



Press Release

One day, in 2010, after sadly noting the limited vegan options at Durham, NC restaurants, Eleni Vlachos' omnivore friend Chef Shirle suggested: "Don't just *ask* restaurants for vegan options. Challenge chefs to create them."

That simple idea stuck, and the 4th Bull City Vegan (chef) Challenge led by a team of 10 community members runs April 1 - 30. Fifteen top local chefs at meat-centric restaurants compete against one another to create the best vegan dish, which is added to their menus all of April. The public dines, then votes on the best. "Rules" include no common fare such as portobellos, raw vegetable platters, or hummus. Community partners include SEEDS, the Durham Farmer's Market, the Durham Visitor's Center and Bureau, and more.

"The idea is to support local businesses, engage our community, and make more room at the table for everyone," says Vlachos, co-founder of the Challenge, and "Over half of the diners usually aren't even vegetarian. It's for anyone who loves culinary adventures." Challenge diners can win prizes, such as a 30-day free pass to the YMCA, \$25 gift certificate to Vegan Flava, or yoga classes.

Indy Week writes: "This year's participating cast is as surprising as it is intriguing. The seafood-specializing [Saltbox](#) joins the ranks, as do the upscale Italian eatery [Gocciolina](#), the Peruvian-based [Luna](#), and the Southern-centric [Beyu Caffe](#). There will be sweets from [The Parlour](#), [Rise](#), and [The Cupcake Bar](#), plus greenery from the second location of [Happy + Hale](#). Bar-food specialists [The Federal](#), [Geer Street Garden](#), and [Parts & Labor](#) are participating, as are the specialist grocers at [Parker & Otis](#) and the [Durham Co-Op](#). Durham standbys [Dos Perros](#) and [Guglhupf](#) round out the list."

"The Bull City Vegan (chef) Challenge has been so successful that other cities have started to replicate it," Vlachos reports. "Yet it's a uniquely 'Durham' event. We believe it's effective because we're supporting and promoting local businesses while showing how popular and in demand vegan options are. We celebrate local restaurants and cuisine by sharing their versatility and creativity when coming up with a plant-based dish. It's also rewarding to see the dishes sell out."



This year, the theme guiding chef creations is the celebration of plant protein and earth month: #planetprotein.

Organizers are proposing a "Meatless Monday" proclamation in front of the Durham City Council to further emphasize the power of meat-free meals.

Winning chefs will be announced on May 7th at the after party. Follow links below for details.

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Contact: Eleni Vlachos / 919.699.3312

Voting & more: www.trianglemm.com/planetprotein

Social: www.facebook.com/bullcityvegan, @bullcityvegan

Quick video: www.trianglemm.com/challenge

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