

VEGAN DIET



A COMPLETE GUIDE TO A CRUELTY FREE DIET

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Introduction

It seems that more and more every day we are hearing something about the vegan lifestyle. Most of us probably know somebody who is a vegetarian or a vegan, or who simply seem curious about the idea of going meat-free. What exactly is the appeal?

People go vegan for a number of reasons, most of which are very personal to them. Of course you may find those who are very emotionally connected to their cause and seek to inform and educate others on cruelty-free procedures so that their message can be heard. Advocates of a vegan lifestyle can get a bad rap, probably because it seems like a very extreme adjustment and some of the ways animals are treated can be truly heartbreaking. Some vegans may take it upon themselves to try and force others to care or understand in ways that can actually really turn the modern masses off of the message.

That's because our diets are something personal to us. We all have the right to choose the way we eat, and it is a privilege that in this day and age we have the resources available to us to actually cut meat out of our lives safely. Ethical practices for raising certain animals in the agricultural industry have come about because of the advocacy of groups that are passionate about animal welfare, and for those of us who are interested in veganism but not quite ready to make it an active lifestyle, that's okay. You can still make informed choices about where you get your food from, and what it takes to get from point A to what you find on your plate.

Whether you are reading this book to learn more about veganism and what it means, or you are seriously considering a vegan lifestyle and want a guide to help to show you the way, this book will help you to learn the basics of going vegan and how it can benefit not only your body and mind, but also the world around us. Let's get started!



**1Month
Vegan
Challenge**

**TRYING VEGAN HAS
NEVER BEEN SO EASY**

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A smiling woman with long brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a grey sports bra, holds a glass bowl of green salad and a fork with a cherry tomato. The background is a vibrant green with a subtle pattern of white dots and lines.



What is a Vegan Lifestyle and Why Does It Matter?

Chapter 1

A lot of people are unclear about veganism and what it stands for. Many of us have an idea in our minds about what it could mean. Does it mean becoming militant about animal rights and lecturing the people closest to us about their unethical food choices?

Does it mean living a more peaceful lifestyle that is automatically more healthy because we are supposed to be eating more fruits and vegetables and less of the red meat that has been linked with heart disease? Does it mean cutting out every single food associated with animals, or just some?

Maybe these questions can seem silly, but they are valid. A vegan lifestyle is something that is often unfamiliar to people and so it is natural to wonder about it. This book will help to guide you through all the questions you may have and provide tools and resources for those questions the guide may not address. Chances are if you have asked, someone else out there has as well, and has found the answers you are looking for!

But let's start with the basics. A vegan lifestyle is one in which the person undertaking it is conscientious about the origins of the products they use and the foods that they eat. A vegan views the world with a particular passion to be as animal-friendly as possible. The unfortunate truth about the world is that some practices utilized in order to feed the masses are inhumane and can cause needless suffering to animals. Vegans aim to try and stop that suffering by refusing to support the industries that allow it to exist in the first place.

For example, a vegan who is living the vegan lifestyle will likely do a lot of research before purchasing any products. They will most likely want to know where the product's origin is located and ensure that no living creature was needlessly harmed or suffered for the making of the product. They want to live with a clear conscience. Many vegans are also humanitarians, who will go as far as researching their clothing and coffee to make sure that the businesses they support are not causing harm to less fortunate people or communities. How far you take your lifestyle is up to you, but ignorance is a choice that can be difficult to live with.

To answer a few other questions, vegans do not eat meat at all. They also do not eat any byproducts of animals. Animal byproducts are foods that are produced with animals involved, such as milk, cheese, eggs, and other dairy items. They choose not to use animal byproducts because practices can often be cruel. Take the egg industry, for instance. When the baby chicks are born, they are sorted into categories of male and female. The female chicks are taken to farms, where they are often fed growth hormones or forced in pens that are lit with artificial daylight 24/7 so they will lay eggs constantly. The male chicks are disposed of in dumpsters, left there to starve to death or suffocate.

This is an inhumane practice. It doesn't take much to understand how horrifying these conditions are. Vegans do not want to support anything that can cause harm and suffering of this caliber. They do not want to support factory farms or dairy farms where animals are mistreated and not allowed to live their fullest, healthiest lives. The goal is to show the rest of the world that such mistreatment does not need to happen and will not be tolerated. Money talks, and vegans use theirs to support businesses that align with their personal moral code.

It may seem trivial to some people. They may say it's pointless, because there is no way we will ever change the world enough that people will voluntarily give up their diet choices in lieu of veganism. The animals will still be slaughtered, everything will go on as it was before because there will always be a high demand for meat. And in ways this may be true. But even if the whole world continues to eat meat and support inhumane practices, the choices you make will always make a difference to the animals you chose not to eat that day. And that's what veganism is all about.



