

moo me a river

Yesterday, as I basked in the gaudy shine of an over-decorated East Village Indian restaurant, I scanned the menu alongside some great company. Moller was visiting from Cincy, and as we prepared to order, a call was made to do it up tapas-style - - a bit of this, a bit of that - - happy tummies, happy wallets.

But, you see, I had to throw a wrench in the plan. I love my aloo mutter gobi, and I love it damn well, and I just don't fuck around with those other dishes. Plus, there was the meat factor - -after months and months of avoiding most forms of the stuff, in the noble quest to make peace with my cranky stomach, I was reluctant to throw curried animal haunches into my gut. (Now, on a sidenote, which I feel compelled to make - Im not one of those pet-the-bunny, don't-eat-the-bunny people; if the bunny comes slathered in Real Wisconsin Cheese and lightly browned, sautéed onions, the bunny's going *down*. Meat avoidance is purely for health reasons, people, *purely* for health reasons.)

So the group ordered lamb-this and beef-that and chicken-whatnot, and I sat content with my happy little pea/potato/carrot tureen. Moller, ever the observant lady, threw me a sideways glance and asked what was up with my lack of meatiness, my avoidance of protein. "Digestive issues," I offered.

What I should have really said was, "Uh, so this weekend, I careened full-tilt off of the mostly-veggie wagon and ate something beefy at this Vietnamese place, something steaky at this tapas place, something saucy/chickeny at this chachacha place, and then topped it off with a bottle of wine and a sausage/paté mixture upon my return to New York. Then I spent an entire evening curled into a massively tight ball on my bed, bemoaning humidity, small spaces, and my dysfunctional colon."

But I didn't say that. What I *did* do later, on an expansive Brooklyn rooftop, while gazing at the brilliant fireworks melting into the New York skyline, was grab a beef hot dog right off of the grill and in a frenzy, devour it in three bites. *Three bites*.

I'm still feeling a little rabid this morning, in case you were wondering.

--Shawnté Salabert, July 2006