

## 7 Can Going Vegan Save Your Life?

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## CHAPTER 1

# The Vegans Are Coming

## YOU ARE POWERFUL

You can help to create the compassionate, healthy, sustainable world that you want to live in.

By deciding to go vegan, you transform your inner world and send positive ripples outwards. Veganism is not simply a diet, or a lifestyle choice. It is a powerful and positive change in how we think, that is gaining momentum around the world.

This book shows you how to go, be and stay vegan. We explain all the practicalities of shopping, cooking and eating out on any budget, as well as arming you with all the knowledge you need about nutrition. We also cover the powerful ethical and environmental arguments against livestock farming.

With your black belt in veganism, you will know how to defend yourself in any situation. You will be able to explain your choices calmly and clearly so that others understand, and bat away any unhelpful assumptions and stereotypes. A vegan warrior wants to help others to realise their full potential.

We have been black belt vegans for decades, doing and teaching veganism. We have worked in restaurant kitchens and bakeries, and written cookbooks and vegan travel guides. We have also worked in national vegan organisations such as Animal Aid, Viva! and The Vegan Society, and collaborated with and learned from the most effective and successful vegan activists and teachers around the world. We have run workshops, and given local and national radio and television interviews. In this book we will teach you to handle situations with confidence, knowledge, and in a way that will inspire others to join us.

## GETTING STARTED

Going vegan starts by declaring yourself to be vegan.

1. **Plan the veganisation of your favourite meals and snacks** – Some will already be vegan, and others can easily be adapted. Go to chapter 3: How to Eat Vegan.
2. **Stock your kitchen** – Mealtimes become easy if you stock up with store cupboard basics.
3. **No time to cook?** – Get in some ready made foods, and meat and cheese replacers.
4. **Be ready for eating out** – Investigate local cafes, restaurants and shops. And **load up on treats** for snacking and boosting your energy during a busy day.
5. **Know your nutrients** – Arm yourself with the facts. Go to chapter 2: A Balanced Diet.
6. **Get some vegan buddies** – It's great to have a tribe to share with. Read chapter 4: Vegan Tribes.
7. **If you have a problem, if no one else can help** – Call in the V-Team to support you. There are many long-established charities and campaigning groups who publish magazines, leaflets, fact sheets and websites, plus hundreds of Facebook vegan discussion groups, probably including at least one covering your local area. Check out chapter 8: The Way of the Vegan.

Thank you for going vegan – have fun and good luck!

## VEGAN FOOD AROUND THE WORLD

### What do vegans eat?

Vegans eat thousands of foods from hundreds of countries. Here are some favourites.

**Spanish tapas:** patatas bravas, toasted almonds, olives, garlic mushrooms, lentil or chickpea casserole, gazpacho soup, sparagus and artichoke salad.

**Brazilian feijoada** with black beans with vegan sausage and/or veg.

Strawberry coconut-based **cheesecake**.



Spanish tapas



Brazilian feijoada



Strawberry cheesecake



Thai tofu curry



British phish &amp; chips



Seitan steak



Chinese buffet



Indian thali



Ethiopian injera feast



South Indian dosa



Raw food buffet



Indonesian tempeh kebab

**Thai** green, red or yellow **curry** with steamed sticky rice.

Banana blossom **phish and chips**.

**Seitan steak** with sweet potato fries, loaded with vegan cheese and roasted veg. Seitan is a high-protein meat replacer made from wheat gluten.

**Chinese buffet** including mock duck, seitan black pepper “pork”, egg-free noodles, stir-fry veg, black mushrooms, pak choi, red and yellow pepper stir-fry.

**Indian thali** with samosa, onion bhajia, aloo gobi (spicy potato), brinjal (aubergine), chana masala (chickpeas), lentil dal soup, popadoms and naan bread.

**Ethiopian** injera flatbread with lentil dishes and salads.

**South Indian** crispy **dosa** pancake filled with veg, with uttapam lentil pizza and chutneys.

Raw superfood **salads**.

**Indonesian tempeh kebab** with satay sauce. Tempeh is a traditional meat replacer made from fermented soya beans.

**Moroccan** chickpea and apricot **tagine** stew with couscous.

Soya, seitan, bean, mycoprotein or mushroom-based **burger with wedges**.

**Japanese bento** boxes with fake fish sushi, rice and veg maki rolls, tempura deep fried veg, crispy seaweed, noodles.



North African tagine



Burger with wedges



Japanese bento boxes

Cashew nut **roast** with Yorkshire pudding, veggies, new potatoes and onion gravy.

