

Go Veg

5

Easystepsto your
new veg life!

GUIDE



BY THE EDITORS OF

VegNews

Easy. Healthy. Delicious.

The essence of veganism can be distilled to just a few words, but a plant-based lifestyle is so much more than good-for-you food that also happens to taste incredible.

Today, being vegan means looking stylish without wearing animals, bringing new dimension and excitement to worldwide travel, and having the option to choose cruelty-free interiors in our cars. That's in addition to the pleasures of fresh, nutrient-rich meals bursting with color, texture, and flavor. There's just no reason *not* to choose a veg lifestyle.

If you've been considering taking steps toward more compassionate living, now is the perfect time. We enjoy gooey, melty cheese on our pizzas; hot dogs and burgers at the ballpark; and multi-course meals at Michelin-starred restaurants—all without artery-clogging cholesterol, quizzical looks, or ethical compromises.

And while plant-based meats taste divine, so do hearty kale smoothies, crispy smoked oyster mushrooms, and seared pumpkin-polenta cakes. The edible bounty alone is enough to sway someone on the verge of going veg.

Need another little nudge to get you moving in the right direction? VegNews editors are here to help. We live and breathe all-things vegan, and love sharing our knowledge and experience to help you live compassionately and healthfully, without extra effort.

In this guide, you'll find easy-to-digest information on plant-based nutrition, recipes to dazzle your taste buds (and your dinner guests), and useful tips for navigating the grocery store *and* social situations. Welcome to your new veg life.

—The Editors of VegNews

“I went vegan after having the simple realization that I love animals, and I didn't want to be a part of any process or system that contributed to their suffering.”

—Moby

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GO VEG FOR Your Health

The first question vegetarians are predictably asked by curious omnivores is, “Where do you get your protein?” Thankfully, it’s widely acknowledged that meeting your optimal health needs on a veg diet is easy and that, in fact, most Americans consume *too much* protein. So many plant foods in regular circulation at your local grocery store or farmers’ market are loaded with protein, including corn, potatoes, bananas, avocados, rice, and peanuts. Other popular veg-nutrition-related myths have been laid to rest by leading health experts, so we no longer need fear such things as calcium, iron, B12, or omega-3 deficiencies. With a balanced diet rich in vegetables, grains, fruit, nuts, and seeds, vegetarianism is a healthy lifestyle choice for everyone.

It’s a fact that vegetarians have a lower risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, certain cancers, kidney disease, and gallstones than their omnivorous counterparts, and because animal products are the only sources of dietary cholesterol, **plant-based diets are naturally heart-healthy.** Vegans’ blood cholesterol levels are typically 35 percent lower than those of omnivores, and by eschewing animal protein, you won’t need to worry about calcium loss attributable to high-protein diets.

Weight watchers will be glad to learn that vegetarians have a lower body-mass index (BMI) than omnivores, and a common experience among people transitioning to vegetarianism is that they immediately shed a few pounds, have more energy and stamina, and—perhaps best of all—feel better, having made the leap from meaty to meat-free. Best of all, **vegetarians live, on average, six to 10 years longer than meat-eaters,** which gives us more time to have fun with our friends and families, eat amazing food, and continue work that’s important to us. And did we mention we’ll have more time for enjoying vegan ice cream?



Veg Health 101

Meeting your nutritional needs on a veg diet is easy-peasy, but if you need a nutritional refresher course, read on.

- + **What you need:** Iron
- + **Where to get it:** Whole-wheat bread, kidney beans, broccoli
- + **What you need:** Calcium
- + **Where to get it:** Collard greens, dried figs, molasses
- + **What you need:** Vitamin D
- + **Where to get it:** 15 minutes of sunshine a day, fortified soy milk
- + **What you need:** B12
- + **Where to get it:** Nutritional yeast, soy milk, fortified cereals
- + **What you need:** Omega-3s
- + **Where to get it:** Flaxseed, flax oil, walnuts

“My motivation for going veg was athletic performance. I was simply searching for the best diet to fuel a high-performance lifestyle. I found it in the form of a plant-based diet.”

—Brendan Brazier,
Ironman Triathlete

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GO VEG FOR THE Environment

Veg Fact:
Factory farming
is responsible for
more pollution than
automobiles.

Carbon offsetting is *de rigueur* among today's eco-friendly set, but if you're already veg, you're already helping to make a difference. By merely eliminating meat and dairy from your diet, you're already doing more for the environment than if you were to exchange your gas-guzzling SUV for a hybrid.

