medicine for diabetes and wants to keep it that way, and I want him to keep it that way," Terrie Bourque said.

The couple now prepares two to three dinners a week and Marc opts to eat salad for lunch and a few raw carrots or a green smoothie for breakfast. The smoothies are made of various combinations including kale, spinach, banana, coconut water or lemon juice. Brown said smoothie greens should be rotated so they body can take in different nutrients.

Rawdacious Savory Mushroom Gravy

3 portobello mushroom caps
1 clove garlic
2 Tablespoons coconut aminos, tamari or soy sauce
1½ Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 cup macadamia nuts
water as needed
Process macadamia nuts in food processor until fine powder. Add portobello caps, coconut aminos, olive oil and garlic process until smooth. Add water if needed to reach desired consistency.

Rawdacious Living classes

Thursday, Dec. 2: Raw Food 101
Thursday, Dec. 9: Rawkin' the Holidays: Part 2
Wednesday, Dec. 15: Raw Friends meeting at the Millyard Hub
To RSVP contact Alyssa Brown at alyssa-ab33@yahoo.com

FOOD

"Not Turkey" — a nut loaf made with cashews, pumpkin seeds, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts and pecans, all soaked in water, plus poultry seasoning, diced celery and onions, shredded carrots and ginger — served as the "meat" of the meal and was dehydrated at 105 degrees. Brown said food is dehydrated at less than 115 degrees so that its enzymes and nutrients will stay intact.

"We are uncooking," Terrie Bourque said.

Mashed jicama (a Mexican potato, which Brown said is less starchy than typical potatoes), mushroom gravy, mushroom stuffing, cranberry sauce made with fresh cranberries, apples, oranges and raisins and a salad of kale,

pomegranate seeds, oranges and lemon juice were dinner accompaniments. Cashews were used as a cheese substitute for the pumpkin cheesecake served for dessert.

With five people manning the food processor and blenders, the entire meal took only two hours to prepare. When they were done, everyone took a seat at the dinner table and celebrated their culinary accomplishments.

"It doesn't feel that long when we're here, because of the whole group thing. ... This is not any more time-consuming than making a traditional Thanksgiving meal," Terrie Bourque said.

Rawdacious Cranberry Sauce

2 cups cranberries
1 1/4 cups raisins
2 apples peeled and cored (one cut into quarters, the other, minced)
1 orange

Cover the raisins with water and soak for at least 1 hour. Drain and process raisins in food processor until you have a raisin paste. Add cranberries, apple quarters and peeled orange to food processor. Blend to desired consistency. Pour ingredients into bowl and fold in minced apple for added texture.

Banana Mango Madness Green Smoothie

1 frozen banana
1 half mango
1 handful spinach
cinnamon
add coconut water to cover and blend
optional ingredients: 3 Tablespoons hemp seeds, 1 Tablespoon spirulina

"Not Turkey"

4 cups mixed raw nuts
2 cups shredded carrots
1 onion chopped
2 stalks of celery chopped
1 Tablespoon raisins
1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1/2 Tablespoon ginger
1/2 Tablespoon poultry seasoning
1 teaspoon sea salt
Soak nuts in water 6-8 hours to reduce enzyme inhibitors. Soak raisins in water for at least an hour to make them soft for blending. Drain and blend nuts and raisins in food processor until chopped. Add olive oil, ginger, poultry seasoning and sea salt and continue to blend until the mixture is a paste.

Remove to mixing bowl. Add shredded carrots, chopped celery and chopped onions to bowl; stir to combine. Remove mixture to serving dish and mold to desired shape. Mixture can be served as is or placed in dehydrator for 1-4 hours to warm.

Festivals/cook-offs/expos/parties/book events

• **COOKIES WITH SANTA** Kellerhaus on Route 3 between Meredith and Weirs Beach is holding its annual Cookies and Milk with Santa event on Fri., Nov. 26, from 2 to 4 p.m. The event will feature handmade chocolate samples, balloons with Mo the Balloon Buffoon, a raffle and a chance to get pictures with kids visiting Santa. Call 366-4466 or go to www.kellerhaus.com.
• **JOHN CARROLL** will speak about his book *Pastures of Plenty: The Future of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Conservation in New*

England on Tues., Nov. 30, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Hooksett Public Library, 1701B Hooksett Road in Hooksett, 485-6092, www.hooksettpubliclibrary.org. Call 485-6092 to RSVP.

• **TIPS FOR TOYS** T-Bones at 77 Lowell Road in Hudson and the Salvation Army of Nashua will hold their annual Tips for Toys event on Mon., Dec. 6, from 4 p.m. to closing. The servers working that night pool their tips and shop for toys for the Salvation Army to distribute to area children. Call the Salvation Army at 889-5151 for more.

• **CHAMPAGNE & CHOCOLATE** Concord Cooperative Market, 24 S. Main St. in Concord,

410-3099, www.concordfoodcoop.coop, has events on the schedule to get you ready for the December holidays. On Thurs., Dec. 9, from 6 to 8 p.m., it's "Champagne & Chocolate." Sample chocolate from local and international chocolatiers as well as champagne and sparkling wines. Tickets cost \$20. Call or stop by for tickets.

• **SPARKLING WINE & FOOD PAIRING** Thurs., Dec. 9, from 6:30 to 9 p.m., All-Sparking Wine Tasting and Food Pairing at Zorvino Vineyards, 226 Main St. in Sandown, 887-8463, zorvino.com.

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