

**Flipping the Switch to A Vegetarian Life-Style ~
Becoming A Vegetarian ~ Not So Bad When You
Think About It!**



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Table of Content

1. Nourishing Our Body - Nourishing Our Spirit

You Are What You Eat

Humans Did Not Always Eat Meat

Traditional Meat

Why Switch to Vegetarianism

PETA

2. The Environmental Costs of Factory Farming and Ranching

Caged Chickens and Hormones

Cow Slaughterhouses

Veal

Turkeys

Pig Farming

Fish and Mercury

Animal Suffering

3. Different Types of Vegetarians

Vegetarians and Heart Disease

Vegetarians and Cancer

Bowels and Stomach Digestion

Weight

4. The Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet to Diabetics

Osteoporosis

Transition Family

Detoxification

Eliminate Red Meat

Eliminate Poultry

Eliminate Seafood

5. Got milk? Reasons Not to Grab for the Glass

6. Flipping the Switch to Vegetarianism

7. Variety Adds Vitality to your Vegetarian Meals

8. Lazy Vegetarians Who Choose the Wrong Carbs Risk Health

9. Proper Planning Prevents Problems

10. Vegetarian Diet for Optimal Personal and Environmental Health

11. The Special Needs of the Pregnant Vegetarian
12. Sample Daily Menu for Pregnant Vegetarians
13. The Healing Effects a Vegetarian Diet on your Post-Baby Body
14. What to Feed your Vegetarian Baby
15. Sample Vegetarian Diet to Promote Healing
16. Putting your Vegetarian Toddler on the Fast Track to Health
17. Sample Menu Items for your Growing Vegetarian Toddler
18. Ideas for Adding some Variety to your Vegetarian Lifestyle
19. Tips for a Vibrant Vegetarian Holiday Filled with Variety
20. Veggies on the Barbie
21. Tips for a Tasty Vegetarian Thanksgiving
22. Variety in Your New Vegetarian Diet

Conclusion

NOW FOR THE LEGAL STUFF (DISCLAIMER) It is strongly advised that all persons seek advice and guidance from a competent medical doctor regarding and prior to embarking on a vegetarian dietary lifestyle change. This is particularly true for pregnant women or mothers who are breast feeding infant children, senior citizens, growing children, and/or any individual who is suffering from or being treated for any disease or health disorder.

This guide is not intended as and may not be construed as an alternative to or a substitute for professional dietary counseling or medical services and advice.

This guide is presented with the sole purpose to inform the reader of the vegetarian (vegan) lifestyle and of dietary choices that the reader may wish to make. The authors, publishers, and distributors of this guide have made every effort to ensure the validity, accuracy, and timely nature of the information presented here. However, no guarantee is made, neither direct nor implied, that the information in this guide or the techniques described herein are suitable for or applicable to any given individual person or group of persons, nor that any specific result will be achieved. The authors, publishers, and distributors of this guide will be held harmless and without fault in all situations and causes arising from the use of this information by any person, with or without medical supervision.

Nourishing Our Body - Nourishing Our Spirit

Many times our choice to become vegetarian isn't only for health, environmental, or economical reasons, but also spiritual. There is a heartfelt connection between

vegetarianism and the deeper side of nourishment. We must learn to nourish ourselves not only physically, but also spiritually.

The subject of nutrition is not simply a question of the food we eat at meals. Besides nutrients, foods contain scents, colors and invisible particles that attract pure light, light that is so essential for our joyful life and well-being. The choice we make is therefore always of consequential significance.

Grains, fruits and vegetables naturally grow and flourish in sunlight, and you could deduce they are actually their own form of light. In order to develop the qualities of the heart, we must eat not only peacefully, but consciously. Therefore it makes sense to consume food that is nourished by sunlight.

As a result, our emotions and our essence are illuminated and nourished as well.

It's long been said that your body is your temple and everything that enters that temple has a direct result in who we become. Therefore, when we choose to nourish our bodies with healthful, nutrient-dense plant foods from the earth, we are in turn nourishing our souls, our spirit, and our being. The quality of your food and its physical properties not only transforms our emotions and mind, but can actually change your appearance and personality.

By focusing our diet on fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season and organically produced, we are in turn connecting with nature and learning to live in harmony with it. By committing and devoting ourselves to a vegetarian lifestyle, we've also committed to nourishing our souls and our inner well-being. You can't ask for a more perfect health food than that!

