

Vegan Living:

**Your Healthier, Environmentally-Friendly
and Cruelty-Free Lifestyle**



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More and more people are realizing that the vegan lifestyle provides a number of significant health, lifestyle, and ethical benefits. In fact, the number of vegans is growing substantially.



According to a 2008 report in Vegetarian Times, 3% American adults, 7.3 million people, follow a vegetarian diet, and one million of them are vegans. (And 23 million say they've significantly reduced their consumption of meat.)

Celebrities and public figures are standing up and taking notice too. From Bill Clinton to Ellen DeGeneres, more people with public sway are able to share the benefits with the public. This public awareness has led to more acceptance of the vegan lifestyle.

What Exactly is Vegan Living?

Vegetarians are people who choose to not eat meat. As with any lifestyle, different individuals make different choices. Some may eat seafood. Others might eat eggs and dairy too.

Vegans generally embrace an all-encompassing approach, and do not eat any animal products at all. That means they do not eat meat, eggs, fish, milk, or cheese. Some also do not eat honey because it is made by bees.

The vegan lifestyle doesn't stop at what you eat. It also includes not buying or wearing products made from animals. For example, leather, suede, and wool are all animal products. Someone who has embraced a vegan lifestyle would choose synthetic fibers or plant fibers over items made from animal skins or hair.

There are many benefits to adopting a vegan lifestyle. Yet it's not perfect – there are some drawbacks too. By understanding the benefits and being prepared for the drawbacks, you can make the right decisions for yourself. In this report we'll take a look at:



- The Health Benefits of Vegan Living
- How Vegan Living Benefits the Environment
- Why Cruelty Free is Better for Everyone

- The Challenges of Vegan Living and Tips to Thrive
- How to Stock Your Vegan Pantry

Let's start by taking a look at the many health benefits a vegan lifestyle provides.

The Health Benefits of Vegan Living



In growing numbers, doctors are recommending that people cut back on their meat consumption and eat more vegetables. It's certainly good advice, and those that take significant steps to go meat free and embrace a vegan diet are finding that not only is their health improving – and we're talking about significantly reducing their risks for the top four killers – they're also finding surprising benefits. Let's take a look at the benefits in a bit more detail.

Reduced Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

Plants do not contain the same type or volume of saturated fats that animal products do. Dairy and red meat are particularly high in saturated fat. While some vegetables do contain saturated fat – like avocados and nuts – these particular fats have been shown to actually be quite beneficial. When people go on a vegan diet and eliminate animal products from their life, their cholesterol goes down, their blood pressure often goes down and their cardiovascular health improves.

There is a cumulative effect that reduces a vegan's risk for cardiovascular disease. More fruits and vegetables means more nutrients and more fiber in a diet. Combine that with reduced cholesterol and saturated fats and you have a winning combination.

In a study reported on by The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, <http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/89/5/1627S.full>, *“plasma total and LDL cholesterol were 32% and 44% lower among vegans than among omnivores. Because obesity is a significant risk factor for CVD, the substantially lower mean BMI observed in vegans may be an important protective factor for lowering blood lipids and reducing the risk of heart disease.*

Vegans, compared with omnivores, consume substantially greater quantities of fruit and vegetables. A higher consumption of fruit and vegetables, which are rich in fiber, folic acid, antioxidants, and phytochemicals, is associated with lower blood cholesterol concentrations a

lower incidence of stroke, and a lower risk of mortality from stroke and ischemic heart disease. Vegans also have a higher consumption of whole grains, soy, and nuts, all of which provide significant cardioprotective effects.”

Reduced Risk of Cancer

Vegan eating has shown to not only prevent certain types of cancer but also reverse cancer in some patients who are dealing with the disease. A study published in Medical News Today showed that men who are in the early stages of prostate cancer were able to stop the progress of the cancer and in some cases were able to reverse it. (Source: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/28979.php>)

Colon cancer is another cancer that is commonly reduced or eliminated by a diet that is rich in fiber, fruits, and vegetables. Additionally in countries where meat and animal product is low, women have a much lower rate of breast cancer.

