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JAY WALKING

Detoxing and Kamakazi Coffee Conundrums

By *Jacqui Zurcher*

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About two months ago I decided to detox. For a week I was a paragon of purification headaches, rye bran and endless glasses of water. Tall and proud I walked. I was turning over a new leaf. This was the new, healthier me. No more, the lactose-saturated latte mid-morning or the gluten-infested toasted sandwich for lunch. Chocolate with its sucrose, fat and caffeine was anathema, and I was able to abstain from it with surprising ease.



It was coffee alone that haunted me. The office kitchen, with its Italian coffee machine, became a battlefield. Whenever I ventured in to top up my jasmine green tea, the seductive aroma of warm roasting beans would invade my innocent nostrils. It would take all my self-control not to sink my hands into the coffee grinder's bean-holder and feel the silken pods slip through my fingers. Well, it was self-control and the fear of reprisals from my officemates who would be perturbed by my fingers in the communal beans.

But I resisted. For seven days I was invulnerable to the aromatic advances of my erstwhile morning companion. Seven days of self-righteous, herbal hedonism had me contemplating vegetarianism and a quiet life of reflective solitude. After all, I love freshly juiced carrots and peppermint tea is just the ticket for a stomach confused by the withdrawal of all familiar food groups.

I also managed to discover a whole new range of products in the supermarket that I now needed. Mung beans for sprouting. Chickpeas and lentils for soups and curries. I imagined my cool hippie-chick factor had miraculously quadrupled, simply by the presence of these exotic groceries in my trolley. Honestly, I think my sense of well-being had more to do with the new venture translating so easily into a form of retail therapy.

Yes, it was all going well. I was thinking of trying to find some tie-dyed flowing dresses and maybe even trying to crochet myself a jacket. But then, my old nemesis started to pick away at the foundations of my new lifestyle.

It started in the kitchen, as it would. The office kitchen.

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from the editor



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on, live a little..."
Leigh Robertson,
Highlife Editor

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I had decided I wanted some decaf coffee. It had been eight days since coffee had passed by lips.

There he was, bent over the coffee machine frothing his milk. Let's call him Randall to protect his family. When he spotted me, he looked up and politely offered to stop his coffee-making activities till after I had vacated the kitchen. How thoughtful! He knew I was avoiding caffeine.

I would have none of it though. He wasn't to worry, I was just going to get some decaf. He looked at me aghast. Decaf! He assured me it contained more toxins than the filtered stuff he was nonchalantly poring over his immaculately frothed milk. One small cup of the real thing is actually good for you, he explained. Oh yes, all the impurities remain behind in the filter.

I hadn't thought of it like that before. The decaf was sounding less appealing by the milli-second. "The secret," he continued "is all in the milk" and proceeded to casually demonstrate the most astoundingly foolproof way of making dense, frothed milk with a steam nozzle.

That was the beginning of the end. How could I not exercise this knowledge of superior milk frothing? I have, after all, been known to phone Verimark before the end of an infomercial to establish the price of a TurboWhip. Infomercials should reward you in some way for phoning even before they get to the hard sell. "If you phoned five minutes ago, you would have got this set of false teeth cleaning mugs free!!!"

But I digress. After the frothing revelation it was a slippery slope back to the land of now superior lattes, toast and chocolate. And there I happily stayed for a while, enjoying anew all the foodstuffs I had shunned for my week of cleansing.

Life was easy. I didn't have to analyse every mouthful and wasn't a pain at a restaurant.

But then, two weeks ago, I again decided to throw in the towel with all things caffeinated, dairy and gluten and climb back on the health bandwagon.

I'm not sure why I have decided to heed the call of the health fairy, but it could have something to do with having to use up the vast reserves of legumes and non-dairy milk powders that wouldn't see the light of day in my kitchen under any other circumstances.

Luckily for me, Randall seems to have moved to another floor.

More Jay Walking:

JACQUI ZURCHER lives in Cape Town near a house with very noisy rottweilers. She is a freelance journalist with an honours degree in Computer Science and a Postgraduate Diploma in African Studies, majoring in Postcolonial English Literature from UCT. On occasion she has been known to dabble in IT.


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