**British cooked breakfast** with vegan sausages and scrambled tofu.

**Italian** vegan ham, chorizo and mozzarella **pizza**.



Sunday roast dinner



British cooked breakfast



Italian "meaty" pizza

**Mexican** black bean **burrito** with guacamole, jalapenos and chili sauce.

**Middle Eastern falafel** in pitta with hummus, salad, pepper, tahini sesame sauce.

**Caribbean platter** with chickpea curry, pumpkin curry, lentil stew, ackee, callaloo, plantain, fried dumplings, seaweed fritters, salad.



Mexican burrito



Middle Eastern falafel



Caribbean platter



Chick'n wingz



Smoothie bowl



Sausage rolls



Chocolate ice cream



Ice cream pancake



Protein shake



Cake



Muffins and brownies



Cupcakes

**Chick'n wingz** made from seitan in barbecue sauce.

**Smoothie bowl** with granola, nuts, seeds and fruit.

**Soya sausage rolls.**

Vanilla, chocolate or strawberry soya or coconut **ice cream.**

Warm **pancake** filled with ice cream and served with chocolate and vanilla soya dessert.

Almond **milkshake** with protein powder (soya, pea or hemp), banana, spirulina and ground flax seeds.

**Egg and dairy-free cakes** such as blueberry and almond cake.

Chocolate **brownies** and blueberry **muffins.**

**Cupcakes.**



Chocolate bars



Chocolate truffles



Energy balls



Plant milks



Vegan cheese



Vegan yogurt



Vegan wine



Vegan beer



Vegan honey

Vegans around the world create foods and dishes using ingredients from the following groups of foods:

**Grains:** Amaranth, barley, buckwheat, bulgur, cassava, kamut, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, rye, sorghum, spelt, teff, triticale, wheat.

**Pulses, these are lentils and beans, which are also called legumes in some countries:** Aduki, black, blackeye, borlotti, broad, butter, cannellini, chickpea (garbanzo, gram), flageolet, lentils (black, brown, green, puy, red, yellow), haricot, kidney, lima, lupin, mung, pinto, split peas, soya.

**Vegetables:** Ackee, artichoke, asparagus, aubergine (eggplant), beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprout, cabbage, callaloo, carrot, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chard, chicory, courgette (zucchini), cucumber, daikon, endive, fennel, garlic, ginger, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, marrow, mooli, mushroom, nettle, okra, onion, pak choi, parsnip, pea, pepper, plantain, potato, pumpkin, radish, runner bean, seaweed, sorrell, spinach, spring onion, squash, swede, sweetcorn (maize), sweet potato, tomato, turnip, yam, watercress.

**Fruits:** Apple, apricot, avocado, banana, blackberry, blackcurrant, blueberry, breadfruit, cherry, clementine, coconut, cranberry, custard apple, date, durian, elderberry, fig, goji berry, gooseberry, grapes, grapefruit, guava, jackfruit, kiwi fruit, kumquat, lemon, lime, lychee, mandarin, mango, melons, mulberry, nectarine, olive, orange, papaya, passionfruit, peach, pear, persimmon (kaki), pineapple, plum/prune, pomegranate, quince, raspberry, rambutan, redcurrant, satsuma, star fruit, strawberry, tangerine, watermelon, whitecurrant.

**Nuts:** Almond, Brazil, cashew, chestnut, hazelnut, macadamia, peanut\*, pecan, pistachio, walnut. (\*Peanuts are botanically a pulse, not a fruit or nut, as they grow in pods underground.)

**Seeds:** chia, flax (linseed), hemp, pine nut, poppy, pumpkin, sesame, sunflower.

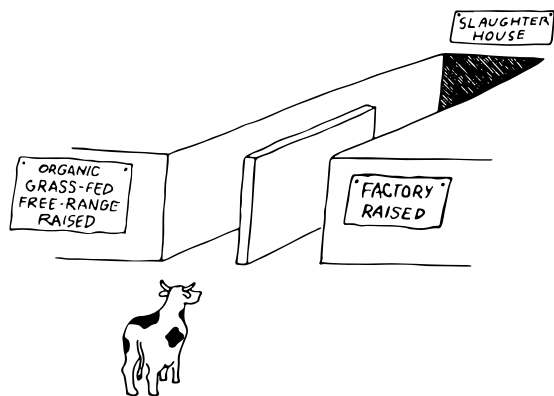
Modern vegan cuisine is a synthesis of the healthiest foods and fun foods from all over the world. Take your choice from the world's thousands of edible plants and everything made from them.

## WHY VEGAN

Whether you are taking the first steps on the path to going vegan or have completely done so already, you may be tempted to skip this section. You are bound to get questions from friends, family and co-workers about why you've done it. Here are some things you can say.