You Are What You Eat

You've certainly heard the expression many times, —You are what you eat. || Have you ever really thought about what it means? And do you think about it when you're making food choices?

In some ways, we do become what we eat, literally. Have you ever seen an example of your blood plasma after eating a fast food hamburger? What was previously a clear liquid becomes cloudy with the fat and cholesterol that's absorbed from eating a high-fat hamburger.

And when you think about it, we also become what we don't eat. When we switch from eating meat to a vegetarian-based diet, we become less fat, less prone to many types of cancers. Our cholesterol can improve. When we're leaner and eating fewer animal products, then many other health and fitness issues are reduced. The incidence of Type II diabetes is reduced.

Blood pressure falls into normal ranges. When you're healthier, you're taking fewer medications. Even if you have a prescription drug benefit in your health plan, you're still saving money with fewer co-payments on medications.

If you have a family history of high cholesterol or high blood pressure, then it's particularly incumbent on you to revise your eating habits. Moving towards a more vegetarian diet has been shown statistically to reduce the incidence of so many of the diseases of industrialized countries. Vegetarians are statistically healthier than omnivorous persons; they're leaner and live longer.

Isn't it time to think about what you want to be and to eat accordingly? Do you want to be sluggish and fat? Do you want the risk that goes with eating animal products, with their high fat content? Or do you want to look like and be what vegetarians are? Leaner and fitter with a longer anticipated lifespan. It's never too late to change what you're doing and increase your chances for a longer, fitter life.

Humans Did Not Always Eat Meat

Do you ever think about how far we've diverted from the path of our pre-historic ancestors and their eating patterns? Consider how the earliest humans evolved, and what they ate. They were hunter-gatherers and did not evolve with the characteristics of carnivores. Humans aren't made to tear animals apart and eat their flesh. When you look at carnivorous animals, such as wild cats, you can see

their teeth are designed to rip and tear, not chew.

Humans evolved from vegetarian creatures. Even our digestive systems are not particularly suited to eating meat. Eating meat is a relatively recent development in human history, most likely born of opportunity and necessity. Perhaps earliest man observed carnivores eating meat, and if they couldn't find any of the natural foods they were used to eating, such as vegetables, berries, nuts and grains, then they might have assumed that eating meat would at least sustain life.

But initially we emulated the creatures we evolved from, herbivores like apes. Even to a prehistoric mind, apes would have looked similar to man, walking primarily upright, with arms and hands. We naturally would have foraged for our food, eating roots and berries, fruits and nuts. We would have watched the apes peeling bananas, or crushing nuts on stones to get at the meat of the nut.

We would have been living more moment-to-moment, constantly foraging for food. Hunting, after all, requires thought and planning. Eating meat requires preparation and most importantly, fire. Until man discovered fire, he was primarily vegetarian, living in what was the natural order of things. Vegetarian eating is a more natural way of eating, in addition to being healthier. It's a way that's in balance with the planet, and doesn't seek to dominate it and conquer it.

It must have felt unnatural at first, to eat animal flesh. After all, we're not so far removed from animals ourselves. Perhaps it even felt cannibalistic. There might not have been that much intellectual distinction between humans and other animals.

When humans were pure vegetarians, they were living in harmony with the earth and with the other creatures co-habiting the planet with them. Their closest animal relatives, apes, were vegetarians. Eating the products of the earth, like plants, grains and fruits that they could gather and eat would have seemed the natural order of things.

But necessity is the mother of invention. Prehistoric men who lived in frozen geographies, or who lived in an area that became devastated by fire, would have eaten anything to survive. Just like the soccer players whose plane crashed in the mountains of Chile, and were forced to eat the flesh of other players who died in the crash, earliest man at some point had to make the choice for survival, and that could have consuming meat for the first time and changing human history – and

health – forever.

We can imagine that men first ate meat that had been charred or cooked by virtue of being caught in a natural forest fire.

They might have subsequently eaten raw meat, if necessary, but we can also imagine that our earliest digestive systems rebelled against eating raw meat.

Imagine having eaten raw foods and vegetables for eons, and all of a sudden, incorporating meat products into your system. You may have heard friends who were vegetarians tell stories of trying to eat meat and becoming violently ill afterwards.

Biologists will tell you we're really not designed to eat meat, but we adapted to it. However, in the timeline of human history, eating meat is a relatively recent evolutionary development.

