



Passionate Crescent  
Dragonwagon relaxes by her  
Vermont fireplace, holding her  
beloved Z-Cat.

# from the heart

WHOLESOME MENUS FROM  
THE PASSIONATE VEGETARIAN

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Crescent Dragonwagon, the exuberant author of the 2003 James Beard Award-winning *Passionate Vegetarian* cookbook, is taking a much-deserved break. On the road for most of the past 2 years, she's forging a new—and calmer—life at her family's old summer house in southern Vermont.

Interested in her take on the relationship between good health and vegetarianism—themes of her writing—we caught up with her on a glorious fall day and sat outside admiring the distant blue mountains from across her front meadow. Our first question, though,

## MENU ONE

Lemon-Dijon Salad  
of Winter Vegetables

High Desert  
Blue Corn Muffins

**Cover Recipe:**  
Quick Green Chile Soup-Stew

Maple-Quinoa-Oatmeal  
Cookies with Pecans

## MENU TWO

Moroccan Carrot Salad

Quick Spinach-Split Pea Cakes

Layered Chocolate-Raspberry  
Mousse

had nothing to do with health: What's the origin of her name? Born Ellen Zolotow, daughter of famous children's book editor and author Charlotte Zolotow and Hollywood biographer Maurice Zolotow, Dragonwagon invented her pen name at the age of 16 as a way to be taken on her own terms. Ever since, it's been an unforgettable publishing asset, as well as an embarrassing liability: Think about going through passport control or about cashing a check at a grocery store. Crescent? *Dragonwagon?*

▼ Growing up in the New York suburb of Hastings-on-Hudson, Dragonwagon longed for adventure, community and a radical change of place. With one parent on the East Coast and the other on the West (Maurice Zolotow lived in Los Angeles after he and his wife divorced), Arkansas seemed equidistant from both. Discovering the Ozark Mountain resort Eureka Springs by chance, she first loved its rural beauty and then came to love its eccentric community. Thirty-three years later, that community was an enormous source of solace when her husband Ned Shank was killed in a bicycle accident.

In their early years in Eureka Springs, she and Shank started a country inn and restaurant called Dairy Hollow House, which has become very well known. The Clintons were frequent guests, and shortly after the election, the new president invited Dragonwagon to serve a brunch that the *New York Times* said was the best food of inaugural week.



kitchen is entirely meat-free. But eating vegetarian hardly means restraint—Dragonwagon's table, particularly when she's developing recipes, is filled with dishes that range in inspiration from America's own rural South to Italy, India or Latin America.

Such dishes are featured in her most recent book, *Passionate Vegetarian*, which also is filled with stories demonstrating her love of food, her love of life and her love for her late husband. And although there are countless fans of *Passionate Vegetarian*, few people know very much about her commitment to the equally important third item on her "top three" list: working out.

While it might seem strange to some to find exercise so high up on a list of passions, Dragonwagon's commitment to daily workouts is the result of seeing her closest female relatives suffer from osteoporosis and too many broken bones. "I took one look at the spider-web bones on the X-rays of my aunt and mother, and I

## As Dean Ornish, MD, demonstrates, she says, emotional health has a positive effect on coronary health.

Today in Vermont, however, our aim is to discover how she views the relationship between heart health and a vegetarian diet. Surprisingly, she defines this in the broadest possible terms. "Heart health, to me," says Dragonwagon, "means constantly working at becoming lovable—to give and receive love in the broadest sense without too much static." She believes that a healthy heart transcends the physical and has everything to do with the person you are becoming and the life you choose to lead. It's much more than about feelings. As Dean Ornish, MD, demonstrates, she says, emotional health has a positive effect on coronary health.

Dragonwagon, whose high energy, lithe body and creamy skin belie her 50 years, attributes her vitality to three great pleasures: eating well, loving and working out.

While Dragonwagon originally became a vegetarian at the age of 22 as a result of reading Frances Moore Lappé's *Diet for a Small Planet*, she remains a committed vegetarian for the sensual delights of eating. "I eat wonderful food that just happens to be vegetarian," she says. While it was often a trial for her to cook for meat-eating guests when she ran Dairy Hollow, these days her



knew I had to do something to prevent this for myself." So for the past 20 years, Dragonwagon has been working out daily—using free weights, performing aerobics and practicing yoga.