### What's wrong with eating animals?

**Animals:** Most farmed animals never see daylight or fresh air, and are killed at a tiny fraction of their natural lifespan. They are bred for the sole purpose of being units of food production. They don't have names. They don't have the chance to explore, play, interact naturally and express their instincts. Free range and organically farmed animals have a little more space, though are killed just as violently.



**Health:** Meat eaters suffer much more from obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes type 2, cancer and constipation.

Animal foods are responsible for almost all food poisoning, including E. coli, salmonella, listeria and campylobacter.

Antibiotic resistant bacteria such as MRSA result from the overuse of antibiotics. 75% of all antibiotics in Europe and America are given to intensively farmed animals and fish, not just to prevent disease, but also as growth promoters. Antibiotic and disinfectant resistant bacteria such as E. coli develop, then infect farm workers, and enter the human food supply, for example via pig meat in supermarkets. The emergence of bacteria resistant to most or all antibiotics is one of the greatest threats of our time.

**Pandemics:** COVID-19 was not the first disease to jump from animals that we eat to humans. So did vCJD (mad cow disease), swine and bird flu, HIV/AIDS (chimps), ebola (bats or primates), and at least 60% of new infectious diseases. The SARS coronavirus in 2002-4 killed one in ten people infected, with 55% of those aged over 60. Ebola, which is not airborne, kills around 50% of those infected. Many scientists believe that “the big one”, an airborne pandemic with a fatality rate comparable to ebola, could cross over from animals into humans this century. If, that is, we continue to eat animals. Pandemics love factory farms, animal markets and meat processing centres.

**Environment:** Most deforestation is for cattle or growing soya for animal feed. Livestock farming is the biggest source of water pollution. It takes far more land, water, fuel and electricity to farm animals than to farm plants.

Given all the above, we believe that eating animals is unjustified and should be consigned to the dustbin of history.

### Now, what's so great about being vegan?

**Animals:** Animals are people in different bodies, as anyone who lives with a dog or cat knows. Like us they feel affection, joy, happiness, and they love to play. They also feel sadness, fear, pain and suffering. Do we really need to say any more?

**Health:** Certain vegan diets can stop the progression of and even reverse most heart disease and reverse all diabetes type 2 within weeks, without drugs or surgery. Being vegan massively reduces your chances of getting heart disease in the first place, and when done correctly makes diabetes type 2 impossible. You can read about this in chapter 7.

**Pandemics:** No factory farming, no hunting, no animals in markets, will mean no zoonotic diseases crossing over from wild animals to decimate us or bring our economies to a standstill for a year. With the world's population heading towards 9 billion, mostly crowded together in cities, veganism is our best chance of avoiding new coronavirus pandemics and worse.

**Environment:** Vegans use less than half as much land as non-vegans to grow our food, some say as little as 20%. That will free up land for re-wilding, putting back billions of trees, returning the prisoners in zoos to their natural habitats, soaking up carbon dioxide, and saving the planet for the thousands of generations who will come after us.

**Taste:** Vegan food is a gorgeous fusion of the best foods from around the world.

### Vegan Films

We've told you what's wrong with eating animals and why veganism is so great. Here are some films that will show you more. You can find them, and others, on Youtube, Netflix, Amazon Video or their own websites.

*Animal Rights: A Universal Declaration*

*Best Speech You Will Ever Hear* by Gary Yourofsky

*Called to Rescue*

*Carnage: Swallowing the Past*

*Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*

*Deadly Dairy*

*Dominion*

*Earthlings*

*The End of Meat*

*The Game Changers*

*H.O.P.E. What You Eat Matters*

*Land of Hope and Glory*

*Meat The Truth*

*Okja*

*The Witness*

*You Will Never Look at Your Life in the Same Way Again* by Ed Winters



### **For Animals** by Dean Bracher of Vegan Campaigns

I spend a lot of time at animal sanctuaries; the places where different species are cared for and given the freedom to live, and in a world that recognises their value. These animals are not much different from you or I, well they are, but I've had many a game of football with Percy the pig and lost. Percy loves ball games. Before he came to the sanctuary, Percy had been raised like a dog and taken around on a lead. So when he arrived he would playfully nip at people's feet and legs and call out when left alone. You could see his previous life had given him certain personality traits that were unhelpful to him and those caring for him. But after time and attention, he showed his humour and that he wanted to be loved, like all of us, and to know that this world would not treat him badly, but would value his life and look after his needs.