Traditional Meat

How did our family traditions become centered around eating meat? Think about it. When we think of Thanksgiving, we think of turkey. If we eat pork, then New Year's celebrations often revolve around pork and sauerkraut. At Christian Easter, the traditional meal is ham. And in the summer, we wait for that first hamburger or steak on the grill.

How did that happen to a species that was designed to eat vegetables and fruits, nuts, berries and legumes?

We can imagine that eating meat was initially an opportunistic event, born of the need to survive. The taste of cooked meat, plus the sustained energy that came from eating high-fat meat products made primitive sense even to earliest man.

Initially, finding cooked animal meat, from a forest fire, would have been cause for celebration. It's something everyone in a clan would have participated in eating together. When man learned to hunt and moved to a hunting orientation, rather than a hunter-gatherer orientation, he would have done this in groups.

They would have had to hunt in teams, and killing an animal for food would have been a group effort. Hunting and killing an animal meant food not just for the individual, but for the clan, and would have been cause for celebration when the hunters brought the food home.

If they brought the animal back to the clan, it would have taken a group effort to skin the animal and tear or cut the meat from the carcass. Everyone would have participated in this, and subsequently, shared in the rewards of their work.

It's easy to see how, once we didn't have to hunt for meat, but could buy it, the need for gathering and celebration was deeply ingrained in our natures. We celebrate the seasons and life's events with family and friends, and because those early celebrations involved eating meat, that tradition has continued to modern times.

Why Switch to Vegetarianism

If you've eaten meat and animal products your whole life, you might think, why switch to a vegetarian diet? You've lived your whole life eating eggs, hamburgers, hot dogs, poultry, so why switch now?

There could be many reasons to switch. Start by looking in the mirror. Are you at a healthy weight? Do you look and feel good most of the time? Do you wake up energized? Or do you wake up tired and sluggish?

How is your general health? Is your blood pressure within a healthy range? Are your cholesterol and blood sugar ranges normal? If they're not, consider what you're eating on a daily basis.

How do you feel after eating? Do you feel energized, as if you've fed your body what it needs? Or are you tired and dragged out? Do you often need a nap after eating? Is that what food is supposed to do for us, make us tired and sleepy?

Not really. Food should nourish and feed the body and leave us energized and refreshed. The human body is a machine and needs fuel that keeps it running in

peak condition. When we're fat, with high blood pressure, Type II diabetes, high cholesterol and other unhealthy conditions, it's like a car engine that hasn't been tuned or isn't running on the optimal type of gasoline it needs to run efficiently.

Your body is the same way. It needs the right kind of fuel to run at peak efficiency, and when you're eating high-fat meat, or meat that's been fed antibiotics throughout its life, that's simply not the kind of fuel the human body evolved to run on.

Try eating vegetarian for a week or a month. See if you don't feel different, more mentally acute and more physically fit and energized. At least reverse the portion sizes you've been eating, and make meat more of a side dish, if you can't stop eating meat altogether. Even that change can make a big difference in your overall health and well-being.

PETA

People have different motivations for eating a vegetarian diet. For many people, it's a health issue. They need to reduce their weight, bring down their blood pressure and cholesterol, manage their blood sugars. A vegetarian diet helps them do this.

For others, it's also a moral and ethical decision not to eat animal products. Through the centuries, we've become accustomed to thinking of man as superior to all other animals on the planet. We use animals for food, clothing, shoes, belts or other accessories. We use them for scientific experiments. We discount their place on the earth and consider that animals are here to serve us and our needs.

PETA stands for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, and is an organization devoted to changing that mindset among humans. They are against using animals for food or for clothing, especially for what they consider the needless or particularly inhumane use of animals, such as killing or trapping them for their fur.

They are passionate about their cause. In their own words, PETA believes that animals have rights and deserve to have their best interests taken into

consideration, regardless of whether they are useful to humans. Like you, they are capable of suffering and have an interest in leading their own lives; therefore, they are not ours to use for food, clothing, entertainment, experimentation, or any other reason.

We are supposedly an evolved society. But how evolved can a society be that thrives on the suffering of animals? In his excellent book, *When Elephants Weep*, author Jeffrey Masson explores the emotional lives of animals and presents compelling evidence for it. As a species, we must begin to re-evaluate our place on this earth and where we fit in relation to every other creature that inhabits it. PETA believes this as well and is a passionate advocate for the rights of animals.

