



How hippie food went mainstream

Sarah Berry

Hippie wasn't always a derisive term. At least, its origins weren't. It evolved from the words "hep" and "hip", each of which means "in-the-know" or "knowledgeable".

Although it came to be synonymous with counterculture, free love and a lax approach to paying rent (or as Ronald Reagan so charmingly put it in 1967: "For those of you who don't know what a hippie is, he's a fellow who dresses like Tarzan, has hair like Jane, and smells like Cheetaah."), hippies may well have been "in the know" for many of their ideas on health are going mainstream.

"The counterculture is always ahead of what's happening in mainstream culture," Peter Meehan, the editorial director of *Lucky Peach* magazine, told *The New York Times* last week. "It's as true in any creative field as it is in food."

Consider many of the foods and movements that we associate with being "hippie".

Australia is the third-fastest growing vegan market in the world while vegetarianism has risen 30 per cent in NSW in just four years. Quinoa, apple cider vinegar, fermented foods, organics and almond mylk are common, not only in many households and cafes but also in Coles and Woolies. Yoga is Australia's fastest-growing fitness activity and meditation has also made it to the mainstream.

Yes, the hippiedom is ruling. Our growing knowledge about the importance of the microbiome, our understanding about the impact of food and stress on our health and of farming practices on the environment, and the growth of farmers markets have all undoubtedly

played their part in the shifting trend away from stodgy towards simple, from fringe to front and centre.

"I've been cooking for 30 years - I've seen a lot of different fashions with food ... it's a more natural approach now. The world is becoming much more aware about the effect of food on our body," says Alessandro Pavoni, the head chef of two-hat restaurant Ormeggio at the Spit and Sotto Sopra in Newport.

After surviving bone cancer and two heart attacks, Pavoni changed his own approach to health.

"These days I'm now vegan - I'm vegan for health," he says.

"I'm better than ever and fitter than ever. I really understand what food can do to you and we pay a lot of attention in our restaurant to making alternative dishes - for our degustation there are whole vegan and gluten-free menus."

For Magdalena Roze, television personality and author of the new cookbook *Happy and Whole*, it is about returning to a more simple, nourishing way of life. Having moved to Byron Bay with her partner, Three Blue Ducks co-owner Darren Robertson, after working

"crazy, long hours" and "burning the candle at both ends" in Sydney, she slowed down, returned to her eastern European roots and "the old simple way of preparing whole foods like my mother and grandmother".

"To simplify things and put the power back in your own hands, I find it helpful to try and get back to the basics," she says. "By this, I mean eating whole foods that are unprocessed, grown without the use of sprays and chemicals and are as

close to their natural source as possible."

In shunning fast foods and the fast life, it is about more than food.

"It's a philosophy," says Pavoni, adding that it encompasses seasonal produce, sustainability and waste

management - "we need to learn to use everything".

In her new book *Hippie Lane*, Taline Gabrielian agrees the philosophy is "all encompassing". Her interest in health and food intersected, evolving her approach as she learnt "how our food choices impact on our wellbeing and overall health".

"It starts with the promise/belief that hippie-style food will result in a healthier life, and is swiftly followed by the amazing results of general wellbeing," says Gabrielian, who says "alternative" foods were not mainstream when she started her business seven years ago.

"When you switch to natural unprocessed whole foods, you will feel the difference."



author of
cookbook *Hippie Lane*, and some
of the meals
from the book;
and chef
Alessandro
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Taline Gabrielian
(right), the
author of
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