Reduce Risks for Type II Diabetes

Type II Diabetes is caused by insulin resistance, which is a common result from obesity and a diet that is heavy in starchy carbohydrates and fatty foods. Conversely, a diet that has a foundation of fruits, vegetables, and plants is low in fat and not only helps manage blood sugar levels but has been shown to promote weight loss.

Better Hair, Skin, and Nails

Many new vegans are surprised by how much their complexion improves. There are, as you might suspect, many reasons for this. Many people are sensitive to dairy proteins but don't realize it. Once they eliminate this food from their diet their immune system and digestive systems don't have to struggle. The result is an improvement in their overall health and your skin is always a good sign of your health. When it looks healthy and radiant you know you're doing something right. Your hair and nails are also a sign of vitality. The nutrients you provide your body with via a vegan diet have a significant impact on your health.

Better Sleep, More Energy, Fewer Headaches, and Reduced Allergies

Studies have shown that not only do vegans enjoy more energy and better sleep, they also live longer. In fact several studies have suggested that they live an average of three to six years longer than omnivores.

Additionally, many vegans report a reduction in their allergy symptoms, including less congestion and fewer runny noses. This may be due to a decrease in allergens entering their body or it may be that they simply have a stronger immune system because of their



nutrient rich diet. They also report fewer headaches including migraines.

Other benefits include:

- Improved eyesight and a reduced risk of degenerative eye diseases;
- Better focus and neurological function;
- Reduced risk for arthritis and reduced arthritis pain; and
- Reduced risk for osteoporosis.

So What Are The Downsides to a Vegan Diet?

When it comes to health there are a few downsides to a vegan diet. The biggest challenge is for vegan dieters to consume enough essential amino acids and protein. An essential amino acid is a nutrient that your body needs to consume because it can't produce it on its own. Amino acids are necessary for the body to make enzymes and for cellular function.

The easiest way to consume an essential and complete amino acid is to eat meat. Meat, eggs, and dairy are all sources of essential amino acids. However, vegans don't eat those foods, right? So what do you do? Well, there are plant based foods that you can combine to get a complete source of essential amino acids. For example, beans and rice provides a complete protein. This means that with proper attention to your diet and meal planning, vegans can make sure they're giving their body the protein and amino acids that it needs.



The other common nutrient that is absent from a vegan's diet is vitamin B12. This is easily taken care of by taking a vitamin B supplement or by consuming enriched foods. Calcium and vitamin D are other nutrients that a vegan needs to be sure to add to their diet.

While the health advantages of a vegan diet are substantial, a vegan diet provides benefits beyond improved health and vitality. There are environmental benefits too.

The Environmental Benefits of a Vegan Diet

Environmentally, we pay a high cost to raise animals for food. Cattle ranching in South America, which is globally ranked as the second-most environmentally damaging regional industry (coal is the first), is responsible for around \$354 billion of damage to the environment a year. (Source: <http://www.environmentalleader.com/2013/04/17/coal-cattle-ranching-most-environmentally-costly-businesses/>)

The environmental damage comes from emissions, followed by soil and water pollution and waste. In fact, about a third of all raw materials and half of the water used in the United States is required to raise animals for food. Farming is responsible for the majority of the pollution in North America and there are estimates that it is responsible for 85% of the soil erosion in the US.

You might be surprised to learn that 87% of the agricultural land in the United States is devoted to raising meat producing animals. And those animals produce methane gas which has a decidedly significant impact on global warming.

It has been reported that livestock produce up to twenty times more waste than the entire human population produces. That totals to more than two hundred and thirty thousand pounds of animal waste every second. While this may not be surprising to you, you might not know that twenty five thousand square miles of trees and rain forest are destroyed each year to raise food producing animals. (Source: <http://voices.yahoo.com/the-environmental-costs-factory-farming-ranching-249231.html?cat=5>)



These are the drawbacks of living in and participating in a meat dominant society. However, as you may well know, every single person can make a significant impact on the environment. By reducing the amount of animal food products you consume, you're helping to improve the environment. The authors of a University of Chicago study concluded that it would be more environmentally beneficial to go vegan than to switch to a gasoline-electric hybrid car, because of the vast amount of emissions created by raising and distributing livestock.