Dragonwagon calls herself a "late-blooming jock" as she has aged. "It's hard to start exercising as an older person," she says. "The physical sensations of pushing your body hard with your heart beating fast are unpleasant until you habituate to them. But if you make a commitment to daily vigorous exercise for a hundred days without excuses, at the end of that time you won't be able to do without it."

What's her most useful trick for keeping on task? "I paste different colored metallic stars on my calendar for each kind of workout—that way I can track it."

Back in the kitchen, Dragonwagon savors a spoonful of her chocolate mousse. "Many people think they have to exercise to shrink their body or for heart health," she says, "but I do it volitionally, to expand my life and open my heart."

*Editor's note: For recipes and information about Crescent Dragonwagon, visit [www.passionatevegetarian.com](http://www.passionatevegetarian.com).*

## MENU ONE

### Lemon-Dijon Salad of Winter Vegetables

SERVES 4 TO 6

With both raw and barely cooked ingredients, this sprightly, very lightly dressed salad contrasts textures and seduces both eye and palate. It is full of flavor, freshness and color to spark even the grayest February day, and the snow pea greens add a breath of spring. These greens are sold in well-stocked markets. This salad is a good first course for almost any meal. To save time, use a bag of fresh precut broccoli and cauliflower bud mix, available in the produce section of most markets, and blanch them at the same time. Ideally, however, you

should blanch each vegetable separately. You will want to serve the vegetables cold and crisp, so plan ahead—even a day ahead—when preparing this dish.

**½ head cauliflower, cut into florets of uniform size**

**1 small crown broccoli, cut into florets of uniform size**

**12 prepeeled baby carrots**

**3 oz. sugar snap peas, optional**

**3 oz. snow pea greens, optional**

**1 Tbs. Dijon mustard**

**1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**

**1 large clove garlic, minced**

**2 Tbs. olive oil**

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste**

**½ bunch radishes, stemmed, and thinly sliced**

**3 scallions, ends trimmed, all white and about 2 inches of green, thinly sliced**

**½ bunch parsley, minced**

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil, and blanch cauliflower for 2 minutes. Drain well, and rinse cauliflower with cold water. Refill pot, blot drained cauliflower dry and roll florets up in a paper towel. Place in a plastic bag, and refrigerate. Repeat procedure with broccoli.

2. Refill pot, and bring to a boil again. Place snow pea greens in a colander, and set aside in kitchen sink. Blanch carrots, and



LEMON-DIJON SALAD of WINTER VEGETABLES

pour carrot water over greens to wilt slightly. Repeat cold water-blot-refrigerate treatment with carrots, sugar snap peas and snow pea greens, if using.

3. Meanwhile, 1 hour before serving, combine mustard, lemon juice and garlic in a large salad bowl. Whisk in olive oil, salt and pepper. Put all blanched and raw vegetables in bowl. Toss, season with salt and pepper again and serve.

PER SERVING: 90 CAL; 4G PROT; 5G TOTAL FAT (0.5G SAT. FAT); 0G CARB; 10MG CHOL; 105MG SOD; 4G FIBER; 4G SUGARS

#### Wine Suggestions

With the tangy mustard and lemon juice dressing, plus the addition of garlic, scallions and fresh parsley, a crisp Pinot Grigio is a good choice. Oregon's Peppi Pinot Grigio is one such crisp white with just a hint of apple and pear.

### High Desert Blue Corn Muffins

MAKES 12 MUFFINS

The remembered flavors, colors and aromas of Santa Fe: Blue cornmeal's grey-

blue-lavender shade is mysterious and shadowy, which is somehow the visual counterpart of sage's haunting aroma. Here, its aroma is subtle and gently enticing, barely noticeable at first. As the muffins cool, it grows more pronounced but not excessive. Sage is much easier to cut with scissors than to mince with a knife. Just stack the sage leaves, scissor once or twice lengthwise, then cut crosswise into tiny ribbons. If blue cornmeal is not available, substitute white or yellow meal. To make vegan buttermilk: Place 1 cup plus 3 tablespoons unflavored soy milk in a 2- or 4-cup measuring cup. Stir in 1 tablespoon lemon juice or cider vinegar, and set aside for several minutes.

