

From the Silver Screen to Queen of Green

Alicia Silverstone introduces a kinder way to live with her new book, *The Kind Diet: A Simple Guide to Feeling Great, Losing Weight, and Saving the Planet*

Words by Vanessa Pascale

What is an interesting fact about yourself you think readers would be surprised to find out about you?

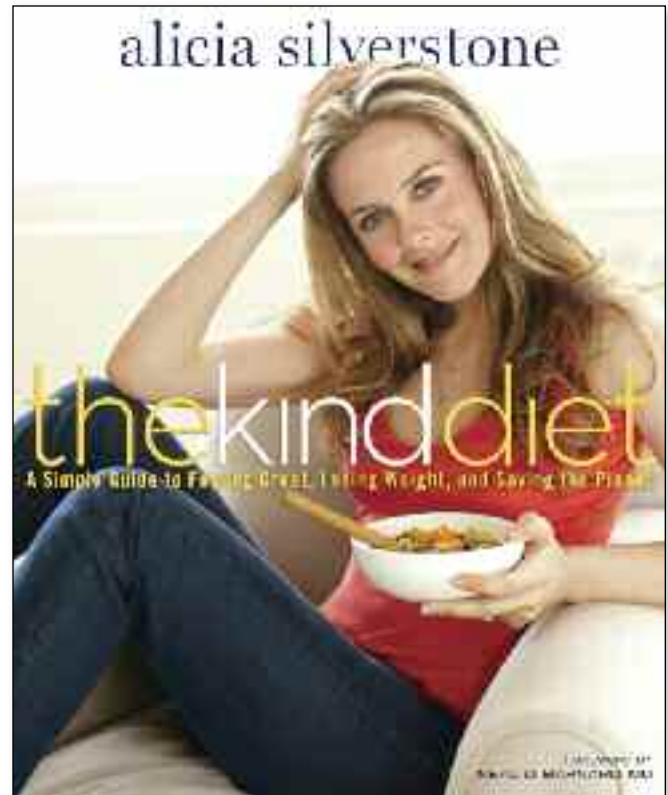
“I’m not sure about this one, but my husband says it’s that I like to watch boxing. When he’s watching it, my ears always perk up...and I love Manny Pacquiao and his trainer Freddie Roach!”

Alicia immediately apologizes for running a few minutes late upon entering the Venice Beach café. Her honey-blonde hair is pulled into a ponytail and her lean, petite frame is dressed in a fitted grey hoodie and eggplant-hued yoga pants — bringing to mind the scene in the sleeper hit *Clueless*, where Cher Horowitz is lounging around on the couch with Josh (**Paul Rudd**) talking about how binding her party clothes are. Here she is, up close and personal, someone that every female teen dreamed of being after seeing the movie.

The phrase ‘life imitates art’ rings true for Alicia, as the parallel between Alicia and Cher is obvious, at least to me. From glamorous actress (Alicia) /envied teen (Cher) to laudable philanthropist/dogooder —both transition into activists lending their popularity to more meaningful causes. Alicia has noticeably evolved into this amazing animal and planet advocate. And just as Cher said to Tai (**Brittany Murphy**), “We should do something for mankind and humanity...” Alicia is doing precisely that.

For the past few months, Alicia has made her rounds appearing on all the major talk shows and holding books signings for her first book, *The Kind Diet: A Simple Guide to Feeling Great, Losing Weight, and Saving the Planet*. I caught up Alicia, just as she was wrapping up her tour, to discuss her book, what she’s most passionate about, and her latest endeavors.

“Don’t you want to use your popularity for a good cause?” – Cher, *Clueless*.



Alicia has been using her fame for a commendable cause for several years now. A prominent voice in the **PETA** (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) crusade, she literally made a splash in PETA’s sexy first-ever naked veggie testimonial PSA. Alicia hasn’t limited her time to one organization. “I work with anyone who has a great thing that they want me to participate in, sometimes it’s PETA, sometimes it’s **PCRM** (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine), I love them, sometimes it’s the **Humane Society**, trying to get Proposition 2 passed... We’re trying to get foie gras outlawed in California. I’ve worked on all those campaigns. It just depends on who is doing what and when,” said Alicia.

But all that had to be put on hold when Alicia took on her “biggest project yet,” writing her book. “I’m only one person, so I can only do so much. The book took up a huge chunk of my life. It took me a 1 ½ years, even more now with the press part,” expressed Alicia. “Now everyone can always just read this, and this will be my form of activism.”

The Kind Diet: A Simple Guide to Feeling Great, Losing Weight, and Saving the Planet, a cookbook/diet book filled with thought-provoking knowledge, elaborates on how adhering to a vegan lifestyle is advantageous to your health, appearance and best of all, the earth. Packed with interesting facts and amazing success stories, it’s easy to read through this book quickly. You may find that, even if you are a die-hard meat lover, the wonderful and magical benefits outweigh your carnivorous tendencies. “If you read the book and you’re like, ‘I want to feel like that. I want to feel younger, look better, and not be dependant on medicine and coffee... I want to be free. I want to feel this amazing.’ There are three entry points: flirt, vegan or superhero. It also helps if you have any kind of illness,” explained Alicia. Don’t get discouraged if the adaptation takes some time. Alicia admitted that she “flirted” with it before fully becoming a vegan. “From the age of 8 to 21, I was a *flirt*, I’d play with the idea and then I’d give up. When I was 21 I became a vegan, I saw the images of what was done to animals and that was not acceptable to me anymore,” said Alicia soberly.



