

MEET THE CHEF



RENEE BRACAMONTE/Tucson Citizen

Lovin' Spoonfuls owner **Peggy Raisglid** makes plenty of vegan desserts at the restaurant, 2990 N. Campbell Ave.

**Peggy Raisglid,  
Lovin' Spoonfuls**

**Address and phone:** 2990 N. Campbell Ave., Suite 120, 325-7766  
**Hours:** 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat-Sun

When Peggy Raisglid, 50, first became a vegan 16 years ago, she didn't know what to eat.

"I didn't really like the grainy food that most vegan places have," says the New York City native, who earned a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Arizona. "I've always enjoyed cooking, and I enjoyed the challenge of being able to create some of the old familiar dishes using new, different, healthy ingredients."

Raisglid has cooked professionally for less than a year - just since the restaurant opened last summer.

**Question: What's your favorite restaurant to eat at in Tucson?**

Answer: The Thai China Siam Restaurant on Oracle (Road) south of Radasill (Road). Even though it's not vegetarian, they understand vegan so well that you can order a vegan version of something and they do a great job.

**Question: What's your favorite dish to prepare and why?**

Answer: We have this signature dish, the Picadilly nut loaf, and it's such a nice presentation with the loaf and the potatoes and the vegetables. When you give it to people it's like a comfort food.

**Question: What's your favorite dish to eat?**

Answer: A (pseudo) bacon cheeseburger! The burger itself is a soy burger with soy cheese and soy mayo and, of course, it's on an organic bun. It's delicious.

**Question: In your opinion, what's unique about the restaurant scene in Tucson compared to other cities?**

Answer: It seems like we have a great variety of restaurants. We seem to have more than the usual amount of restaurants per capita than other cities, which is nice in terms of variety.

**Question: What's your favorite or most-used kitchen gadget?**

Answer: The blender. I make a lot of dishes with tofu. It's a very versatile food, and I'll end up blending it for chocolate-mint mousse pie or filling for lasagna or even fried eggs.

- JENNY HUNSPERGER



> Raisglid's vegan Pecan-Caramel Turtles, Bran Muffins, **Page 7**  
> Chef profiles and recipes,  
[www.tucsoncitizen.com/diningguide](http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/diningguide)

These recipes are courtesy of Peggy Raisglid, owner of Lovin' Spoonfuls.

## Vegan Pecan-Caramel Turtles

- 240 pecan halves
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon vegan margarine (try Earth Balance brand)
- 1 1/8 cups brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup corn syrup
- 1/2 cup soy milk
- 1/4 cup silken tofu
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups vegan chocolate chips

Arrange 60 groups of four pecan halves, each group in a star pattern, on nonstick aluminum foil. Melt the 1/2 cup of margarine in a small pot over medium heat. Stir in the sugar, salt and corn syrup. In a blender, purée the soy milk and tofu. Add to the pot.

Cook to 245 degrees or until a test amount forms a firm ball when dropped into a cup of ice-cold water. Stir in the vanilla and remove from heat.

Pour 1 tablespoon over the center of each pecan star. Using a double boiler, melt the chocolate chips together with the tablespoon of margarine. Drizzle on top of the pecan stars, spreading evenly with the back of a teaspoon. Let cool.

Yields 60 pieces.

## Vegan Bran Muffins

- 4 cups 100 percent wheat bran
- 2 1/2 cups soy milk
- 1/2 cup firm silken tofu
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup vegan margarine, melted (try Earth Balance brand)
- 2 cups flour
- 4 tablespoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease an extra-large muffin tin. In a large bowl, combine the wheat bran and soy milk. Let soak for 5 minutes. Using a blender, beat the tofu until smooth. Add the brown sugar and beat until incorporated. Add the maple syrup and margarine.

In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and baking soda. Set aside. Mix the tofu mixture into the bran and stir in the flour mixture until blended. Fold in the raisins and walnuts.

Spoon into the prepared muffin cups. Bake for 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out mostly clean. Yields 8 servings.