What is the Difference Between Vegetarianism and Veganism?

Chapter 2

A common question that many people have is, what is the difference between veganism and vegetarianism? A lot of people may get confused and think that they are the same thing, when in fact they are vastly different.

To begin with, there are several different categories for vegetarians. Lacto-ovo vegetarians include lactose and eggs in their diets. However, they will not include meat products or poultry into their diets. Lacto vegetarians will not include eggs in their diets, but they do consume dairy. They also prefer not to eat other animal products. Then we get to vegans, who will not eat any egg or dairy products, or products that have utilized animals in any way whatsoever.

There are many people out there who call themselves vegetarians even though they will occasionally eat meat here and there. Some may not consider eating seafood to be a meat, so if you are going vegan you may find that you get the question, "Do you eat fish?" a lot. Just do your best to be polite when discussing your diet choices. Many people are unfamiliar with the vegan lifestyle, and the more compassion you show to them for being curious, the more likely you will be to receive compassion in return. Isn't that what going vegan is all about?

A lot of people don't know the difference between vegans and vegetarians, so rather than asking if a food is vegan, which may cause people to answer in the mindset of "no, there isn't any chunks of meat in this," versus, "No, there are no animals or animal byproducts present in this dish." That can cause some strife, not just for the vegan but for the person who is attempting to be hospitable.

Sometimes it's just easier to say that while you appreciate the good intentions, you are going to be providing your own foods at certain social gatherings or events, that way there is no mistaking what it is that you are putting into your body.

A person who thinks a vegan diet and a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet are the same thing can easily violate a vegan's boundaries by feeding them things that may have cheese or dairy in it because they misunderstand the meanings of the words or they simply haven't looked into it well enough. What is a lacto-ovo vegetarian you may ask? A lacto-ovo vegetarian is someone who does not eat meat, but who does eat animal byproducts such as cheese and eggs. They have not cut out dairy from their diets the way a vegan would. It's an easy mistake to make, especially for those who are uninformed.

There are other types of vegetarians as well. Some are called ovo-vegetarians and they eat only eggs and non-meat products. Lacto-vegetarians don't eat meat or any eggs or egg products. And then of course there is the flexitarian, who eats a mostly vegetarian diet but every so often will include meat in their diet. Another thing a lot of people consider vegetarianism is pescatarian, which actually means a vegetarian diet with the exception of eating fish. That is probably why a lot of people think that being vegan or vegetarian can mean that you still include fish in your diet. So this may be a question you get a lot once you have adopted a vegan lifestyle.

There is no shame in any way you choose to live your life or the diet that works best for you and your body's specific needs. It is important not to shame others for the way they live their lives, especially if you want to begin to create a more tolerant world that is accepting of the ideologies veganism often stands for. By being receptive, we create a more receptive world that is more likely to listen to our point of view in a way that doesn't feel threatening to them so they may choose one day to try it for themselves and see how it feels. Even just a single meatless Monday can be a huge step in helping to eliminate needless suffering in animals.

That isn't to say you have to associate with people who make you feel ashamed to live the way you choose to live and for the way you eat. Treat others as you wish to be treated. And just as no vegan wants to be in the position of the suffering animals, neither do they want to be in a toxic atmosphere where people are making them feel ashamed for the choices they make. If you find that you are in a toxic environment then you would do well to find a way out as quickly as possible so you may begin to live your life in a healthier way.

Once you have decided what label best fits you in terms of your diet, it will be easier for you to explain what your diet is like to those who matter the most to you. Once they understand your specific limitations then there is a high chance they will do everything in their power to accommodate you, which can be a great thing.

Now that we have cleared up the difference between vegetarianism and veganism, let's move on to applying it to our lives.

[Don't Make Another Smoothie Until You Read This...](#)

A person wearing a yellow glove is stirring a wok filled with colorful vegetables. The background is dark with large, stylized teal and blue geometric shapes.

Staying Healthy While Living Vegan

Chapter 3

Most people assume, wrongly, that a vegan diet is automatically going to be very healthy and good for you. Unfortunately, that is not necessarily the case. If you are eating vegan, sure, you are probably going to be getting more vegetables and fruits and leaner protein sources, but that is only if you are making an active effort to make sure your diet is including the things that are the best for you to eat.

Some vegetarians and vegans get away with eating a carb-filled diet that simply includes cutting meat out and still eating the unhealthy Standard American Diet. This diet is also referred to as the “SAD” diet, because it is severely lacking in nutritional content and is high in saturated fats and other things that are detrimental to your body. They think that by living without meat, they are still making healthy choices for their bodies.

Unfortunately, that really isn't the case. Exempting meat from your diet doesn't automatically make you a healthier person. In fact, if you aren't paying attention to your diet, it can become very nutritionally deficient. There are certain nutrients that vegans have to pay close attention to. They need to make sure that they are getting these vitamins and nutrients from sources outside of meat, otherwise their bodies can begin to slowly suffer.

