

# 10 Tips for Going Vegetarian or Vegan ©

**This free report** is based on my own opinions, formed by over 44 years of experience and observation first as a vegetarian, then as a vegan, and twelve years of helping others go veg.

**Often there is 'scientific evidence'** to back up what I say, but mostly this is my personal experience talking. I don't claim to be scientific, and I don't make any guarantees. It's up to you whether you accept what I say - I'm a firm exponent of healthy skepticism.

**But, if you'd rather not re-invent the wheel**, these practical observations might be useful to you as a place to start going vegetarian or vegan.

**Happy Vegging!** Judith Kingsbury, Savvy Vegetarian

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## Frequently Asked Questions:

**Before I get to the ten tips, here are a few FAQ's, for those who are new to vegetarian or vegan diet.**

### **What are the different types of vegetarian and vegan?**

Vegetarians eat no meat, poultry, or fish.

Ovo-lacto vegetarians eat eggs and milk.

Lacto-vegetarians eat dairy products, but not eggs.

Vegans eat no animal products at all, often including honey, and often don't wear or use products made from or derived from animals

Raw vegans eat only raw, uncooked food which is prepared in various ways such as juicing, dehydrating, blending, sprouting, chopping, shredding etc to make raw food easier to eat and to create variety.

These categories aren't set in stone. You can alternate between them, or create your own unique category.

### **What Do Vegetarians or Vegans Eat?**

**This question could be, "What Should They Eat?"** Most vegetarians and vegans don't live on "rabbit food", as many people assume. But, a vegan is someone who eats plants: vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, seeds. Vegetarians may add dairy and egg.

**Some new vegetarians or vegans just say** "hold the patty" at McDonalds, or substitute the fake meat for the real, and otherwise carry on with their usual diet. But, ideally, whole plant foods play a major part in both vegetarian and vegan diets.

## **Why Go Vegetarian or Vegan?**

**Spiritual, moral, or philosophical reasons:** Some cultures consider it a sin to kill animals, such as cows, which are sacred in Hinduism. Many people simply feel that killing animals for food is wrong, and that animals suffer terribly in our industrialized agricultural system. Why support killing and suffering, when we don't need animal food for a balanced, nutritious diet?

**Health:** Poor health is widespread in our society, to put it mildly. Vegetarian or vegan diet is often seen as a way to rebuild health and strength, because a balanced plant based diet is known to be far healthier than the typical Western diet. Meat consumption, on the other hand, contributes to heart disease, cancer, strokes, diabetes, etc. There are dangerous bacteria and illnesses now spread through meat production - ecoli, botulism, and mad cow disease for example.

**Environmental:** Industrialized agriculture is responsible for the widespread destruction of natural resources, and pollution of air, soil and water.

Beef production is the worst, with pork and poultry not far behind. The land and water used to grow food for one steer, to feed one person for a year, could supply all the dietary needs for many times the number of people annually, for years and years. 75% of more of the Amazon rain forests have been burned or cut down to feed cattle, disturbing the global eco-system in profound ways. A good book on this subject is [\*The Food Revolution\*](#), by John Robbins.

**Personal preference:** Many people go vegetarian or vegan when they realize that they have lost their taste for meat, or that it disagrees with them. Or they have gravitated toward a plant based diet because they like the variety of different foods and the improved nutrition.

**The change may be gradual,** or there may be an epiphany, or awakening experience – which has a lot to do with a rise in consciousness, individual and global. Once the change has gathered enough momentum, then moral, health or environmental knowledge comes to support it.

**Cultural:** Some people were raised in a family and/or culture where vegetarian or vegan diet is the norm. They may be lapsed veggies, or they may have things to learn about veg diet, nutrition, cooking, and lifestyle. But, they have an advantage - it's not all strange and new, and there isn't such a big psychological and physical adjustment to make.

## **Should you be a vegetarian or a vegan?**

**It's politically correct these days to be vegan**, so much so that it's almost embarrassing to admit that you're not.

[Savvy Vegetarian Cookbook Reviews](#) it is true that vegans aren't harming any animals, and doing no harm is a worthy goal.

**It's also true** that you don't need egg and dairy for complete nutrition. You can get everything you need from plants (with the possible exception of Vit. B12).

