



Photo courtesy of Vegan Outreach

Enjoy the Vegan Chef Challenge!

Article by Auriana Koutnik

This entire month, you can enjoy new vegan menu items at restaurants and food carts in Eugene and Springfield, thanks to the first-ever Eugene Vegan Chef Challenge. Even non-vegans love these challenges and the opportunity to dine out more with their vegan friends and family members!

At least 19 eateries are participating in the Eugene Vegan Chef Challenge, which runs February 1-28. Local chefs will be competing for your votes with creative and delicious plant-based options at Acorn Community Café, Agate Alley Bistro, B-Heavenly Café, Bao Bao House in Eugene and in Springfield, Capella Market, Drop Bear Brewery, Grateful Gringos, Kazuji-San, McMenamins North Bank, Moi Poki Grill, Moke's Coffee & Kitchen, Ojisan's Ramen, Starry Bites, Tacovore, Thai Fusion, The Spark Mobile Café, Viva! Vegetarian Grill, and Willamette Artisan Pizza. These establishments are excited to offer their Vegan Chef Challenge menu during their regular business hours all month long. Eugene and Springfield foodies are encouraged to get out and try the new vegan menu items and vote for their favorite dishes.

Continued on page 4



Photo by Debby Coulthard

Above: Corey Prunier shares his plant-based cooking skills at the Live Lifestyle Medicine class in Springfield on December 30, 2025, cooking up a delicious Mushroom Bourguignon.

Acorn Community Café Cooking Demo

Article by Trish Kingsbauer

Corey Prunier and Miranda McKeever of the Acorn Community Café came to share their cooking skills with our Live Lifestyle Medicine class on December 30, 2025. During the demo, as Corey cooked up his mushroom bourguignon for the class to enjoy, he discussed knife skills, the “layering” of flavors with multiple mushroom sources, and the wonders of the bay leaf.

Corey and Miranda met working in the restaurant business. Corey was an elite chef with reputable restaurants like Marché who dreamed of opening his own vegan restaurant someday, and Miranda was an elite “mixologist” and front of house. When the COVID-19 pandemic happened, they found themselves furloughed. They began cooking vegan meals in their own kitchen and going to parks to feed those in need with the mantra: “Free hot meals because everyone deserves to eat well.”

Their reputation grew - both for their philanthropy and the quality and amazing flavors of their food. When they learned of a unique little restaurant space for rent at 769 Monroe St. they made their dream come true in 2021. They began serving the community their delicious plant-based meals, along with continuing their Pay it Forward model. To date, they have made and served more than 7,700 free meals!

The video of Corey’s cooking demo is available on the [LiveLifestyleMedicine.com](https://www.LiveLifestyleMedicine.com) website, in the Class archives section, and on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWtSBFshHFE>. Corey and Miranda are scheduled to join us again during the next 13-week Live Lifestyle Medicine class series with a new recipe. They are also participating in the Vegan Chef Challenge.

MUSHROOM BOURGUIGNON

Recipe courtesy of Acorn Community Café

Serves: 4-6
Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 45 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 pound oyster mushrooms
1 pound cremini mushrooms, quartered
1 Tbsp oil
3 oz vegan butter
300 g or 1 onion, diced
300 g or 1 leek, thinly sliced
300 g or 5 medium carrots, oblique cut
15 g or 2 garlic cloves, minced
15 g or 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
1 Tbsp tapioca starch + 2 oz cold water
500 ml or 2 cups red wine
500 ml or 2 cups porcini stock
3 g or 5 springs of thyme
1 bay leaf

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clean and cut the mushrooms. Sauté dry over medium heat until liquid releases and evaporates. Then add a tablespoon of oil and cook for 3-5 minutes more until the mushrooms have a nice brown sear. Remove from pan and set the mushrooms aside.
2. Melt the vegan butter and cook the onion and carrot together over medium high heat stirring occasionally. Once the carrots soften, add the garlic, tomato paste, red wine, porcini stock, herbs and cooked mushrooms. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. At this point, taste the broth for alcohol. If it tastes bitter, continue cooking in 5-minute increments, checking after each.
3. Once the taste is correct, whisk the tapioca starch and water together thoroughly until there are no lumps. Stir into the pot. Continue heating until thickened. Serve over pasta, polenta, mashed potatoes, or crusty bread.



Photo courtesy of Acorn Community Café

EUGENE VEGAN CHEF CHALLENGE

Continued from page 1

An awards ceremony will be held in March to present awards to chefs based on diners' feedback. Event organizers hope this will permanently expand the vegan menu offerings across town, as businesses are encouraged to keep popular vegan items on their regular menu after the challenge concludes.

The Vegan Chef Challenge began in 2010 in Durham, NC, inspired by Eleni Vlachos and her friend Chef Shirle. Bethany Davis brought the idea to Sacramento, CA, in 2011, where it gained national support from Vegan Outreach. Now, challenges are expanding across the United States and potentially worldwide!

The Eugene Vegan Chef Challenge is hosted by Vegan Outreach in partnership with Compassionate Living and Live Lifestyle Medicine. The event is sponsored by Drop Bear Brewery and Capella Market, and supported by numerous local volunteers who helped make the event possible.

For those interested in adopting a vegan diet, Vegan Outreach offers a "10 Weeks to Vegan" support program with weekly emails of nutrition tips and comfort foods. Find out more about this program and the Eugene Vegan Chef Challenge at: <https://VeganChefChallenge.org/Eugene>.

Event organizers hope this will permanently expand the vegan menu offerings across town.



Photo courtesy of Vegan Outreach

Bringing lifestyle medicine to the community, to improve lives, one plant-based kitchen at a time...

www.livelifestylemedicine.com

