Kids dig into mock meat as German school goes vegan

Priya Menon| Updated: Aug 14, 2017, 08:40 AM IST

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Students of the school chose to go vegan after the school opened its gates to injured and abandoned animals.

CHENNAI: Germans love their bratwurst and schnitzel. But, down here in Chennai, the German International School has traded in the sausages for the lentils and the salami for the broccoli.The school, located in Palavakkam, has declared itself completely vegan from this school year, serving its students breakfast, lunch and snacks that are only plantbased.

The school was inspired to cut out all animal products after it began throwing open its gates to injured and abandoned animals. As Thomas A Pallushek, advisor for international schools, Asia Pacific, puts it, it became tough to eat mutton with a pet goat on the lawns nearby. "We felt it was ethically not right. We wanted to reduce the human impact on the environment and eating less meat is the simplest way," he says, adding that turning vegan is also healthier.

So from the middle of 2016, the school that had been serving chicken, beef, fish and cheese, decided to first cut down on the consumption, even while increasing awareness among students. "We watched a couple of informative documentaries on veganism with the students and also included it in our ethics classes," says Pallushek. Parents were informed and invited to a vegan buffet in December last year. "They were very surprised to find it both delicious and nutritious," he says.

The school, now 100% vegan, makes its own mock meat, produces vegan cheese from cashews, and bakes its own bread. Care is taken to see that nutritional requirements are met, by substituting animal products with protein-rich food such as quinoa, lentils, seitan, beans and hemp seeds. The menu ranges from cucumber avocado toast, zucchini bread and apple sauce, to ratatouille, flavoured rice with dal curry, pumpkin spice muffins and fruit smoothies.

Neha Banerjee, whose daughter Tishta, 9, studies in the school, is happy that she is being introduced to healthy fare. "We are a nonvegetarian family. At home, I can't get her to eat vegetables. But in school, she is eating a variety of vegetables and also other grains such as ragi and barley, and getting wholesome nutrition," says Banerjee, adding that they continue to eat non-veg at home.

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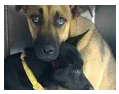

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