- ½ cup piñon nuts
- 1 cup unbleached white flour
- 1 cup stone-ground blue cornmeal
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 Tbs. baking powder
- 1¼ cups buttermilk
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 2 large eggs, or reconstituted egg substitute to equal 2 eggs

- ½ cup granulated sugar, preferably semirefined
- ½ cup mild vegetable oil such as corn, canola or peanut
- 1 to 1½ Tbs. julienned fresh sage

1. Preheat oven to 400F. Spray a 12-cup muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Toast piñon nuts by heating in a skillet over medium heat, stirring or shaking pan almost constantly, for 3 to 4 minutes. When nuts become aromatic and golden, remove from heat and set aside.
3. Combine flour, cornmeal, salt and baking powder in a large bowl, stirring well. Set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk together buttermilk and baking soda. Whisk in eggs, sugar, oil and sage.
4. Stir combined wet ingredients into dry until mixture is not quite blended. Add piñon nuts with a couple of strokes so the mixture is just barely combined. Spoon into prepared muffin tin.
5. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until edges are golden brown and caps are high and rounded. Serve hot.

PER MUFFIN: 220 CAL; 5G PROT; 11G TOTAL FAT (1.5G SAT. FAT); 27G CARB; 35MG CHOL; 320MG SOD; <1G FIBER; 9G SUGARS

#### Cover Recipe:

### Quick Green Chile Soup-Stew

SERVES 6 TO 8 30 MINUTES OR LESS

In an ever more time-pressured world, "quick" and "good" become more and more what we all want. On those nights when we must eat now or our blood sugars will crash, try this. It's as fast as opening a few cans, but it is in fact uncannily good and healthful to boot. If you're serving it with the muffins above, put them in to bake, begin making the soup-stew, and all will be done by the time the muffins emerge from the oven. It is good, straightforward and unadorned, but you can serve it with any of the following options passed at the table: grated cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese or soy equivalents, low-fat sour cream or soy sour cream and minced cilantro.

- 2 cups black beans, undrained
- 2 cups kidney beans, undrained

HIGH DESERT BLUE CORN MUFFINS





2 cups garbanzo beans, undrained  
 2 cups black-eyed peas, undrained  
 1 28-oz. can chopped tomatoes with juice  
 30 oz. enchilada sauce, preferably New Mexico-style green chile, mild, medium or hot  
 1 cup canned, unsweetened pumpkin  
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1. Spray a large soup pot with nonstick cooking spray. Put beans, tomatoes and all liquid into pot, and heat over medium-high heat, stirring often.

2. When heated through, reduce heat to medium-low, and stir in enchilada sauce and pumpkin. Heat again, stir in salt and pepper and remove from heat. Ladle into large soup bowls, and garnish as desired.

**Variation:**

Omit pumpkin, using 1 large onion, diced, instead. Heat 1 tablespoon olive or veg-

etable oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat, and when onion has softened, add 3 cloves garlic, chopped, and sauté for 2 minutes more. Drain the liquid from the tomatoes and the beans over the onions. When the liquid comes to a boil, add ¼ pound fresh green beans, stemmed and sliced crosswise in ¼-inch wide lengths, as well as 1 large yam or sweet potato, peeled and diced into ½-inch cubes. You may also use or substitute several small scrubbed but unpeeled, diced Yukon Gold potatoes. Reduce heat to low, and cook, partially covered, for 10 to 12 minutes, or until potatoes and green beans are tender. Add all canned beans, tomatoes, and green enchilada chile sauce. Heat through, and serve.

PER SERVING: 310 CAL; 16G PROT; 8G TOTAL FAT (3.5G SAT. FAT); 47G CARB; 20MG CHOL; 720MG SOD; 14G FIBER; 8G SUGARS

**Wine Suggestions**

This stew of chiles, tomatoes and beans, whether you like it spicy or mild, calls for a

spicy red Spanish Rioja. Two excellent options: the silky Marques de Caceres Rioja Crianza or a big and very bold Sonsierra Reserva Tempranillo Rioja.