**I'm convinced that whether you go vegetarian or vegan**, it should be a personal choice, and gradual process. It's a challenge to eat a well-balanced plant food diet, with no nutritional deficiencies. It takes a lot of knowledge about the nutrient content of food, food combining, and close attention to your diet.

**In going veg or vegan, as in everything else**, you can't jump the gap between the ideal and the real in a single bound. Jumping right into a strict vegan or even a vegetarian diet can be a recipe for malnutrition, because it's like going from couch potato to tri-athlete in a week. Both vegetarians and vegans need time for their digestive systems to adjust, and to learn about veg nutrition and cooking.

**Things tend to change from time to time**, especially when you first go vegetarian or vegan. To start with, it's best not to put a sign around your neck and climb on a soapbox. Next week, you might feel differently.

**In an ideal world, we all would be vegan**, but we have to start from where we are, and do what we can do, if we're going to make it stick. There is no point in going veg with great enthusiasm and commitment, then a few months later, concluding that it's too hard, and it's making you sick and weak, and people weren't meant to be vegetarian or vegan anyway.

**Whether you go vegetarian or vegan**, give yourself as much time as you need to learn the territory, and do whatever makes you happy and healthy. Think long term, go for the diet that you can maintain, and grow from there.

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## Ten Tips for Getting Started Going Vegetarian or Vegan

### 1. Keep it simple, go slowly, and don't strain

You're going too fast if you feel deprived, tired, stressed or overwhelmed. Don't strain. Cut back on red meat first, then gradually eliminate it, then start the same process with chicken and fish, dairy and egg. At the same time, gradually introduce new plant foods to your diet.

When you're starting out, it's normal to go back and forth between veg and non-veg, sometimes for many years. If you crave an animal food, eat a bit, until you're satisfied, then work your way back.

## 2. Go organic as much as you can

Organic food may cost more, but it's generally tastier and more nutritious (that varies with the quality of soil used for growing). Regardless, you won't be poisoned by pesticide & herbicide residues.

Go totally non-GMO (genetically modified organism) unless you want to be a subject in an illegal frankenfood experiment. Find lists of non-gmo foods at [truefoodsnow.org](http://truefoodsnow.org), or [greenpeace.org](http://greenpeace.org). Books to read are "Seeds of Deception", and "Genetic Roulette" by Jeffrey M. Smith, and "Genetically Altered Foods and Your Health" by Ken Roseboro.

## 3. Buy a basic all-purpose vegetarian or vegan cookbook, to start with:

**Your new cookbook should have** lots of information about nutrition, ingredients, basic cooking instructions, and a variety of easy recipes.

### I recommend:

Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone, by Deborah Madison;

Heaven's Banquet, by Mariam Kasin Hodari (Ayurvedic);

Indian Vegetarian Cooking, by Yamuna Devi;

The Complete Vegetarian Family Cookbook, by Nava Atlas

[How to Cook Everything Vegetarian](#) by Mark Bittman

[30 Minute Vegan](#) by Mark Reinfeld and Jennifer Murray

[The Everything Vegan Cookbook](#) by Jolinda Hackett

[Let Them Eat Vegan](#), by Dreena Burton

[Veganomicon](#) by Isa Chandra Moskowitz and Terry Hope Romero

**All these cookbooks have** excellent recipes, clear directions, and lots of supporting details. The authors have long careers as professional chefs, cookbook authors, and teachers.

### Find more veg and vegan cookbooks at:

[Savvy Vegetarian's Favorite Cookbooks](#)

[Savvy Vegetarian Cookbook Reviews](#)

I also recommend [The New Becoming Vegetarian](#), or [Becoming Vegan](#) or [Vegan for Life](#) as excellent daily nutrition references.

#### **4. Buy a bit at a time**

Instead of rushing out and buying all kinds of new foods, buy a bit at a time until you know what you like, and have found reliable, economic sources. These days, most cities of 100,000 or more have at least one natural food store, especially college towns. Whole Foods are opening new stores all over the place. Food co-ops and buying clubs are everywhere. Most supermarkets have natural food sections, including bulk. There are also farmers markets, and online sources of whole foods.

#### **5. Avoid sugar and junk food, including soft drinks**

When you're a vegetarian, most of what you eat should count, nutritionally. Be sure to eat a well-balanced, widely varied, nutritious diet, to get all the essential vitamins and minerals. Processed food is substandard nutrition - leftovers in a box, always, even when it's vegetarian..

