

The Definitive Vegetarian Starter Guide

Brought to you by VeggieBoards

<http://www.veggieboards.com>

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This guide is for anyone considering adopting a vegetarian lifestyle. The change it can bring to your life can be very rewarding. This guide is meant to help you get off to the right start and give you information on the basics of vegetarianism.

What you will find here are: distinctions between the vegetarian classes, myths & facts about vegetarianism, reasons why you should go vegetarian, food ingredients you should avoid, transitioning to vegetarianism, miscellaneous things you should know, and resources to learn more on this subject.

One of the most misunderstood labels is pescetarians. They claim to be vegetarian except for occasionally eating seafood. Although well intended, they are not vegetarians. Vegetarians do not eat meat. Their diet choice is similar to flexitarians, which is someone who mostly eats a vegetarian diet but occasionally eats meat.

The classifications of vegetarians may be confusing. Therefore, we will define the different levels of vegetarians for clarification:

Vegetarian (or lacto-ovo vegetarian): someone who eats no meat at all but will consume dairy and eggs.

Lacto-vegetarian: a vegetarian who consumes dairy but not eggs.

Ovo-vegetarian: a vegetarian who consumes eggs but not milk/dairy.

Vegan: a vegetarian who tries to avoid, as best as possible, all products and byproducts derived from animals. The most common are eggs, dairy, honey, leather, silk and wool.

Raw Vegan: a vegan who generally does not cook food over 115° Fahrenheit (46° C). The reason why someone would choose this diet is because many vegetables lose nutritional value when cooked at high temperatures.

Fruitarian: a vegan who consumes only fruits and vegetables that can be picked from the plant without destroying it. The term fruitarian is commonly misunderstood because it is assumed they will only eat fruit.



When a human being kills an animal for food, he is neglecting his own hunger for justice. Man prays for mercy, but is unwilling to extend it to others. Why then should man expect mercy from God? It is unfair to expect something that you are not willing to give.

~Isaac Bashevis

Myths & Facts About Vegetarianism

MYTH: "Vegetarians get little protein."

Fact: Plant foods offer abundant protein.

Vegetables are around 23% protein on average, beans 28%, grains 13%, and even fruit has 5.5%. For comparison, human breast milk is only 6% (designed for the time in our lives when our protein needs are as high as they'll ever be). Professional recommendations for adults range from 2.5% to 10%, and plant foods supply that easily.

MYTH: "Vitamin B12 is impossible to get in vegetarian diet."

Fact: B12 may be less abundant in a vegetarian diet, but still attainable. Some vegetarian sources for B12 are: nutritional yeast, breakfast cereals, soy and dairy milks, textured vegetable protein, yogurt, cheese and eggs.

MYTH: "Meat is necessary to maintain a healthy diet."

Fact: A well balanced vegetarian diet is actually very healthy. Don't fall into a vegetarian junk food trap. Junk food is not healthy for meat eaters or vegetarians! Eat a well balanced variety of vegetable-based foods and you will get all the nutrition you will ever need. Even the American Heart Association has an article listing a range of health benefits, including obesity, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer. The website also lists some essential nutrients and vegetarian sources.

MYTH: "Vegetarians don't get enough calcium."

Fact: Many vegetables, especially green, leafy veggies are very high in calcium. Beans and nuts are also a good source of calcium. The truth is, vegetarians suffer less from osteoporosis (a deficiency of calcium that leads to weak bones) because the body assimilates the calcium they eat more easily during digestion.

Myth: "A vegetarian diet is all right for an adult, but kids need meat to develop properly."

Fact: This somehow makes the assumption that protein from plants isn't as good as protein from meat. **The truth is, protein is protein.** It is all made from amino acids. Children need 10 essential amino acids to grow and develop properly. These amino acids are as readily available in plants as they are in meat.



"If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian."