**Maple-Quinoa-Oatmeal Cookies with Pecans**

MAKES 3 TO 4 DOZEN COOKIES

These are subtle, delicate, gently addictive cookies—grown-up cookies, not the cinnamon-raisin chewy type of oatmeal cookies you remember from childhood. They are a whole new and delicious experience on several fronts. Instead of being sweetened with brown sugar, these contain maple syrup, which adds its own perfume and flavor. Be sure to use pure maple syrup, preferably the stronger-flavored grade B syrup. The cookies also call for three grains: whole wheat pastry flour, oatmeal and quinoa, the high-protein staple grain of the ancient Incas. An already quick-cooking whole grain, quinoa is now available in flakes, like oatmeal, which cook

almost instantly as a breakfast cereal and are also terrific in cookies. One or two of these cookies with a cup of hot, vanilla soymilk-laced *lapsang souchong* tea will warm any February afternoon—or any afternoon any time of year. Adapted with permission from Crescent Dragonwagon from *Passionate Vegetarian*.

- ½ cup butter at room temperature
- ¼ cup grade B maple syrup
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1½ cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1½ cups quinoa flakes
- ½ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup chopped pecans, preferably toasted, optional

1. Preheat oven to 325F. Spray cookie sheet with nonstick cooking spray.
  2. Cream butter using an electric mixer, gradually adding maple syrup, about ¼ cup at a time. Add vanilla, and set aside.
  3. Put flour into a mixing bowl. Sift baking soda and salt into flour. Add quinoa flakes and oats, and toss well to combine.
  4. Combine both mixtures with a wooden spoon, stirring until all ingredients are well incorporated. Stir in pecans, if using, with a few strokes. Do not overbeat. Drop batter by rounded teaspoonfuls onto baking sheet, leaving about 2 inches between cookies.
  5. Bake until cookies are firm, for about 15 minutes. Remove from oven, cool on baking sheets for a few minutes and remove to cool completely on wire racks.
- PER SERVING: 60 CAL; 1G PROT; 2G TOTAL FAT (1G SAT. FAT); 9G CARB; 5MG CHOL; 60MG SOD; <1G FIBER; 3G SUGARS

## MENU TWO

### Moroccan Carrot Salad

SERVES 4 TO 6

As Crescent Dragonwagon writes, this salad combines the faintly exotic North African seasonings, about which people tend to be love-'em-or-hate-'em, with the comfortingly familiar grated carrots. The carrots are blanched briefly before being

grated, which leaves plenty of texture but the raw edge is taken off. This is Dragonwagon's version of an early Paula Wolfert recipe from her cookbook *Couscous and Other Good Food from Morocco*. Reprinted from *Passionate Vegetarian* with permission from Workman Publishing.

- 1 to 1½ lb. carrots
- 3 large cloves garlic
- 2 to 3 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbs. ground cumin
- 1 Tbs. paprika
- ½ tsp. salt, or to taste
- Dash ground cinnamon, optional
- Dash cayenne, optional
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1 tsp. honey
- ¼ cup minced cilantro
- ¼ cup minced Italian parsley

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Drop in carrots, and blanch for 3 minutes. Drain well, and place in cold water. When cool, drain carrots. Remove any tough peel, and grate carrots.
  2. Put grated carrots in a bowl, and, with a garlic press, squeeze garlic over top. Drizzle in olive oil, starting with 1 tablespoon, and sprinkle on cumin, paprika, salt, cinnamon and cayenne, if using. Squeeze half lemon through sieve, and stir in honey. Adjust oil, lemon juice and salt to taste. Chill if desired. Before serving, toss with cilantro and parsley.
- PER SERVING: 90 CAL; 1G PROT; 5G TOTAL FAT (0.5G SAT. FAT); 10G CARB; 0MG CHOL; 220MG SOD; 3G FIBER; 6G SUGARS

### Quick Spinach-Split Pea Cakes

SERVES 3 TO 4

These are delightful burgers. Crescent Dragonwagon writes: firm-textured, mild and pleasing, with a base of spinach and split peas, reminiscent of a nonspicy falafel. They are simple and they satisfy, especially when put on a nice bun with tomato and a dressing. To make a vegan version of these cakes, omit the egg, add 1 tablespoon chickpea flour (also called *besan*) to the split pea soup and use an additional 2 tablespoons of water. Eat the cakes hot or

cold. Reprinted from *Passionate Vegetarian* with permission from Workman Publishing.

