

VEGAN DIET



A COMPLETE GUIDE TO A CRUELTY FREE DIET



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!



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.