~Paul McCartney

Reasons Why You Should Go Vegetarian

1. The environment. Only a small fraction of the calories consumed by farmed animals are actually converted into the meat that people eat. This means that by raising animals for meat, we are literally wasting about 130 times as much excrement as the entire human population of the United States, and since factory farms don't have sewage treatment systems as our cities and towns do, this concentrated slop ends up polluting our water, destroying our topsoil, and contaminating our air. Raising farm animals is responsible for the production of 86,000 pounds per second! Whether it's the overuse of resources, unchecked water or air pollution, or soil erosion, raising animals for food is wreaking havoc on the Earth.

2. Animal welfare. Farm animals do not have any legal rights. They cannot speak for themselves. They are almost always housed in horrible conditions with almost no room to move. Sanitation is ignored as well. They must sleep in their own feces. And then they are systematically killed by the cheapest methods possible. Often times, the cheapest methods of death are also some of the most painful ways to die. It's no wonder why there are so many recalls on meat for being diseased.

3. Your health. Vegetarian diets are generally healthier than meat based diets. A vegetarian diet can lower blood pressure and reduces the risk of heart disease (which is the #1 killer in the US).

Your calorie intake will probably be reduced, thus you will probably lose some weight (if you eat healthy foods, not vegetarian junk foods). Usually, vegetarians consume more fiber than meat eaters, which profoundly decreases the risk of colon cancer. There are many more health benefits.

4. You may discover a whole new world of foods. There are so many wonderful ingredients that people completely overlook like seitan, tofu, nutritional yeast, curries, tempeh, exotic spices, lesser known veggies, etc. Similarly, there are so many cultural cuisines that most people don't even try that are full of flavor and have a good selection of vegan choices like Thai, Indian, Moroccan, Vietnamese, Ethiopian, Bengali, and Mediterranean. You may encounter chefs preparing vegetarian feasts concentrating on perfecting the balance of ingredients and spices to optimize the taste of food. When well prepared, vegetarian meals can be quite astounding.



“Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.”

~Albert Einstein

Common Non-Vegetarian Ingredients

BETA CAROTENE: Provitamin A. Carotene. Found in many animal tissues and in all plants. Used as a coloring in cosmetics and in the manufacture of Vitamin A.

CARMINE: Red pigment from the crushed female cochineal insect. Also goes by the names Cochineal, E120 and Red #4 (not to be confused with Red #40 which is vegetarian). Used in fruit drinks, yogurt and often in strawberry flavored items.

FATTY ACIDS: Can be one or any mixture of liquid and solid acids, caprylic, myristic, oleic, palmitic, stearic, behenic. Used in bubble baths, lipsticks, soaps, detergents, cosmetics, shampoos, foods.

GELATIN: Protein obtained by boiling skin, tendons, ligaments or bones with water, from cattle and hogs. Used as a thickener for fruit gelatins and puddings, candies, marshmallows, cakes, ice cream, yogurts, medicines, shampoos, face masks, other cosmetics.

GLYCERIN: A byproduct of soap manufacture (normally used animal fat). Also known as Glycerine. Glycerol. Polyglycerol. Polyethylene Glycol (PEG). Used in cosmetics, foods, mouthwashes, toothpastes, soaps, ointments, medicines, lubricants, transmission and brake fluids, plastics.

ISINGLASS: A form of gelatin prepared from the internal membranes of fish bladders. Used in foods and sometimes used in "clearing" wines and beers.

LARD: Fat from hog abdomens. Used in shaving creams, soaps, cosmetics, baked goods and other foods.

LEATHER: Suede, Calfskin. Sheepskin. Alligator

MUSK: Obtained from the genitals of the Northern Asian small hornless deer. Used in perfumes and food flavorings.

NATURAL FLAVOR: This elusive ingredient can (but not always) be meat derived. It can pretty much be anything.

PALMITATE: Palmitic Acid. Fatty Acids. From fats, oils, mixed with stearic acid. Occurs in many animal fats and plant oils. In shampoos, shaving soaps, creams.

