

# SEITAN

## THE HUMANE (AND DELICIOUS) MEAT ALTERNATIVE

### WILDLIFE WATCH INTERVIEW WITH SHAMAH



Good food, be it vegetarian, vegan, or otherwise, is more than just a necessity for survival. It can be a stimulus for several of our senses and even a restorative for the spirit. Therefore, when we find a comestible that we truly enjoy, we want to make it a regular part of our lives. Such is the case with "Shamah's Savory Seitan," created by local chef, Shamah Hament.

Although it is made from wheat, seitan has little in common with flour or bread. Also called wheat meat, wheat gluten, or simply gluten, seitan becomes surprisingly similar to the look and texture of meat when cooked, making it a popular meat substitute. Seitan is also high in protein, making it a popular protein source for vegetarians. It is used as the base for some commercially available products such as Tofurky.

Seitan can be prepared by hand with whole wheat flour or vital wheat gluten. The starch in the wheat is rinsed away, leaving high-protein gluten behind. Though not yet as

widely popular as tofu, seitan is growing in popularity, especially in vegetarian restaurants, due to its ability to take on the texture and flavor of meat. Prepared seitan can be found in the refrigerated section of many health food stores. (From About.com article, "Vegetarian Food," by Jolinda Hackett.

<http://vegetarian.about.com/od/glossary/g/Seitan.htm> )

Shamah, as she is fondly known to her clientele, has been making her specialty, seitan, for 20 years, and those who have partaken of it generally find it to be the best they've tasted.

As just one example, Anne Muller, President of Wildlife Watch and an avowed aficionado, says, "Shamah's seitan is the best I've ever had!"

Shamah has maintained the same customers for decades due to the superlative quality of her product. Among her regulars are such top restaurants as New World Home Cooking in Saugerties, NY, Joshua's of Woodstock, NY, New World Bistro in Albany, NY, Main Course in New Paltz, NY, and Sunflower Health Food Store in Woodstock, NY.

Shamah's culinary experience has varied and interesting roots. A native of Queens, NY, she has been cooking all her life. She worked as a top baker and chef in Berkeley; lived in a rain forest area of the Caribbean for 10 years, where she acquired new skills and tastes, and cooked over an open fire; and she has taught all four of her children to make seitan. A vegetarian since 1970, she likes to eat healthy food. "I know what makes me feel good," Shamah said. She knows that good food makes for good health.

Shamah was a Montessori teacher before she became a renowned seitan chef. After a near-calamity with a chimney fire, she decided she wanted to do something different. She worked for a long time to perfect her recipe and the best procedure for seitan.



"The first year I did a lot of crying," she says now, with a laugh. "It's all done by hand. It's all about how it feels." Having the best seitan on the market is a distinction that she does not take for granted. "I pray before I get to work," she added.

The dedication to her craft has been well worth it, because her customers are very loyal. "I love my customers – that is really important to me, and they appreciate me."

Another kind of devotion is evident in Shamah's work with the congregation of His Word Revealed Church, in Kingston. She was ordained as a Minister last July, and has thrown herself into her church's community-oriented projects. One of their successful efforts was planting a 50' x 30' community garden plot at the church. The "Feed the Nation" project fed between 75 – 100 people each week last year, and Shamah is looking forward to this, the second year of this valuable program.

Apparently not content to let any grass grow beneath her feet, Shamah is also writing a book about her life. The autobiography/memoir will doubtless be of great interest to her many satisfied customers, some of whom may hope even to learn the secret of her fabulous seitan!

We don't think that Shamah has to worry about competition, however. After all, how many people bake their own bread, even if they know how?

## Seitan and Tofu: Nutrition Facts.

### Seitan:

per serving, 85g

calories: 90

fat: 1g

protein: 18g

carbs: 3g

iron: 1.2mg, 6% RDA

Selenium: 10 mcg, 14% RDA

Phosphorus: 65mg, 5%RDA

### Tofu:

calories: 98

fat: 5g

protein: 10g

carbs: 3g

iron: 1.6mg, 9% RDA

Selenium: 13 mcg, 19% RDA

Phosphorus: 136 mg, 14%RDA

Manganese: .8mg, 38% RDA

Calcium: 175mg, 18%

<http://hellyeahitsvegan.com/vegan-fried-chicken/>