Vitamin deficiencies are no laughing matter. The most important vitamins and nutrients for vegans to pay attention to are iron, vitamin B12, vitamin B6, and omega 3 fatty acids. It would also help to make sure you are getting enough protein from plant sources, such as soy. Diets lacking in animal proteins and other animal byproducts can easily cause deficiencies that, over time, can lead to anemia and heart problems, among other things.

It is very important for vegans to plan out the ways they will get foods that are fortified with these minerals. You can look into supplements, but of course eating these things in foods is the easiest way for your body to absorb nutrients. For example, rather than taking an iron supplement, which can sometimes cause gastrointestinal discomfort or constipation, you might instead look into foods that are high in iron, or fortified with iron so that you know for sure that you are getting all of the vitamins and minerals your body needs to remain as healthy as possible on your new diet.

It is a huge mistake to assume that simply having the will to cut meat out of your diet is going to equate to a healthy lifestyle.

However, it is true that cutting meat out of your diet will help you lose weight somewhat drastically, depending on your body type. Still, you would of course benefit from a healthy lifestyle that includes exercise and a good grasp of the vitamins and minerals that you are getting. Talk to your doctor about getting a physical and bloodwork done to keep an eye on the nutrients that you may or may not be deficient in. That way, you will always be ahead of the game and prevent yourself from any potential deficiencies that could affect you later in life.



Protein, Protein, Protein!

Chapter 4

Most vegans loathe the protein question, although it is fair. It can be difficult to build strong, healthy muscles without enough protein in your diet, and a lot of people have an image in their minds of vegans being sickly and feeble because they are simply lacking in the nutrients that are abundant in a diet that includes meat and meat byproducts.

Fortunately, there are many sources of protein that are not necessarily meat-based, and as a vegan it is important to know what they are. Some of these foods may end up being an acquired taste, but they do the trick none the less. One popular protein choice for vegans is seitan. Seitan is certainly filling, and is made primarily of wheat gluten. You can make it for yourself or buy it pre-made and flavored. Both options are good, and can create very hearty meals that are similar to the kinds of meals you have with animals on the plate, minus the cruelty!

Tofu and other soy products contain protein as well. While many people do not like the taste of tofu, others find that soy products can be very similar to the foods they are missing when they are prepared well and flavored properly. Tofu is like a blank canvas, and when given the proper treatment, it can emulate several different types of dishes. That is what makes it a very popular choice for meat substitutes. Eventually you may find that you get used to the flavor of soy products and that you hardly miss meat at all!

Another source of protein that many people overlook is plant proteins. Plant proteins can be found in many vegetables, including but not limited to leafy greens, edamame, and green peas. Getting a lot of these foods in your diet can be incredibly beneficial for any vegan.

Significant sources of protein include beans and lentils, chickpeas, hempseeds, and several other grains as well. Spirulina can also contain nutrients that are crucial for vegans, including protein. Spirulina is from the sea, and is made of seaweed concentrated often into a powder. This can make a great addition to morning shakes and smoothies.

Tempeh is another good source of protein and a good, filling option for those who want to live on a cruelty free plant based diet. While the taste may be unique at first, it can be a great substitute for those hearty foods that you may begin to miss when going on a plant-based diet.

There are all kinds of sources of protein for any vegan who wants to look for them. It can be very important to include this essential nutrient into your diet, but if you are doing well at keeping up on your nutrition and including these sources of protein in with the foods you eat on a daily basis, then you should have no issue in gaining muscle and maintaining proper health!

Your Ultimate Go-To Master Game Plan



Old Habits Die Hard, Here's How

Chapter 5

Building new habits is probably one of the hardest parts about beginning any new lifestyle. A vegan lifestyle is particularly challenging at first because you often go from not paying much attention to the ingredients in your food to having to do a lot of research to figure out what all those ingredients on boxes of processed foods are and whether or not they may be ethical or healthy.

Much of the time, going vegan is most easily achieved by cutting out these processed foods altogether and sticking to fresh fruits and vegetables and plant proteins to make up your daily meals. This can make going vegan much easier.

Regardless, starting new habits can be challenging, and sticking to a vegan diet may prove to be difficult. Especially if you have an emotional attachment to certain foods. But that doesn't mean you have to give up everything you love. It simply means that you have to get used to making compromises and learn to be happy with the replacement ingredients while maintaining loyalty to the foods as a concept.

Most of the time, building a new habit takes a fair amount of time. Some people may pick certain things up more easily than others, and that is okay too. One person may struggle on a weekly basis with a vegan diet or temptations of foods that contain animal proteins or meat byproducts, while others may be able to quit cold turkey. Either of these is okay, and it doesn't make one person more or less vegan than the other to simply have cravings or meals that they miss deeply. Food is a very personal topic, and judging others for their relationship to it is unproductive and cruel.