Our individuality is important to us. We take for granted that we have choices and control over our lives. Being vegan for me means taking responsibility for your actions, knowing the consequences of them, and making choices that achieve positive results and save lives while at the same time enhancing your own life. It's about valuing equally the lives of other species and seeing their unique personalities. You can see that we all breathe and want freedom to make our own decisions. We want



to take part in life and make sure that we care for those around us and leave the planet in a good state for future generations.

More and more people are seeing the reality of factory farms and the way animals are treated to produce all sorts of things that society deems necessary, but aren't. These bring the world no pleasure of any kind, only suffering; they just take and take and take until nothing is left. Our one planet, already fully populated with people and animals, doesn't need billions more using water, resources, and then having their lives ended so that more can be bred. There really seems no sense in this when we know that an individual animal is the same as us, has the same feelings and needs and wants what we want. These individuals would not choose to live in factory farms, or indeed in any farm. I went vegan to stop that and give the planet a rest and help the lives of all species.

If something is worth doing and we know it will make a difference, then why not? Visit an animal sanctuary and let a pig beat you at football, or a chicken perch on your shoulders, or stroke a sheep, and see them for who they really are and not what you've been told or taught.

***I leave you with this:*** you have more power to change a bad situation than you realise, and when you make that decision, it will make this planet a better place.

*“The animals of the world exist for their own reasons.  
They were not made for humans any more than black people  
were made for white, or women created for men.”*

Alice Walker

### **For the Environment** by Catherine Laurence BA, MSc

Being vegan is not only kind and healthy but it's better for the environment too.

Of the total mass of mammals on Earth, food animals account for 60%, humans 36%, and wild animals just 4%. Over three-quarters of all agricultural land in the world is used for animal farming. For the United Kingdom that figure is 85%.

The world's one billion cows, and billions more sheep, pigs and chickens, outnumber humans by three to one. As well as grass, they eat 45% of the world's grain and up to 90% of the soya harvest. When converting grains and soya to protein and fat, most of the calories and protein are wasted.

Food animals drink more water than humans, and produce many times more waste, polluting rivers and underground water supplies. The intensive agriculture to grow their feed crops uses millions of litres of pesticides, not to mention fertilizer, which also run off into rivers.

As intensive agriculture and grazing reduce the amount of topsoil, land degrades and becomes less and less productive. More than 75% of Earth's land area is already degraded, and more than 90% could become degraded by 2050, with estimates anticipating up to one billion environmental refugees by 2050.

Food animals are the main sources of methane and nitrous oxide, the most powerful greenhouse gases, through their burps, farts and manure.

For decades humans have been cutting down forests worldwide, mainly for grazing and growing animal feed. Trees now cover just 9% of Northern Ireland, 10% of England, 15% of Wales and 19% of Scotland.

Plastic bags and food miles are topical environmental issues, but what we eat is more important than what it's packed in or where it comes from. In fact, while saying no to single-use bags and straws is an important step, the main source of ocean plastic pollution is discarded fishing gear from both 'wild-caught' and farmed fish – another reason among so many to say 'no' to sea food and 'yes' to sea life.

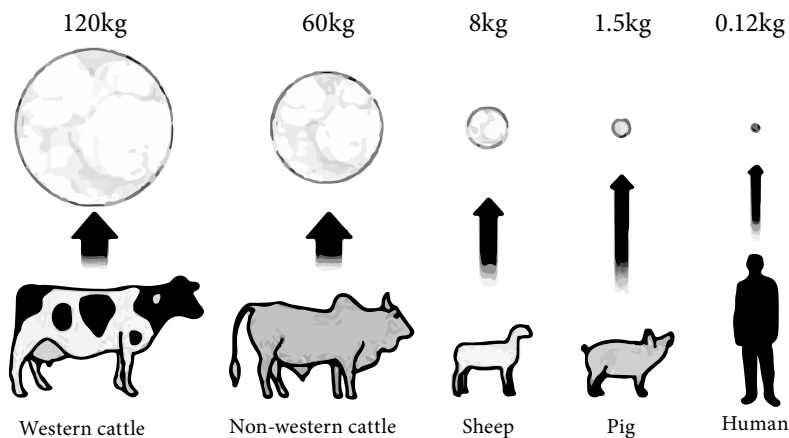
Our food choices are the most important aspect of our ecological footprint, a way that we interact with the environment every day. Eating vegan minimizes our impact. Plant-based diets require about one fifth as much land as omnivorous ones. This is good for the natural world and good for us. For example, it would allow enough reforestation to put the brakes on climate change, while restoring habitat to our threatened wildlife.

