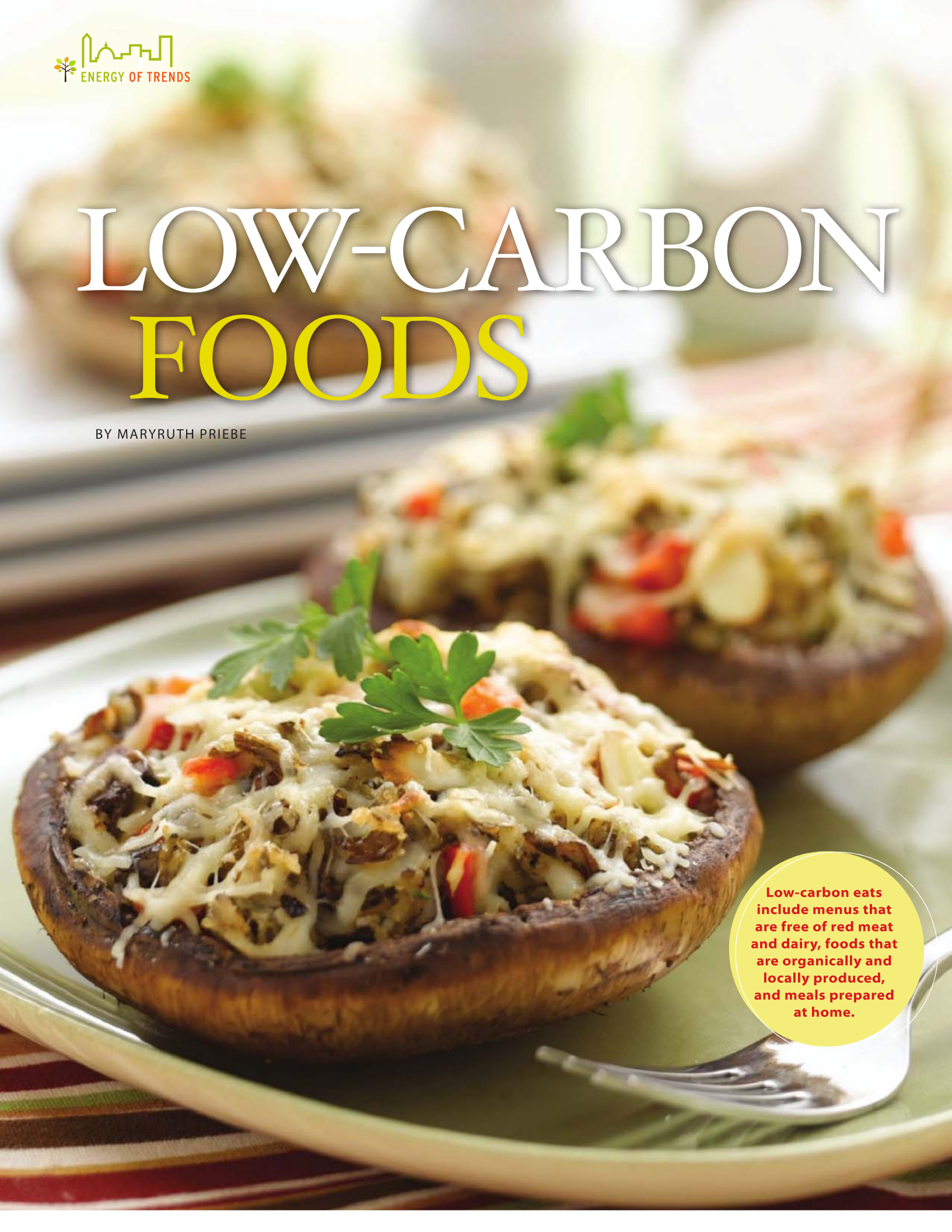


LOW-CARBON FOODS

BY MARYRUTH PRIEBE



Low-carbon eats include menus that are free of red meat and dairy, foods that are organically and locally produced, and meals prepared at home.



COOKING UP CREATIVE NEW MENU CHOICES THAT ARE TASTY AND CLIMATE-FRIENDLY

When it comes to educating her clients about eating lower on the food chain, natural foods personal chef and cooking instructor Rachel Brumitt is very passionate: “Leaving a smaller carbon footprint is very important to me.”

As a specialist in vegetarian and vegan cooking, Brumitt is well versed in the climate consequences of a conventional, meat-heavy diet, listing direct energy consumption, deforestation and enteric fermentation (natural animal digestive processes) as some of the bigger causes of food-based greenhouse gas emissions. A recent United Nations study found that at least 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the production of meat for human consumption.

Eating lower on the food chain is one of the things the average consumer can do to help. “The more animal products you replace with plants, the smaller your footprint will be,” Mimi Clark, “Veggie Gourmet” and another vegan cooking instructor.



But for the uninitiated, cooking with beans, lentils and whole grains can seem like a daunting endeavor. That’s why chefs like Brumitt and Clark are making it their mission to help people learn how to incorporate plant-based foods without sacrificing taste, texture, nutritional value or the environment.

“Learning to cook your own food from whole foods is cost-effective, brings your family together, makes you self-sufficient, puts you in control of your own diet, and further reduces your carbon footprint by allowing you to make seasonal-local choices when you can,” Brumitt.

In addition to taking a class on veggie cuisine, another low-carbon solution is to cook at home, and there’s no simpler way than to use a meal assembly shop like Corner Cuisine or Let’s Dish. Choosing these minimally packaged meal options (be sure to bring your own containers) will help you avoid the energy and resource waste associated with dining out.

A food prep session at one of these venues gets you the chance to put together multiple meals (4, 8 or even 12 at a time) by scooping nutritious, prechopped, pregrated and presliced ingredients into casserole dishes and storage containers as you make your way down their assembly lines. Then head home and fire up the oven, and you’ll be cooking healthy in your own kitchen without the fuss and mess of prepping yourself!

To find low-carbon cooking classes in the D.C. area, check out these sites:

veggourmet.wordpress.com/register-for-class

www.dcvegan.com/category/cooking

www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/pstreet/storecalendar.php