PEPSIN: Obtained from the stomachs of hogs. A clotting agent. In some cheeses and vitamins.

RENNET: From calves' stomachs. Used in cheesemaking, rennet custard (junket) and in many coagulated dairy products. Also known as Rennin.

SHELLAC: Obtained from the bodies of the female scale insect Tachardia lacca. Shellac is used as varnish, as a coating on wood and plaster, in electrical insulation, and in sealing wax.

SILK: Shiny fiber made by silkworms to form their cocoons. They are boiled or roasted in their cocoons to get the silk. Used in cloth and silk screening.

TALLOW: Rendered beef or sheep fat. May cause eczema and blackheads. In wax paper, crayons, margarines, paints, rubber, lubricants, candles, soaps, shampoos, lipsticks, shaving creams, other cosmetics. Also known as Tallowate, Tallow Fatty Alcohol and Stearic Acid.

*"I eat everything that nature voluntarily gives: fruits, vegetables, and the products of plants.
But I ask you to spare me what animals are forced to surrender: meat, milk, and cheese."*

~Author Unknown

Transitioning To Vegetarianism

The transition to vegetarianism may or may not be difficult for you. We will discuss ways to manage this change and make it easier for you.

Some people can quit eating meat immediately while other people reduce meat consumption and gradually eliminate it from their diet over a few months time. Do whatever works best for you.

Many people experience constant hunger or a lack of feeling full for a short period of time when first going vegetarian. This will pass. Your body gets used to what you feed it and it needs time to readjust. Generally, vegetables are very low in calories. You may need to eat more of them to compensate for that lack of high calorie foods. This is an excellent opportunity to cut down on high fat foods and eat those veggies you mother kept telling you to eat when you were a kid.

You may want to consider joining a vegetarian group. They could give you one on one support and down to earth answers to your questions. Check with a local group in your area. Ask them what they do, how often they meet, etc. Groups are independent of each other, so not all groups do the same thing. In the process, you may end up making some new friends. Here's a website that has a fairly large listing:

<http://www.soystache.com/vegorg.htm>

Arm yourself with knowledge. Knowledge helps you understand why vegetarianism is such a good choice on so many levels. Join forums and browse around. On VeggieBoards, you will find topics ranging from animal rights to recipes and a lot more in between.

Restaurant trips with friends, family and coworkers may go much smoother if you research their vegetarian options before you go. These days, many restaurants have their menus posted on their website. If the restaurant does not have a website try searching third party websites for the menu. If all else fails, you can call ahead to ask what vegetarian options they offer. In the Links You May Like section coming up, there are links to four websites that have lists of vegetarian friendly restaurants around the world. They usually include a list of specific items they offer that is vegetarian friendly.

Attitude is everything. Don't look at vegetarianism as a chore. It really isn't. There are meat substitutes that are amazingly realistic. Restaurants and food manufacturers are catering to us now more than ever in history. You won't miss out on anything because all your old favorites are readily available. Being vegetarian is what you make of it. Have fun with it!



"Life is life – whether in a cat, or dog or man. There is no difference there between a cat or a man. The idea of difference is a human conception for man's own advantage."

~Sri Aurobindo

What Else Should I Know?

The ingredient list in this guide is not a comprehensive list. It is a list of the most common non-vegetarian ingredients. Ingredients can have multiple names. If you have doubts, search for information on the internet.

There is one thing that your body needs that does not directly come from vegetables: vitamin B12. No need to fear. Vitamin B12 is fortified in many vegetarian foods. One of the most potent sources is nutritional yeast. Be sure to read the package because some varieties of nutritional yeast do not contain B12. Nutritional yeast has a cheesy flavor and is one of the most nutritious foods on the planet (it's also high in protein, fiber, B1, B2, B6, Niacin and Folic Acid). B12 is also fortified in most energy drinks, milks (like rice/soy/almond milks), mock meats, cereals, vitamins, etc. Just read your labels to make sure you are getting B12. It is a necessity and easy to incorporate in your diet.