When the United Nations released its 2007 environmental report, many were shocked to learn that industrialized animal agriculture is responsible for more greenhouse-gas pollution than all the world's automobile emissions. Livestock production also accounts for more than eight percent of global water use and is the number one cause of water pollution worldwide. When you consider that 64 percent of the world is expected to feel the stress of water shortages by 2025, going veg just makes sense.

As countries around the globe continue to industrialize and develop, the demand for meat increases. Sadly, 70 percent of what was once Amazon rainforest is now used for grazing animals, and with each tree that disappears, the earth's ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the air diminishes, placing a higher environmental toll on our already-burdened planet. A close examination of the big environmental picture and the role that animal agriculture plays in global warming will have you swapping that hamburger for a soy dog in no time.

fact

It takes 27
times more
petroleum
to produce a
hamburger
than it does a
veggie burger.

“I don't think it's ethically sound to hurt an animal when it's perfectly healthy and doable to survive on non-animal sources of food.”
—Emily Deschanel, actress

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GO VEG FOR THE **Animals** #3

If you love animals, adopting a veg lifestyle is the most profound way to align your actions with your ethics. Similar to dogs and cats, the 10 billion pigs, chickens, turkeys, sheep, cows, goats, and other animals slaughtered for food each year in the United States are sentient beings who deserve to live their lives free from pain and suffering. Today's factory-farming methods, however, don't allow them these basic rights.

In the United States, the federal Humane Slaughter Act stipulates that cows should be killed by being stunned by a mechanical blow to the head to render them unconscious before being strung up, yet assembly lines often process 400 cows per hour, resulting in live cows being dismembered, which is definitely *not* humane. The grim trend is also true for chickens.

Ninety-eight percent of egg-laying hens in the United States exist in overcrowded wire battery cages, where they can't preen themselves, perch, flap their wings, or even walk. New legislation is being introduced in several US states to allow our feathered friends some basic rights, but there really is no such thing as a "cruelty-free" egg or "humanely-raised" chicken.

The road to vegetarianism is often taken in baby steps, and eliminating fish from your diet might be the final phase before going flesh-free for good. Fish feel pain, too, and deserve our consideration. They have complex social structures and can even recognize specific shoal mates. Some fish will eavesdrop on their neighbors, while others employ tools—such as the South African fish who carry their eggs to a safe spot using leaves. If saying goodbye to your beloved tuna-salad sandwiches brings a tear to your eye, cry no more: Fish alternatives—from flaky tuna to golden, crisp crab cakes—await you at supermarkets around the country.

“Vegans can be sexy—super fun, super stylish, and conscious.”
—Pamela Anderson,
actress



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Tasty RECIPES

Here's one feel-good excuse for taking the veg plunge: the food! Once you give animal products the boot, a whole new world of culinary wonder reveals itself. When cooking at home, don't be afraid to experiment. Almost any dish can be made veg, so grab that apron and head to the kitchen! Delicious surprises await.



Baked Macaroni & Cheese

Mmmm ... macaroni and cheese. Everyone's favorite comfort food is traditionally loaded with butter, cheese, cream, and more butter. This transformed version with a super-rich vegan cheese sauce makes this mac 'n' cheese the ultimate comfort food.

Serves 6

- 4 quarts water
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 8 ounces macaroni
- 4 slices of bread, torn into large pieces
- 2 tablespoons + $\frac{1}{3}$ cup vegan butter, divided
- 2 tablespoons chopped shallots
- 1 cup peeled and chopped red or yellow potatoes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup peeled and chopped carrots
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup peeled and chopped onion
- 1 cup water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup raw cashews
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon minced garlic
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cayenne
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon paprika



1. In a large pot, bring the water and salt to a boil. Add macaroni and cook until *al dente*. In a colander, drain pasta and rinse with cold water. Set aside.
2. In a food processor, make breadcrumbs by pulverizing the bread and 2 tablespoons vegan butter to a medium-fine texture. Set aside.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a saucepan, add shallots, potatoes, carrots, onion, and water, and bring to a boil. Cover the pan and simmer for 15 minutes, or until vegetables are very soft.

4. In a blender, process the cashews, salt, garlic, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup vegan butter, mustard, lemon juice, black pepper, and cayenne. Add softened vegetables and cooking water to the blender and process until perfectly smooth.
5. In a large bowl, toss the cooked pasta and blended cheese sauce until completely coated. Spread mixture into a 9 x 12-inch casserole dish, sprinkle with prepared breadcrumbs, and dust with paprika. Bake for 30 minutes or until the cheese sauce is bubbling and the top has turned golden brown.