Instead, focus on the ways you can begin to build healthier habits for yourself and things you can do to stay on track with your vegan diet.

One of the best things you can do to begin building your habits is to maintain accountability to yourself. If you want to be vegan but you know that you are still cheating with foods that are not vegan, make sure you are owning up to it. Maybe you can tell a friend or family member who is compassionate to your goals about your conflict and air it out. You can ask them to hold you accountable and ask you questions such as, "what about your vegan lifestyle?" or "is that a vegan thing to do?"

This way you are forced to confront the consequences of your actions head on and take responsibility for the fact that the choices you are making are not in alignment with your goals.

Another thing to do to make sure you are building habits that will last is to start slow. Rather than trying to make a lot of big changes at once and overwhelming yourself, maybe it would be better to try to make gradual changes. This can be especially helpful when it comes to your diet. If you are not familiar with a lot of vegan food options, then suddenly cutting yourself off of meat and trying to do a lot of new meals at once can be very difficult. If you want to make choices that will stick, you have to make sure that you are not overdoing it.

Instead of transitioning overnight, you may find it helpful to begin to integrate new positive habits in a more gradual manner. Start with one night of veganism a week, for example, then steadily get into the habit over time until you are doing it every day without the pressure of trying to make sure that you are doing it right without having any idea what kinds of foods you enjoy eating. By incorporating foods that are vegan into your diet without the pressure, it can make it a lot easier to stick with it long term if you fear this may be the kind of thing you struggle with.

Building healthy habits takes time, so another thing to remember is to be patient with yourself. Allow for mistakes and slip ups. Be kind to yourself and remember that there is no timeline for something like this. It is a personal goal and it is up to you how to approach it. Don't let anyone else shame you or make you feel bad if you are not going based on their timeline. You are doing this for yourself, and ultimately, for the animals. So do it right and don't shame yourself!

If you find yourself craving meat a lot, you can also attempt to fine-tune your habits by interrupting cravings and other thoughts about meat with different thoughts. For example, if you find yourself thinking about how delicious a steak might be right now, perhaps you could interrupt that thought with a quick fact check.

Look into the realities of slaughterhouses and factory farms. Condition yourself to associate the negative realities of the meat industry with your food choices. Soon, you may find that meat doesn't seem quite so appealing anymore!

It can take anywhere from seven days to a month to build a new habit, so be patient with yourself throughout the process. Remember, eating meat is probably something you have done the majority of your life. You aren't going to suddenly stop wanting things that were enjoyable at one point. You are making this choice for personal reasons, so don't worry about these cravings. They are natural and many people never get over them. But in working on building healthier habits, you may find that the cravings are not as bad as they once were.

In fact, eventually, you may come to love the new foods in your diet so much that you hardly even think about meat anymore. Veganism is a way of life, and this new lifestyle can be incredibly rich and rewarding. Surrounding yourself with other people who share your mentality is another great way to hold yourself accountable and stick to your guns. They can often give you little tips and tricks to help you along in your journey, and sharing your experiences with others can make it a lot easier to get used to the changes you are going through!

Just be patient with yourself and remember exactly what it is about veganism that you find so appealing. Don't talk yourself out of something because it is overwhelming at first to make such drastic changes in your life. Instead, take it one step at a time and find peace and confidence in knowing you are on the path you chose for a reason!



Identifying Your Values and Sticking To Them

Chapter 6

Veganism is very much about finding your morals and sticking to them. Sometimes, we don't know what we are passionate about until we see something that we realize we do not want any part of.

Veganism often hits us hard as a way not to participate in the deliberate slaughter and sometimes torture of innocent animals.

Or maybe it's about holding corporations accountable for their practices and creating more rigorous guidelines for them to follow. Perhaps going vegan is not just about the animals for you, but for the environment as well. Maybe understanding how factory farms can pollute the water supplies and create extreme deposits of methane gas that can wreak havoc on the ozone layer is as much of a motivation as preventing the needless suffering of animals to serve a purpose that isn't entirely necessary in today's day and age.

Back when surviving was difficult, humans as a species utilized animals in many ways to ensure their survival. Things are not that cut throat anymore. We have many options now that once didn't exist, and a better understanding of the way that nutrition works. If we don't want to eat meat, for whatever reason we choose, we don't actually have to eat meat. While it is of course important to look after your health and make sure you are getting the essential vitamins and minerals to ensure your body is functioning to the best of its ability, the same is true of anyone. People eating a meat-based diet have to watch their health as well. It is easy to get high cholesterol and other issues that can cause heart attacks, which are the leading cause of death in the United States alone.

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