The Environmental Costs of Factory Farming and Ranching

Long ago, eating meat was a good source of nutrition, since the use of hormones, pesticides and mass production methods was as yet unheard of. A family raised and processed their own livestock. Every morning the large golden eggs were plucked from the chicken's nests, which were lovingly cared for and fed healthy pesticide-free grains..

Today's factory farms use everything, but in the process they leave behind an environmental toll that generations to come will be forced to pay. Raising animals for food requires more than half the water used in the United States each year and one-third of all raw materials, including fossil fuels. This industry is the greatest polluter of our waters and is directly responsible for 85 percent of soil erosion. Our country's meat addiction is steadily poisoning and depleting our land, water and air.

Of all agricultural land in the United States, 87 percent is used to raise animals for food. That's 45 percent of the total land mass of the United States.

Methane is one of four greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. The world's 1.3 billion cows produce one-fifth of all methane emitted into the atmosphere.

Raising animals for food causes more water pollution in the United States than any other industry because animals raised for food produce 20 times the excrement of the entire human population-230,000 pounds every second.

Of all raw materials and fossil fuels used in the United States, more than one-third is used to raise animals for food.

Rain forests are being destroyed at a rate of 125,000 square miles per year. The primary cause of deforestation is raising animals for food.

Coupled with the inhumane treatments of animals that are raised for human consumption, the costs of raising and processing these animals for human consumption is becoming too high. Make a commitment to reduce or eliminate meats from your diet, and learn to live from the plant foods the environment naturally provides. The animals and your conscience will be better for it.

Caged Chickens and Hormones

If most of us thought about the conditions in which chickens used for meat and eggs are raised and slaughtered, we'd become vegetarian on the spot. Egg-laying chickens can be raised in cages with 6 chickens to a cage, each chicken getting only 67 square inches of space for its lifetime.

Unless they're certified and labeled as being free-range or organic or natural, they might have been fed growth hormones to get them to slaughter faster, and antibiotics to combat the diseases which come from being raised in cramped and less-than-clean conditions.

And consider what the recommendations are for cleaning up after touching poultry? It's recommended to clean surfaces with bleach to remove bacteria, and to wash your hands thoroughly after touching a chicken.

Do you really want to put something into your body that requires bleach to clean up after? Something that needs to be cooked to specific temperatures to be sure you've destroyed any bacteria that could make you sick?

Chickens and turkeys have become so mass-produced and injected with antibiotics

and hormones that there's no taste to it anymore, so why bother? Even the most humanely treated chicken has either been stunned in a salt-water brine before being beheaded. In John Robbins excellent book and video, *Diet for a Small Planet*, he shows us pictures of chickens being grabbed in groups by the neck and thrown into cages. Can you really consider eating a chicken with that vision in your head?

Any means of mass-producing animals for human consumption is by its very nature unhealthy and cruel for the animals, and unhealthy for humans as well. Even if you're of the opinion that man is a natural hunter, how natural is it to eat an animal that's been raised in captivity and fed a diet of hormones and antibiotics?

Cow Slaughterhouses

Even if you don't eat meat, you might think drinking or using milk is part of a vegetarian diet. We all have images of farmers pumping milk by hand, and it seems a natural part of life and a benign use of the cow. But we don't really think much about it at all, do we?

Do you know how a cow raised for producing milk lives its life? Like most animals used for mass consumption, a milk cow lives in cramped and often filthy conditions. It is fed hormones to stimulate its reproductive processes, because that's what a mother's milk is for – to feed its baby.

As soon as a calf is born though, it's taken from its mother. A male calf often goes to a terrible fate to be raised for veal; a female calf often has the same fate as its mother.

Often the cows mourn for their babies. They'll be seen bellowing for them and looking for them. Mass producing milk for human consumption has disrupted the natural order of things.

The cows are fed hormones to continue to stimulate milk production. The electric pumps are painful to the cow's udders. With the hormone stimulation, cows are forced to produce 10 times more milk than they would ordinarily.

When their milk-producing days are over, the cows are then slaughtered for ground

beef. It also takes enormous natural resources to feed and water all these cows. The water table is being depleted to sustain this enormous industry. And the waste produced by all these large animals is having a detrimental effect on the environment.

We really don't need to consume milk after a certain age. Why would we continue to support this industry that's built on animal suffering? To really top it off, humans are not meant to drink cow milk. Calves are meant to drink cow milk and we humans are meant to drink human milk. Our bodies were not designed to digest the proteins in cow milk – so why bother? Especially when you can get more calcium from a green, leafy vegetable?