If everyone went vegetarian just for one day, the U.S. would:

- Save 100 billion gallons of water;
- Save 70 million gallons of gas;
- Save 3 million acres of land;
- Prevent 1.2 million tons of CO2 emissions; and
- Prevent 3 million tons of soil erosion and \$70 million in resulting economic damages

(Source: http://www.kathyfreston.com/kathy_freston_ask_any_question.html#abuse)

And while it's not an environmental cost, pound for pound, calorie for calorie, it's much cheaper to be a vegan. Meat and dairy are the most costly items in your supermarket produce section. A pound of carrots may cost only a dollar or two. A pound of meat costs around six dollars, and that price is increasing due to the rising cost of production.

One additional reason many people turn to a vegan diet is because it is cruelty free. After viewing films like *Food, Inc.* and learning more about how our food is produced, your attitude and your perception of animal based foods may change.

The Cruelty Free Benefits of a Vegan Diet



In the United States, more than 27 billion animals are slaughtered for food annually. The animals that are raised for food are generally not treated in a humane and compassionate manner. Common practices include:

- Cutting the beaks off of chickens.
- Castrating male cows and pigs without painkillers because painkillers cost money.
- Housing all animals in dark and crowded spaces without room to

move or ever experience sunshine or fresh air.

- Feeding livestock an abundance of antibiotics because they spend their lives wallowing in their own disease-ridden waste. (These antibiotics are then consumed indirectly by people who eat those animals, which may be contributing to a global antibiotic resistance.)
- Slaughter and preparation for the factory is often conducted in front of the other animals and while the animals are still alive. Some people believe that the negative emotions experienced by the animals during their slaughter is retained in the meat, which is then consumed by people. Their theory is that consuming this negative energy isn't good for health or vitality.

The solution is quite simple. When you switch to a vegan diet, you can save more than 100 animals a year.

Whatever your reasons for wanting to embrace a vegan lifestyle, the first step is to begin to replace old foods, like hamburger and milk, with vegan foods like beans and soy. Vegans can live a very satisfying life eating delicious foods. It all starts with a well-stocked pantry.

Essential Items for the Vegan's Pantry

If you enjoy cooking then chances are your pantry is already well on its way to becoming a great vegan pantry. The most significant changes you'll make include your protein sources. Because beans are an excellent source of protein and provide a complete protein when consumed with rice, we'll start your vegan pantry with beans.

Dried and Canned Beans

Beans may very well become your go-to source of protein. They're easy to cook, they provide protein and fiber, and there are almost as many different types of beans as there are colors in a crayon box. When buying beans you can buy them canned or dried.

If you're cooking dried beans and tend to get a bit gassy from them, consider investing in a pressure cooker. Cooking beans in a pressure cooker breaks down the lectin, which is the primary cause for digestive issues from beans.



When purchasing canned beans, look for beans that have no additives including no additional salt or sugar.

Here are a few types of beans to add to your pantry:

- Black beans
- Lentils
- Black-eyed peas
- Chickpeas (garbanzos)
- Great northern beans (cannellini)
- Pink beans
- Pinto beans
- Red or kidney beans
- Split peas

Whole Grains And Whole Grain Flours

Whole grains are another primary source of protein and fiber. If you buy in bulk, be sure to store them in your refrigerator. Consider adding the following grains and flours to your pantry:

- Barley
- Bulgur
- Couscous
- Millet
- Rice
- Quinoa
- Wheat berries,
- Triticale
- Corn meal/polenta
- Quinoa
- Teff
- Rice flour
- Tapioca flour

- Spelt flour
- Whole wheat flour

Oils, Vinegars, Sauces, Spices, and Condiments

One of the best features of vegan cooking is the abundance of flavors you'll get to enjoy and experiment with. Consider adding the following items to your pantry:

- Coconut oil
- Olive oil
- Dark sesame oil
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Safflower, sunflower, or other light-flavored oil
- Soy Sauce or Tamari
- Balsamic vinegar
- Red wine and white wine vinegar
- Rice vinegar
- Apple cider vinegar
- Barbecue sauce
- Pasta sauce
- Salad dressings
- Salsa
- Thai peanut sauce
- Curry sauce
- Miso
- Mustards
- Chili oil and paste
- Tahini
- Stir fry sauces
- Vegetable broth
- Nutritional yeast
- Spices – as many as you want or like
- Tomato sauce, chopped tomatoes, and tomato paste
- Relish and pickled vegetables
- Vegan mayonnaise
- Canned coconut milk



Pasta and Noodles

It's always a good idea to keep pasta and noodles on hand. And there are a variety to choose from.