Alicia's 5 Ways to Become more GREEN:

1. Read The Kind Diet
2. Go to thekindlife.com and sign-up!
3. Eat as much plant-based food as possible
4. Use all recycled products when buying new (office paper, plastic utensils, etc.)
5. Get a water filter for your sports bottles and for your home and stop buying plastic bottles

Dieters would be happiest to hear that if you're on the "kind diet" you don't have to exercise. "No more, 'I have to go the gym! I have to go to the gym!' If you just changed your food, it would change your whole being and you would feel and look so much better. I want people to go on this diet, the diet of freedom, where there is no more calorie counting and you don't have to exercise. If you need to lose weight then this is the best way to lose weight on the planet. If you are an athlete, you can continue to be an athlete. Bruce Lee was a vegetarian. Robert, a body builder I mention in my book, totally vegan. We're really busting all the myths about iron, protein, calcium," Alicia said excitedly.

A Ray of Light

Beaming like the star she very much is, Alicia radiates passion for all aspects of her life. Certain subjects, especially theater, evoke an animated, exuberant tone. "I love theater so much. I did **The Graduate** on Broadway with **Kathleen Turner** a long time ago. It's so exciting and inspiring, and sexy... I love film too. I'm really open to whatever. I've had a really amazing run in theater, so we'll see what happens. It's really wherever the wind takes me." The wind recently blew Alicia back to Broadway, where she is reprising her role in Pulitzer Prize winner **Donald Margulies'** play, **Time Stands Still** (which began in January). "We did the play here (in Los Angeles), then they were asked to do it on Broadway, so they asked me to join them there. Same director, same writer, but it's a whole new cast: **Laura Linney**, **Eric Bogosian**, and **Brian d'Arcy James**."

The glow continues as she talks about her musician husband **Chris Jarecki**, who accompanied her to the interview (but stayed off to the side). As he passed by us during our interview, Alicia smiled coyly, then playfully stuck out her tongue at him. The two have been married for almost 5 years now (they began dating in 1997), and are clearly still very much in love—no small feat when you're a Hollywood couple. "My husband and I love watching old movies. We love **Giant** with James Dean, **A Place in the Sun**. We cook and play with the dogs, go for walks. I really love going to the beach, getting my feet in the sand, lying in the sand, walking in the sand," Alicia said wistfully. "Another one of my favorite things to do is to come down here and ride bikes. We'll have a glass of wine somewhere and ride bikes around. We're like a lil'bike gang. I have my lil' bell and my lil' basket," Alicia giddily expressed. "I love it! I do it all around **Abbot Kinney**."

And when she begins to talk about the music she's into, her eyes widen in excitement and she becomes amazingly animated. "I love, love **Ray LaMontagne**. You don't know him?" she asked. "Ohmigod, you would love him! I think. I don't know what kind of music you like," she realized. "He's amaz-ing. Ahh," she thoughtfully sighed. "His album, **Trouble** is so insanely beautiful." Sadly, I've never heard his album. What kind of music is it? I ask. "I don't know," she breathed. "It's beautiful. It's not rock. It's a man with a guitar and he's singing his heart out. What do you call that? Indie-folkie?" she laughed. "It's just amazing. And I really love **Jenny Lewis** and her band **Rilo Kiley**. Do you know them? It's like really groovy, sexy..."



Ahh, it's so good. I really love **Jeff Buckley**, *always* Jeff Buckley. **Etta James**, stuff like that." Hearing the way she speaks so fervently about these artists makes me want to go about and buy their CD. Really, hearing Alicia talk about anything that she's devoted to and cares about will have you believing that it's absolutely, the most wonderful, "groovy", "sexy" thing in the world.**ML**

Check out EcoTools by Alicia Silverstone

"I created this line of cosmetic bags. There are five different cosmetic bags. They're so pretty, totally green and cheap. I use them everyday, they're all I use. You can go to Target, Walgreen's or Wal-Mart. I was just trying to fill a need; there was no product on the market. There were no make-up brushes that do the smoky-eye-look that I do. They do the smoky look really well. EcoTools makes the softest brushes ever and they're doing it with recycled metal and bamboo, they're beautiful. There are no brushes, expect EcoTools that are cruelty-free and environmentally kind."

Can we look forward to Alicia introducing more eco-friendly products? "There are things that are stirring in my head, but now I need to do my play. I'll be on Broadway for four months and when that's done we'll see what I'm going to do. I wish there were 10 of me so that I could create all that I want to do, but you have to just go slow."

