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Meet and eat: Community potluck a new trend

Bengaluru Vegans was started in 2012 to connect vegans in Bengaluru and support those exploring a lifestyle free of animal products. It meets on the last Saturday of every month in Cubbon Park.

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Sharan India potlucks feature participants who follow a whole food, plant-based diet. Credit: Special Arrangement

Exploring Veganism

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Vegan curd rice made with peanut curd is a crowd favourite, along with vegan brownies, pasta, and payasam made from cashew cheese and plant-based milks extracted from almond, oats, and soy, shares chef Susmitha 'Veganosaurus', a regular attendee. Participants can bring homemade or store-bought vegan food, or just fruits.

The next potluck is scheduled for May 31. Visit bengaluruvegans.wordpress.com for details.

Whole food diet

Several potlucks now revolve around the whole food, plant-based (WFPB) diet, which focuses on unprocessed or minimally processed foods. Savera Naturals, a natural farming initiative, started one in 2023, and its attendance has since grown from 50-60 people to over 250 now. Instead of sugar, oil, or paneer, participants use alternatives like date paste, almond and sunflower seed butters, and tofu respectively. Dishes such as masoor dal bread, raw zucchini noodles (called zoodles), oil-free hummus with falafel, and beetroot 'nice cream' (a dessert made by blending frozen bananas with beets) are popular. Cofounder Merwin Fernandes says the events, hosted at participants' homes, offer a platform to discuss each other's plant-based journeys. The next gathering is on June 8 in Sarjapur. Visit saveranaturals.in.

Poshak Life, which offers health programmes, has been hosting a similar potluck since 2015. It is held monthly on Saturdays at a participant's home. It features salads, soups, roti-rice, and desserts made with seed butters, date and raisin pastes, unpolished rice, and pink Himalayan salt. Indian, Mexican, and Chinese dishes are popular, with cashew cheesecake a crowd favourite. The meetups also include cooking demonstrations, wellness workshops, and psychodrama sessions, says cofounder Sae Bapat. The next potluck is on June 28 in J P Nagar. Visit poshaklife.com.

Sharan (Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals in Nature) India has hosted potlucks for nearly a decade. Founder-director Nandita Shah says each event draws 25–40 people, often families, with around 20 dishes coordinated in advance to ensure variety. Sharan also offers consultations and cooking classes for those exploring the WFPB lifestyle. Visit sharan-india.org for upcoming events.

Family recipes

The Locavore, an online platform promoting seasonal, local ingredients, launched the Bengaluru chapter of its nationwide potluck initiative, Local Food Club, in May. It focuses on homemade regional and family recipes. At its latest Bengaluru event, Karnataka dishes such as gojjaivalakki (a poha dish), along with Tamil-style mango rice, were partaken. It is held on the first Sunday of every month. First-time participants are expected to bring a local ingredient or kitchen heirloom and share a story behind it, if they can't get a prepared dish. The next event is on June 1 in Jayanagar and Brookefield. Visit thelocavore.in/localfoodclub to register.

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