Consider:

- Semolina pasta
- Rice pasta
- Buckwheat noodles
- Kelp pasta
- Soba

- Bean thread noodles

Nuts, Seeds, and Dried Fruit

Nuts, fruit, and seeds make exceptional snacks. They're also great for topping salads. Also, nut butters are quite tasty and can enhance a sandwich or a piece of morning toast. Nuts and seeds are high in fiber and protein as well as a good source of healthy fats.

- Tahini (made from sesame seeds and added to blended chickpeas for a tasty hummus dip)
- Almond butter
- Peanut butter
- Hemp seeds
- Peanuts
- Cashews
- Walnuts
- Pecans
- Sunflower seeds
- Pumpkin seeds
- Pine nuts
- Chia seeds – high in omega fatty acids
- Flax seeds – also high in omega fatty acids
- Dried cherries
- Dried apples
- Dried apricots

Fruits, Vegetables, and Vegetable Proteins

No pantry is complete without potatoes, garlic, onions and sweet potatoes. Also consider adding shallots to your list, and a variety of potatoes including red, fingerling, yams, and purple potatoes. Each type of potato provides different nutrients.

It should also go without saying that you'll want to stock your pantry with an abundance of fruits and vegetables. Always have dark leafy greens on hand, like spinach and kale, because they're nutrient dense. Also consider trying one new fruit or vegetable each week to help your diet stay well rounded and varied.



Vegetable proteins include tofu, tempeh, and seitan. Seitan is actually wheat gluten, so if you have a gluten sensitivity don't eat it. Tofu and tempeh are made from soy. Tempeh is fermented and is considered to be extremely healthy. Tofu is easy to cook with and generally takes on the flavor of whatever you're cooking it with. Soy is one of the most common genetically modified crops. If you're seeking non-GMO varieties simply look for organic tofu.

TVP, textured vegetable protein is another type of protein to add to your pantry. Its soy based as well and can be used to make a variety of meals including “burgers.”

Dairy and Egg Alternatives



Cow’s milk is not vegan. If you drink cow’s milk or enjoy cheese you’ll want to try a variety of dairy alternatives. Consider:

- Coconut milk
- Rice milk
- Hemp milk
- Almond milk
- Soy milk
- Vegan cheese – many soy cheese products contain casein which is a dairy protein (you’ll need to search for “Vegan” cheese to find good alternatives)
- Egg substitute – essential for baking

Other Essentials

- Breads – make sure there aren’t eggs or dairy in the bread. Look for “vegan” labeling
- Tortillas (corn and flour) – Again, make sure they’re vegan. Many tortillas have lard as an ingredient
- Pita or naan

Eating Out and Dining at Friend’s - Tips for Going Vegan

There are many challenges to adapting a vegan lifestyle. Some of them will be easier to overcome than others. For example, you may have an easy time dealing with the opinions of meat eaters but a tricky time finding foods that are vegan friendly. Let’s take a look at some of the more common challenges and tips to help you maneuver through them.

#1 No Vegan Friendly Substitutes

There are some areas where you’ll be challenged to find a true vegan option. This happens often at restaurants where meat is the only thing on the menu. The good news is that as vegan awareness increases, more and more restaurants are offering vegan menu items. Consider making



a list of restaurants that do offer vegan menu items and steering friends and family toward those establishments.

When at the supermarket, the key to finding vegan friendly substitutes is to learn to read labels. For example, many soy based foods like yogurt and cheese can still contain dairy. Some condiments and sauces have casein in them as well, which is a protein from cow's milk.