#### **6. Drink mostly water and other clear fluids**

It'll help the inevitable de-toxing. Plus, there's more bulk, or roughage in a vegetarian diet, and you need plenty of liquid to keep it all moving through your digestive system.

Make sure your water has minerals in it - add trace mineral drops to RO or distilled water, which is stripped of all content other than wet. Or get an inexpensive filter for your tap water

Caffeine is a diuretic, so if you're drinking several cups of coffee, tea, or other caffeinated drinks, cut way back.

Soft drinks, even if non-caffeine and unsweetened, contain many harmful ingredients: artificial sweeteners, flavors, colors, and preservatives. Carbonation interferes with your digestion.

Contrary to popular notions, it's not necessary to drink four glasses of milk a day - there are better sources of calcium and protein, with less saturated fat.

And, according to ayurveda, milk shouldn't be combined with other foods, except for maybe rice and wheat, and cold drinks put out the digestive fire.

#### **7. Listen to your body**

Food cravings, excessive hunger, fatigue, depression, circles under the eyes, bruising – may indicate vitamin or mineral deficiencies, allergic reactions, digestive disturbances, or an underlying health problem. It isn't normal to feel tired, weak or ill on a vegetarian diet. If you do, there's something wrong, and it may not be the diet.

Get regular checkups, and go to a doctor or nutritionist if you're not feeling well. Your health will most likely improve on a balanced vegetarian diet, but never assume that because you're vegetarian, nothing can go wrong.

By the way, many medical doctors will tell you to scrap your vegetarian diet, because most of them know almost nothing about vegetarian diets. Smile sweetly and promise to consider it. Then go to someone more knowledgeable and sympathetic.

## **8. Stay away from extreme diets**

I mean diets such as high carb, high protein/low carb, fat-free, 100% raw, macrobiotic, etc., at least for the first year or more, until you have the nutrition basics down, and are more experienced at buying and preparing food.

## **9. Don't worry.**

A plant food diet takes some time to get used to. It has different tastes and textures, and it's lighter than a meat-based diet. You may not feel quite full enough, at first. But, if you overeat, it'll interfere with your digestion, and perhaps make you gain unwanted pounds.

Take it easy and don't worry too much about what you're eating or not eating. Follow these *general* guidelines, and remember if you look healthy and feel healthy you're probably doing okay.

- Eat three meals a day – yes, just like Mom always told you! They don't all have to be *big*.
- And, as Mom always said, chew your food well to help your digestion process all that fiber.
- Be sure to have protein from several different plant food sources every day – e.g. nuts & seeds, legumes, whole grains. If you're vegetarian, don't just rely on egg & dairy for protein.
- Try a variety of whole grains, and fresh vegetables, and different combinations of foods.

## **10. Enjoy your food!**

Of course, be adventurous, and open to new possibilities, but...if you don't like something, or it doesn't seem to like you, *you don't have to eat it!*

There's such a variety of whole foods available for vegetarians and vegans, enough to satisfy everybody's tastes and nutritional needs. You don't have to eat something just because it's good for you, or it's trendy to eat it.

I remember when millet was in with vegetarians during the seventies. I couldn't stand millet, but there it was, everywhere I went. After a while, I wouldn't have it in the house, and I did fine without it for many years.

But I've gradually warmed up to eating millet (nutritious & delicious), and buckwheat as well. I love quinoa, and it's so nice to have options to brown rice. So ... each to his own taste, but keep an open mind.

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[Veg/NonVeg Eat Together](#)

[Socially Responsible Vegetarian](#)

[Beans Without Gas](#)

[Vegetarian Nutrition](#)

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## **Useful SV Links:**

['Organic Food: What Is It and Why Should We Eat It?'](#)

[Vegetarian Protein - Myth and Reality](#)

[Vegetarians, Are You Getting Enough Vitamin B12](#)

[Magnesium is Critically Important to Your Vegetarian Health](#)

[Essential Fatty Acids](#)

['Be Happy, Healthy And Vegetarian While Pregnant Or Breastfeeding'](#)

['Food Revolution' by John Robbins](#)

['Seeds of Deception' By Jeffrey M. Smith, 'Exposing Industry and Government Lies About the Safety of Genetically Engineered Foods'](#)

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**Happy Vegging!**

**Judith Kingsbury, Savvy Vegetarian**

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