

Libby Awards Announce Vegan Convenience Foods Worth the Indulgence

The people at PETA reviewed all things vegan to select a winner in each of 21 categories for their second annual Libby Awards. Hungry as I am with my expanded stomach from weeks of holiday splurges, the food winners peaked my attention the most. While I would easily be stricken down for identifying any of the winners as unhealthy, the categories of "Best Vegan Junk Food," "Best Vegan Ice Cream," and "Best Vegan Cookies," hardly scream "perfect for that new year's resolution." Nonetheless, wouldn't you like to know which foods might be worth it for a Saturday indulgence … that well-deserved break from a ridiculously healthy week? So without further ado, the foodie Libby Award winners as announced during the first week of January 2008 are …

Best Vegan Junk Food: Tings

The folks at Robert's American Gourmet took a bad hit early in the year from a product recall. I am glad to see that they have bounced back, as I can profess that these cheesy Tings are pretty tasty. Their entire product line fills the all-natural snack category nicely, but be forewarned that some products from Robert's American Gourmet do contain cheese. According to their site the following are vegan (dairy-free, egg-free): Baked Tings, Caramel Booty, Fruity Booty, Pirate's Swag Cranberry Trail Mix, Potato Flyers, Tings, Tubes, Veggie Booty, Veggie Chips, and Veggie Tubes. And, yes, the winner is of course the fried version of Tings, but we like the baked one too!

Best Vegan Cookies: Uncle Eddies Vegan Cookies

This brand teases me on the shelves of every store I shop at. The slightly indulgent price has allowed me to resist their pull, but such rave reviews make me wonder if just one little sample might be worth it. The neat little brown paper bags with see-through window (I do like to see what I am getting!) come in five different cookie varieties: Oatmeal Chocolate Chip, Chocolate Chip, Oatmeal Raisin, Peanut Butter, and Trail Mix.

Best Vegan Ice Cream: Temptation Vegan Ice Cream

This small Chicago ice cream maker came onto our dairy-free radar a couple of years ago, but their limited distribution kept us from tasting what many proclaimed to be the best dairy-free frozen dessert ever. Well times are changing, and this brand is popping up in more and more states by the day. Alas, I have not yet found them on the West Coast, but still hold out hope that their reputation will continue to help them grow. As an added bonus, Temptation is made in a dedicated dairy-free, egg-free, peanut-free, tree nut-free, vegan, and kosher certified facility!

Best Veggie Burger: Morningstar Farms Grillers Vegan

This must be one heck of a veggie burger to beat out the five great vegan varieties from Amy's Kitchen. Some veggie burgers tend toward a mix of veggies, nuts, and grains not pretending to be a traditional burger, while others do their best to give that meaty vibe for a better barbecue experience. I am guessing from the ingredient list, which is heavy in various forms of soy and processed ingredients that this burger's claim to fame is for its efforts as a mock beef burger.

Best Fake Meat: Gardenburger BBQ Riblets

Speaking of mock meats, these Riblets took the overall prize. It is hard to deny that the promotional pictures are very impressive. With the PETA thumbs up on taste too, I may have to come out from behind my faux meat fears to give this product a trial. This too is a heavy soy based product, and alas, not organic.

If your vegan curiosities extend beyond food, visit the PETA2 Libby Awards to see all of the winners, from Best Cruelty-Free Cosmetics Company to Veg Athlete of the Year.