There is a lot of debate about whether soy is bad for you. Basically, it is just like any other food. It has its advantages and disadvantages. You can do research on the subject but most websites either say it is a healthy food or it is horrible for you. For an unbiased look at soy, visit this link:
<http://stanford.wellsphere.com/general-medicine-article/how-soy-can-kill-you-and-save-your-life/363232>
That link is to an article written by a medical doctor describing both the good and bad effects of soy.

When you browse forums, you may see some unfamiliar abbreviations. Here are a few:

AR – animal rights
Veg*n – short for “vegetarian/vegan”
HFS – health food store
Omni – omnivore (meat eater)
VB – VeggieBoards

As mentioned earlier, don't be afraid to try ethnic cuisines. Introduce your friends and family to these different options and if they grow to enjoy them, it can make restaurant outings with them much easier on you.

Although not required, you may want to consider buying locally grown fruits and produce. It helps support farmers in your area, saves a lot of fuel because the food is not being transported across the country, and generally, costs much less than grocery store food.

Lastly, remember that going vegetarian is a process of changing the way you live to make the world a better place through your own actions. If you have questions, visit discussion forums and ask them. Generally, others on such forums are very willing to give advice and guidance. If you make a mistake (we all do), it's not the end of the world. Learn from it and move on.



<http://myveggiekitchen.blogspot.com>

“Man is the only animal that can remain on friendly terms with the victims he intends to eat until he eats them.”
~Samuel Butler

Links You May Like

Information About Diet & Nutrition:

American Heart Association

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4777>

USDA's MyPyramid website

http://www.mypyramid.gov/tips_resources/vegetarian_diets.html

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

<http://www.pcrm.org/>

Nutritional Data

<http://www.nutritiondata.com/>

Information About Vegetarian Restaurants:

Veg Guide

<http://www.vegguide.org/>

Happy Cow

<http://www.happycow.net/>

Veg Dining

<http://www.vegdining.com/Home.cfm>

Vegetarian Restaurants

<http://www.vegetarian-restaurants.net/>

More Information On Going Vegetarian:

GoVeg

<http://www.goveg.com/>

Vegetarian 101

<http://vegetarian.about.com/od/vegetarianvegan101/qt/HowtoGoVeg.htm>

Vegetarian Resource Group

<http://www.vrg.org/>

Vegetarian Recipes:

Veg Cooking

<http://www.vegcooking.com/>

VegWeb

<http://vegweb.com/>

Miscellaneous:

101 Reasons To Go Veg

<http://www.flex.com/~jai/articles/101.html>

Vegetarian Quotes

<http://www.quotegarden.com/vegetarianism.html>

Citations

Introduction Page:

VeggieBoards

<http://www.veggieboards.com>

Myths & Facts:

Vegetarian Guide

<http://michaelbluejay.com/veg/myths.html>

Life Source

<http://www.yourlifesource.com/myths.htm>

Reasons Why You Should Go Vegetarian:

VeggieBoards

<http://www.veggieboards.com>

Common Non-Vegetarian Ingredients:

Vegan Wolf

http://www.veganwolf.com/animal_ingredients.htm

Transitioning To Vegetarianism

Black Vegetarians

<http://www.blackvegetarians.org/transition/tips.htm>

EatVeg

<http://www.eatveg.com/trans2veg.htm>

What Else Should I Know?

iVillage:

http://www.ivillage.co.uk/dietandfitness/nutrition/vitamins/qas/0,9582,250_163610,00.html

Lasaffre Human Care

<http://lesaffre-yeast.com/red-star/vegetarian-support-formula.html>

VeggieBoards

<http://www.veggieboards.com>

Some pictures were provided by members
of VeggieBoards.



"Non-violence leads to the highest ethics, which is the goal of all evolution. Until we stop harming all other living beings, we are still savages."

~Thomas Edison