PRESS RELEASE

Acterra Announces Meatless May Challenge Featuring Less Meat, More Plants

Nonprofit Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet has launched a Meatless May Challenge. Participants in this challenge make a plant-forward, eco-friendly dietary pledge for the month of May.

Event website: acterra.org/meatless-may

PALO ALTO—April 19, 2021—Acterra has launched the 2021 Meatless May: Less Meat, More Plants Challenge in partnership with several local restaurants. All Bay Area residents are invited to join the challenge and embrace a healthier, more plant-forward lifestyle.

The Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet program is focused on educating Bay Area residents about how our daily dietary choices and food waste can negatively impact our environment, our climate, and our health. Surprisingly, one of the most effective ways for individuals to lower their personal carbon footprint is to reduce their meat and dairy consumption. Locally, the average Bay Area omnivore household contributes to nearly 10 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) equivalents to the atmosphere each year from the food they eat - the equivalent of driving a typical gas-powered car about 23,000 miles.

Globally, food accounts for about one-fourth of global greenhouse gas emissions, largely as a result from animal products made for consumption. The current system for meat production uses up to 80% of agricultural land worldwide, while it only provides about 15% of the world’s calories. Unhealthy dietary habits and a lack of access to healthy foods have led to a global increase in obesity, and in some countries, to an increase in undernutrition and hunger rates. Reducing consumption of resource-intensive meat by switching to a climate-friendly “flexitarian” diet would lower carbon emissions and alleviate large-scale food scarcity.

Our current climate crisis may feel daunting, but Acterra’s groundwork helps empower individuals by highlighting their important role in helping our planet. In alignment with the worldwide theme for Earth Day 2021 — Restore Our Earth — everyone, every day, can have a restorative impact by choosing what is on their plate. Indeed, recent polling data indicate that more individuals are voluntarily going plant-forward in their food choices.

Enter Acterra’s “Meatless May” challenge: Participants will pledge to choose more fruits, veggies, whole grains, and legumes while moving meat and dairy products to the side, or off their plates entirely. In addition to creating environmental benefits, participants will also reap the personal health benefits of a plant-forward lifestyle, including reduced risk of many chronic diseases, more energy, and maintenance of a healthy weight. More than a year into the COVID pandemic, public awareness of healthy plant-rich dietary habits supporting a strong immune system has likewise increased.
“Everyone is concerned about climate change, but some wonder what they as individuals can do to help. Making small incremental changes to your diet is something that anyone can do, and as more of us make the switch, it has a huge impact in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. With the added benefit of improving your own health, there’s even more incentive to give it a try,” said Nicole Angiel, Acterra’s Director of Sustainability.

Weekly recipes and tips are provided to all participants during Meatless May. Additional support is available to challenge participants who request a buddy. Buddies can help suggest grocery lists and meal plans to suit every budget, as well as recommend recipes and options for plant-based takeout. And Acterra’s 200+ Facebook community members in the My Healthy Plate, Our Healthy Planet group can supply additional crowd-sourced insights. Acterra’s plant-based virtual cooking class is another resource for those seeking to boost their from-scratch skills.

Each week in May will have a particular theme, encompassing meat alternatives (Week 1), in-season veggies (Week 2), dairy/egg alternatives (Week 3), and seafood alternatives (Week 4). Vegetarians can join the Meatless May challenge by going dairy-free, or totally plant-based, for the month.

Local restaurants including Chef Reina, Gaumenkitzel, Sumo Sushi Boat, Cuban Kitchen, LUNA Mexican Kitchen, and Capo Mediterranean are partnering with Acterra and offering special menu options and rewards to those participating.

Please visit acterra.org/meatless-may for more information and to register for the free program.

About Acterra: Acterra's Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet program helps Bay Area eaters understand the connections between our everyday food choices, our personal health, and our shared climate, focusing on plant-rich diets and reducing food waste. For more information, please visit: acterra.org/healthy-plate

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