

[Time to Veg Out](#)

Category : [January 1999](#)

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FOOD

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The faithful at Boston's Vegetarian Food Festival tempt meat-eating Americans with sumptuous samples, cooking demos and gritty homilies

October 3, 1998, saw the Boston Vegetarian Society host numerous eateries, markets, nonprofit organizations and over 7,000 enthused visitors at their third annual food festival. Chairwoman Evelyn Kimber and fellow volunteers coordinated exhibitors ranging from Stacy's Pita Chip Co. to the Animal Legal Defense Fund. "We've had fabulous feedback," she says. "A natural foods supermarket said a week after the festival customers came in asking where to buy all the foods they'd tasted at the festival!"

One exhibitor, M.U. Shaikh, doesn't just sell his Tastes of the East curry sauces. He's got a dance routine to mimic food preparation! "I teach Hinduism and Indian cooking in schools," he says. "My dance catches kids' attention." With Indian restaurants and markets blooming, Indian food today is a strong vegetarian option in America. Shaikh reinforces the concept to kids--about 10 percent are veggie, mostly girls--"so they don't treat it as just a fad." The festival's website is <http://web.mit.edu/vsg/foodfest98/>