- 1 5-oz. pkg. dehydrated split pea soup
- 1½ cups boiling water
- 3½ oz. sesame crackers
- 1 large egg
- 1 10-oz. pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry

1. Place split pea mix in a food processor, and pour boiling water over it. Let stand for 3 minutes.
  2. Add crackers, crumbling them coarsely into split pea mixture. Add egg, and process, pausing to scrape down sides of processor to make a smooth, well-combined and thick mixture. Add spinach, pulsing to combine. Spray hands with nonstick cooking spray, and form mixture into 12 to 15 patties, 2 to 3 inches in diameter and about ½-inch thick.
  3. Heat a nonstick skillet over medium heat. When pan is hot, add 4 cakes and cook for 2 minutes, or until slightly browned. Flip over, and cook for 1 to 2 minutes more. Repeat with remaining cakes, and serve.
- PER SERVING: 240 CAL; 12G PROT; 3G TOTAL FAT (1G SAT. FAT); 41G CARB; 55MG CHOL; 990MG SOD; 6G FIBER; 3G SUGARS

### Layered Chocolate-Raspberry Mousse

SERVES 4 WITH MOUSSE ONLY  
SERVES 6 WITH TOPPING

Each of the components of this Valentine of a dessert is excellent on its own—but for a real show-stopper, layer all 3 in clear goblets and garnish the final composition with fresh raspberries, as pictured, or even sliced fresh strawberries. Chambord is a raspberry liqueur. You may serve a kissel warm over vanilla or chocolate frozen yogurt or tofu ice cream, or serve it chilled, as a kind of thin fruit pudding with a dollop of silken tofu-based "whipped cream" made from 1 package silken tofu, 2 teaspoons raw cashew butter, 2 tablespoons honey and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Or make it into a chilled fruit soup by adding 1½ cups

red wine and 1 cup plain soy or milk yogurt, and whisking all together well. You may macerate strawberries and serve them over pancakes, french toast or waffles, over vanilla frozen yogurt or tofu ice cream, or over raspberry or chocolate sorbet. The macerated strawberries are also good when combined with other fresh fruit, such as sectioned oranges in late winter or blueberries and peaches in summer.

#### **Chocolate-Raspberry Mousse**

1 oz. unsweetened chocolate, cut up  
2 oz. semisweet chocolate, cut up  
2 Tbs. raw (untoasted) cashew butter  
21 oz. silken tofu, firm or extra-firm  
½ cup granulated sugar, preferably organic  
½ cup unsweetened cocoa  
2 to 3 Tbs. Chambord  
Fresh raspberries, optional, for garnish

#### **Raspberry Kissel, optional**

1 16-oz. bag frozen raspberries, thawed  
3 to 4 Tbs. sugar  
2 tsp. cornstarch

#### **Macerated Strawberries, optional**

1 pint fresh strawberries  
1 Tbs. Chambord or Grand Marnier  
2 Tbs. granulated sugar

1. To make Chocolate-Raspberry Mousse: Melt chocolates slowly over hot water. As they melt, place cashew butter in a food processor. Add silken tofu and sugar, and process until smooth, stopping to scrape sides down. Add melted chocolates, unsweetened cocoa and Chambord. Process again until very smooth, scraping down sides as needed.

2. To make Raspberry Kissel: Drain 2 to 3 tablespoons of juice from frozen raspberries into a measuring cup. Put remaining berries in a saucepan with sugar, and heat over medium heat, bringing to a boil. Stir cornstarch into reserved juice to make a smooth slurry. When berries are boiling, stir in cornstarch slurry. When berries

thicken into a thin, clear sauce, remove from heat and add additional sugar, if desired.

3. To make Macerated Strawberries: About 1 hour before serving, stem and slice strawberries crosswise. Toss with 1 tablespoon Chambord and 2 tablespoons sugar. Set aside, and let stand until berries absorb flavor.

4. To serve, if making a layered mousse, divide mousse mixture, Raspberry Kissel and strawberries among parfait dishes. Or just divide mousse alone. Cover, and refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving. Top with fresh raspberries, if available.  
PER SERVING: 540 CAL; 15G PROT; 14G TOTAL FAT (6G SAT. FAT); 91G CARB; 0MG CHOL; 135MG SOD; 7G FIBER; 72G SUGARS



LAYERED CHOCOLATE-RASPBERRY MOUSSE



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