Veal

There are few issues that make a more compelling argument for a vegetarian diet than that of veal and how it's produced. While the meat industry is, by its very nature cruel and inhumane, the veal industry is the worst.

Baby calves are taken from their mothers, often at just one day old. They're kept in pens that prevent movement, to keep their muscles soft.

To produce the pale, soft veal that is so highly prized by gourmets, the calves are fed a liquid that's deficient in iron and fiber that creates an anemia in the animal.

The confinement in which they live for their short lives creates a significant level of chronic stress for the animal and they're subsequently given much higher levels of medications that can be harmful to humans. The confinement makes them weak, often unable to stand. We treat criminals who have committed the most vicious crimes imaginable more humanely than we treat innocent calves.

Why would anyone want to consume meat that's delivered to the table infused with the suffering of animals? What culinary experience can ever be worth it when you know what the animal, especially a calf, has to go through?

At age 20 weeks, the calf is then slaughtered. All the meat we eat has been mass produced and slaughtered. Their life is inhumane and their death is inhumane, in

addition to which it's becoming less and less healthy for us to eat. Veal is the premier example of this industry. Changing to a vegetarian diet not only is a much more healthy way to eat, it's way of living in balance with the earth. It may have been one thing centuries ago to hunt for meat because it was a means for survival. Today's mass-produced meat industry is nothing like that and is more a cause of illness and poor health than it is for survival or nutrition.

Turkeys

The consumption of turkeys in the U.S. has escalated through the years. It's no longer eaten primarily at Thanksgiving and Christmas, but throughout the year. The process of mass-producing turkeys for human consumption is as barbaric, if not more so, than the process of mass-producing chickens.

Turkeys are kept in cramped, dark spaces to discourage the naturally aggressive behaviors that occur when an animal is kept confined without space to roam and feed freely.

They're overfed to the point where their legs can't support the weight of the breast tissue. And this animal which normally has a 10-years life span is generally slaughtered at about 2 years of age.

Unhealthy and overcrowded conditions mean that disease amongst commercial turkeys is widespread, resulting in approximately 2.7 million turkeys dying in their sheds every year.

Foot and leg deformities, heat stress and starvation caused by the inability of immature birds to find the feed and water troughs are commonplace. Ulcerated feet and hock burns are common - caused by continual contact with litter contaminated by urine and feces.

Can you really sit at dinner on your next holiday and look at a roasted turkey the same way? Turkeys come with the same recommendations for cleanliness and cooking that chickens do. You have to be sure they're cooked to a specific temperature to ensure that any disease-causing bacteria are completely killed. You should clean up any counter space with bleach, again to kill all bacteria.

It makes a compelling case for switching to a vegetarian diet, doesn't it? Suddenly, the jokes about vegetarian dinners, with nut loaves and vegetables, instead of meat, seem to make more sense, not only from a health standpoint, but from a humane issue as well.

Why do we persist in eating in such a way that makes us unhealthy and is inherently bad for us? For your next holiday dinner, consider the possibilities of an all-vegetarian menu. So much of the dinner is vegetable-based to begin with; it's a small change to replace turkey with a plant-based main course as well.

Pig Farming

Many people reject eating pork and other meats derived from pigs for religious reasons or health reasons.

When people start eating a more vegetarian diet, red meat is usually the first thing they eliminate from their diets. When they do, various health indicators generally start to improve, such as their cholesterol levels and blood pressure readings.

Health is one of the most compelling reasons to eat vegetarian, but the inhumane treatment of the animals mass-produced for human consumption is another reason many people are rejecting a carnivorous diet.

Pig farming follows the same processes that chicken farming and other animal farming employ. The pigs are kept in small crates with limited movement. They're overfed so they can be slaughtered more quickly. Their living conditions can be dirty and they're fed growth hormones to stimulate weight gain and antibiotics to ward off diseases that are the results of their living conditions.

They're forced to live in unnatural conditions and they exhibit signs of chronic stress that other animals produced for human food do. They chew on the bars of their cages or worry with their water bottles excessively. Their limited range of movement prevents the rooting behavior that's natural for a pig.

The pigs pay an extremely high price to feed us. And we pay a high price for eating pork and other red meat. We're basically not made to eat meat. Our teeth weren't developed to rip and tear meat. We evolved from herbivores and it's still

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