#2 Adapting Your Taste Buds

While vegan foods are delicious it can be difficult to adapt your taste buds to some of the vegan options. For example, a bean burger isn't going to taste like a beef hamburger. You'll be better able to adapt if you are able to let go of preconceptions about what something is supposed to taste like. A garden burger may not taste like a hamburger, but it can still be a tasty meal.

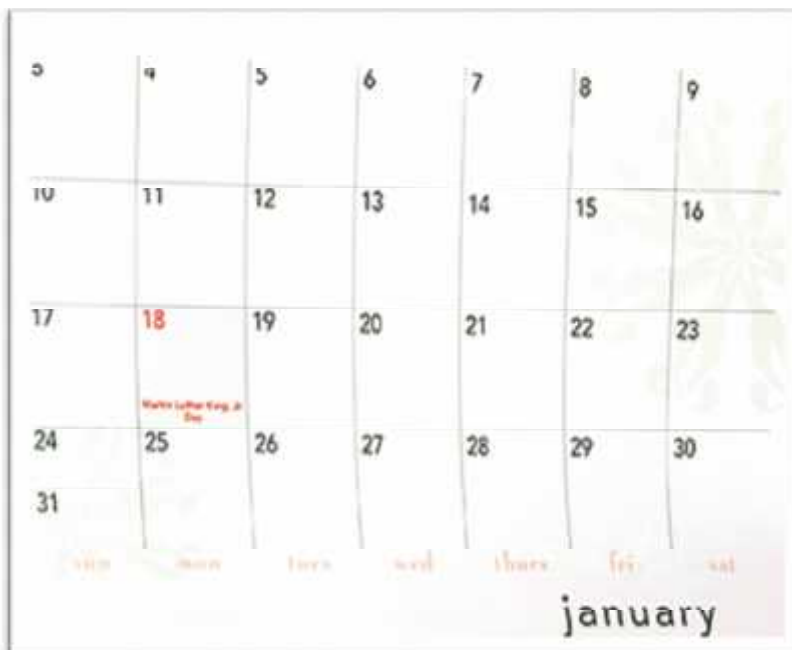
If you find you're struggling, consider easing into a vegan lifestyle. Try to go meatless for one day or for the majority of your meals. Mark Bittman, an author and food columnist for the New York Times, recommends being meatless before 5pm. Dinner would then be the only meal of the day where you consume animal products. As your taste buds and lifestyle adapt, you may find that it's much easier to be vegan.

#3 Social Expectations

We live in a meat eating society. You may face criticism and judgment from your friends and family for your eating choices. There are two basic ways to approach this.

The first is to explain why you made the choice to live a vegan lifestyle and to share how much you're enjoying your vitality, wellness, and the amazing Tiramisu Pancakes you had for breakfast today. Or you can tell them that it's your choice and they just need to respect it.

How you approach the criticism depends on your personality and who you're dealing with.



#4 Meal Planning and Whole Nutrition

To be healthy it's important to meal plan and to make sure you're getting enough vegetables and fiber. Many vegans inadvertently fall into a starchy carbohydrate habit because bread and muffins are easy and convenient. Try to find a few good recipes and vegan cookbooks and start experimenting. You're

going to be amazed at the many delicious recipes. You won't feel like you're depriving yourself or missing out.

#5 Cravings

Cravings can happen when you first transition to a vegan lifestyle. Many people who consume a lot of dairy find that they really miss the taste and the creaminess of dairy. Try non-dairy desserts in your supermarket's freezer. Coconut milk based products are quite creamy and have a similar texture. Avocados are also a lovely treat because they're high in fat like dairy and they have a creamy texture when they're mashed. If you're craving a hamburger, try a veggie burger with the works, lettuce, tomato, onion and more.

Final Thoughts for Your Cruelty-Free Lifestyle

If you're struggling to fully embrace a vegan lifestyle have patience with yourself. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. Learn your triggers and make adjustments as you go. You may want to find a vegan friend or online forum for support and motivation.

Living a vegan lifestyle is rewarding and a life change that you'll be happy you made. Remember your reasons for changing the way you eat. You're living a much healthier lifestyle. You're improving the environment and you're saving millions of animals from cruelty.



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