

Vegetarian restaurants flourished in New York in the 60's and 70's. Made you feel great to be so healthy and hip. Some had really elaborate dishes and a cozy ambiance, like the Vegetaria off Sheridan Square. BYOB. Some were big and noisy like the Village Natural, large murals on the wall, home-cooking style veggie dishes, hippie-served. Still going at Greenwich Avenue at Charles Street. Our neighborhood place (8th Ave. and 22nd) was the Mushroom (or "something" Mushroom, we called it "the Mush") a teeny place, just a storefront really, mostly lunch. We were regulars for the "Brown Rice Special." Maggie came last week, reminded me we had it for years at the Stone House when she was growing up. I made it for her. Can still make you feel great to be so healthy and hip.

1 cup short grain brown rice (Lundbergs from California at your Co-op).  
2-3/4 cups water. Safer to start with more water, then adjust for next batch.)  
Bring water and rice to boil in 2 quart saucepan with a tight-fitting lid.  
Reduce heat, cover and low low simmer until all liquid is absorbed, about 40 minutes.  
Turn off heat and let stand 10 minutes. Do not stir rice.

Preheat oven 400deg.  
Spoon rice into pyrex bread pan (8in x4in x4in high).  
Cut 2oz. high quality Munster cheese (an American-style process cheese, not the fancy French ripening cheese) into small pieces and place inside and on top of the rice pile.  
Heat in oven till cheese thoroughly melted (about 15 min).  
Remove from oven and stir with spoon to mix rice and cheese.  
Serve in rice bowl. Diners help themselves from bowl of cut veggies.  
Soy sauce. Eat with chop sticks.

Bowl of cut veggies:  
Broccoli florets.  
Cauliflower florets.  
Finely sliced carrot julien.  
Finely sliced celery julien.  
Optional. Sliced cabbage. Any veggie you like.