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GardenFreshRatatouille

Ratatouille, a rustic Mediterranean dish teeming with the seasonal flavors of eggplant, tomatoes, and zucchini, tastes even better served over polenta or couscous.

Serves 4

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 medium eggplant, diced
- 1 medium zucchini, quartered and diced
- 1 medium red bell pepper, diced
- 6 tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon roughly chopped fresh oregano
- 1 teaspoon roughly chopped fresh thyme
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon capers, drained and roughly chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh basil, thinly sliced

1. In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is softened, about 5 minutes. Add eggplant and cook for 5 minutes. Add zucchini and bell pepper and cook for 10 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and cook for 5 more minutes. All vegetables should be tender.

2. Stir in oregano, thyme, salt, and pepper and cook for one additional minute. Remove from heat and add balsamic vinegar and capers. Garnish with basil when serving.



Neapolitan Bars

Strawberry, chocolate, and vanilla come together in these sweet, simple bars. Each classic flavor is wonderful on its own, but combined in these bars, they're something spectacular.

Makes 16 bars

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- 1 cup strawberries, hulled and roughly chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dark brown sugar, packed
- 5 tablespoons vegan butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup plain soy milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dark chocolate
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup coconut or soy creamer

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and lightly grease an 8 x 8-inch square pan. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and sugar. Add strawberries, and toss to coat thoroughly.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together brown sugar, vegan butter, vanilla, and soy milk. Pour wet ingredients into dry mixture, and stir. Mix until just combined, and pour batter into prepared pan. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out dry. Allow to cool in the pan.
4. While the bars are cooling, prepare the ganache topping. In a microwave-safe dish, combine chocolate and creamer, and heat on high for about one minute. Stir thoroughly until mixture is smooth, microwaving for an additional 30 to 60 seconds to melt any remaining lumps if necessary. Pour ganache over bars, and let cool completely. Slice into bars and enjoy.



Let's Eat!

#5

Shopping for your veg staples should be a fun adventure. Take the time to enjoy the color and aroma of your purchases, and relish the opportunity to broaden your culinary repertoire. Next time you head to your local farmers' market, natural-foods store, or neighborhood grocery, take this handy list and rest assured you'll always have something on hand to whip up a tasty plant-based meal.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Avocados | <input type="radio"/> Maple syrup |
| <input type="radio"/> Bananas | <input type="radio"/> Nut butters |
| <input type="radio"/> Brown rice | <input type="radio"/> Nutritional yeast |
| <input type="radio"/> Canned black beans | <input type="radio"/> Oatmeal |
| <input type="radio"/> Canned chickpeas | <input type="radio"/> Olive oil |
| <input type="radio"/> Canned tomatoes | <input type="radio"/> Pita bread |
| <input type="radio"/> Coconut water | <input type="radio"/> Quinoa |
| <input type="radio"/> Dark chocolate | <input type="radio"/> Raw almonds |
| <input type="radio"/> Dark leafy greens | <input type="radio"/> Seasonal fruits and vegetables |
| <input type="radio"/> Dried pasta | <input type="radio"/> Tamari |
| <input type="radio"/> Flaxseed | <input type="radio"/> Tofu |
| <input type="radio"/> Non-dairy milk | <input type="radio"/> Tortillas |
| <input type="radio"/> Frozen fruit | <input type="radio"/> Veggie burgers |
| <input type="radio"/> Hummus | <input type="radio"/> Whole-wheat bread |
| <input type="radio"/> Jackfruit | |

Dining in or eating out has never been easier to enjoy, thanks to endless options of satisfying meals that don't include meat, eggs, or dairy.

Restaurant Survival Tips

When eating out, head for Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Mexican, and Japanese restaurants for a bounty of veg options. Some of the VN editors' favorite restaurant options include:

CHINESE Tofu-veggie stir-fry over rice; fried noodles with mushrooms and baby corn; vegetarian egg rolls

ITALIAN Cheeseless pizza with roasted vegetables; pasta puttanesca (hold the anchovies!); grilled vegetables on focaccia

JAPANESE Avocado sushi rolls; shiitake mushroom rolls; rice-stuffed inari

MEXICAN Black bean tacos; burritos with rice and refried beans; tostadas with fresh vegetables, lettuce, and guacamole

VIETNAMESE Fresh spring rolls with peanut sauce; Vietnamese crêpes with fresh greens and dipping sauce; vegan pho soup with rice noodles

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