*"I AM VEGAN. I don't eat animal products.  
I don't use any animal products because of ethical,  
environmental and climate reasons."*

Greta Thunberg

### The real population problem: livestock

Methane emissions per animal/human per year



SOURCE: Nasa Goddard Institute for Space Studies

### THE BIRTH OF MODERN VEGANISM

People have had a vegetarian, almost vegan, diet in some parts of the world for thousands of years. Around 500 B.C. the Greek mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras called on politicians to act justly in the highest degree by not hurting animals.

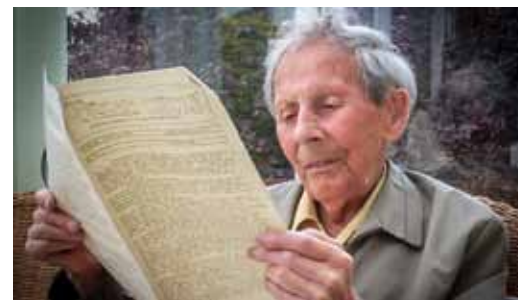
The social justice activist Jeremy Bentham compared human superiority over animals to racism as early as the 18th century. The Vegetarian Society was founded in Manchester in 1847. Throughout the 19th century, vegan pioneers in Britain and America, at that time known as strict or total vegetarians, discussed and debated the cruelty of the milk industry within the wider vegetarian movement.

The first vegan cookbook, *No Animal Food: Two Essays and 100 Recipes*, by Rupert Wheldon, was published in 1910.

In November 1944, the Vegan Society was created in the UK, with Donald Watson as its first secretary. Donald invented the word *vegan*, calling it "the beginning and end of veg-etari-an". Donald typed their newsletters, which started off with fewer than 30 subscribers.

In 1960 Jay and Freya Dinshah founded the American Vegan Society. Jay travelled widely to promote veganism and they organised annual conventions.

In 1965 the Plant Milk Society, later Plamil Foods, introduced soya milk to the UK. Led by Arthur Ling, who was also very active in the Vegan Society, and later by his son Adrian Ling, Plamil also pioneered vegan mayonnaise, an early attempt at cheese spread, and several kinds of chocolate.



Donald Watson with the first Vegan Society newsletter

Other groundbreaking and innovative vegan outreach organisations founded last century include Animal Aid (1977), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA, 1980), Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM, 1985), and Vegetarians International Voice for Animals (Viva!, 1994).

In 1994 Louise Wallis, Chair of the Vegan Society, proposed World Vegan Day, celebrated on 1st November. This later became National Vegan Week, the week around 1st November including both weekends, and then World Vegan Month, the whole of November. It's a popular time to organise vegan outreach events and get coverage in newspapers and on local radio. This was taken to the next level by the Veganuary campaign, which every year supports hundreds of thousands of people to go vegan for January.

Thanks to the foundations laid in the 20th century by vegan campaigning and food pioneers, becoming vegan these days is easier than becoming vegetarian was 50 years ago. As more and more people go vegan or choose to eat more vegan food, vegan food is becoming available everywhere. With vegan food easily available, and A-list celebrities, politicians and business leaders jumping on the bandwagon, being vegan is becoming cool, fashionable and unstoppable.

## CHAPTER 2

# A Balanced Diet

*by Scarlet Hughes, BSc (nutrition)*

A vegan diet excludes all animal products, such as meat, dairy, eggs and honey.

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) is the UK's largest, and one of its most long-standing organisations that represents food and nutrition professionals, with over 9,000 members. The BDA has declared that a well-planned vegan diet can “support healthy living in people of all ages”. It has renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with The Vegan Society to state that a balanced vegan diet can be enjoyed by children and adults, including during pregnancy and breastfeeding, if the nutritional intake is well planned.

Nowadays shop shelves are stocked with vegan sweets, pizzas, cakes, doughnuts, burgers, fish-style fillets and all sorts of ready meals. These are vegan from an ethical perspective, but are not necessarily the healthiest choice. Most are ‘empty calories’, meaning that besides energy, they provide little nutritional value. They can be highly processed, containing alarming amounts of refined sugar, sodium and saturated fat. Even high protein foods, such as soya or seitan based burgers, can be loaded with fat and salt. Cutting out animal products does not automatically lead to a balanced diet bursting with plant-based goodness. Does this mean that we should never consume manufactured foods?

A healthy and balanced diet is wholefood plant-based, avoiding processed foods (high in refined sugar, oil and salt, and low in fibre and micronutrients) and replacing them with food to be consumed as a whole. For example, whole apple rather than apple juice, roasted or steamed potato versus chips or a packet of crisps, wholemeal pasta rather than white pasta, home-made blended banana ice cream rather than ice cream with added refined sugar, and stir-fried vegetables with brown rice rather than shop-bought stir-fry with fried white rice.