



VEGAN 101

How to kickstart your vegan journey




One world. Many lives. Our choice.





WELCOME TO VEGAN

Many people say that going vegan is the best thing they've ever done – their only regret is not doing it sooner. So what are you waiting for? There's a whole world of positive benefits just around the corner.

Let's start with the basics. What is veganism? Vegans avoid all use of animals, for food, clothing, product testing, entertainment and more. One of the fastest-growing lifestyle movements, there are now over half a million vegans living in Great Britain. This has trebled in the past ten years, and is showing no sign of slowing down.

So why the increase? People are simply waking up to all the positive effects of going vegan. By refusing to fund the cruel and unethical use of animals, we also help to protect the environment by choosing a more sustainable lifestyle. And given that we can thrive and enjoy great health on a balanced plant-based diet, all while enjoying delicious food, what's not to love?

In this leaflet you will find the basic info you need to get started on your vegan transition. All of this, and more, is also available on our free 30 Day Vegan Pledge, which you can sign up to at vegansociety.com/pledge.



PLANT-BASED BENEFITS

Vegan living is...

Healthy

But don't just take our word for it. There are so many incredible vegan athletes out there excelling in fields from speed to endurance to strength. If they can thrive on a plant-based diet, anyone can! But even if you're not an ultra-marathon runner you can still reap the benefits. We tend to eat more fruits and vegetables, more fibre and less saturated fat when we go vegan, which is part of the reason why vegans are thought to have lower risks of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and certain forms of cancer.

Easy

Like any lifestyle change, vegan living takes a little practice. In the early days there is a steep learning curve, but after you have picked up some great new recipes and found replacements for your old favourites it will be a breeze. Once you've been vegan for a few weeks it will feel as easy and natural as anything.

Affordable

There is a common misconception that vegan food is expensive, but it can also be one of the most affordable diets out there. Cheap vegan staples such as fruit and veg, rice, potatoes, beans, herbs and spices can make a million tasty different meals. On the other hand – you know what is expensive? Meat and cheese. Just saying.

Delicious

It's time to let you in on a secret. Vegans eat the same as most other people. Ask the average vegan what they eat and they will be stumped to give you a short answer. Whatever you like – be that pasta, curry, stir-fry, burgers, salads, pies, cakes, ice cream, take-away – there are vegan versions of everything, and they're just as good.



GETTING STARTED

Everyone goes vegan in their own way. Whether that's diving in headfirst or making a gradual transition over a few weeks – either is fine. You need to decide what will be the best and most sustainable way for you to do it.

If you're not ready to go 100% vegan straight away, there are a few different approaches to take. One good idea is to start with vegan breakfasts, and then introduce vegan lunches too, before going the whole shebang.

And don't worry if you slip up and eat something non-vegan by accident. We've all been there. Don't feel that your veganism is broken and there's no point trying anymore – just hop right back on the wagon and keep trying your best. That's what veganism is about.

You also don't need to be an amazing cook to be vegan, but you will probably find yourself cooking more. Which isn't a bad thing! To get yourself started cooking vegan, you can search for your favourite meals online. Search for 'vegan chili', 'vegan lasagne', 'vegan cookies' or whatever takes your fancy.

Check out vegansociety.com for hundreds of great recipes.



SWAP IT OUT

You know what's great? You've chosen to go vegan at the best possible time in the history of veganism. We've got vegan versions of any product you can think of, which makes transitioning easier than ever before.

Meat

If you're looking to replicate the taste and texture of meat products, there are plenty of options in your local supermarket frozen section. Here you can find vegan burgers, sausages, nuggets, mince and more.



Dairy

There are more kinds of plant milk than you can shake a stick at, so you're sure to find one you like. Vegan cheese is becoming far more widely available, plus vegan yoghurt, cream, ice cream and custard.

Eggs

If you're looking to replicate scrambled eggs, using tofu works a treat. Chickpea flour does a great job making quiches and omelettes, while you can replace eggs in baking with a whole host of options from mashed banana to vegetable oil to commercial egg replacer powders.



Specialist health food shops such as Holland and Barrett will have even greater variety – which is good news for Vegan Society members, who receive a 10% discount



OUT AND ABOUT

Worried about how convenient a vegan lifestyle will be? Well we've got news for you – times are changing. Cafes and restaurants are starting to take note of the power of the vegan pound, with delicious vegan options to be found in a growing number of independents and chains.

If there are no vegan options on the menu, talk to the staff and see what they can do for you. You'll get them thinking creatively about vegan cooking, while making life easier for the next vegan to come along.

You can also check out local vegan-friendly restaurants and shops on happycow.net.



LIFESTYLE

But a vegan lifestyle isn't just about food, I hear you say. As well as avoiding animal products in their diet, vegans also avoid the use of animals for clothing, research and entertainment.

While this might seem daunting to begin with, remember going vegan is about doing your best. You don't need to immediately rip up all of your carpets and replace them with synthetic wool. If you would like to continue using your non-vegan clothing and cosmetics until they run out or wear out, you can do this. Just make sure you find vegan versions to replace them with eventually.

Look out for the Vegan Trademark on cosmetics and toiletries to ensure that the product contains no animal ingredients and has not been tested on animals.



THE SOCIAL SIDE

**Worried about the social aspects of going vegan?
Here are a few tips to get you off to a good start.**

- **Get involved** in cooking, if you are not already the primary chef of the house. Make it easy for those you share meals with by swapping in vegan ingredients, or make food for the whole house which everyone can enjoy together. Cake is a great way to win people over.

- **Do your research** so if someone questions your decisions, you can back up what you're doing. Present these points in a friendly and even-handed way, but remember if someone's not really listening to your answers, you don't have to continue the conversation.

- **Remember your reasons** for going vegan. If it feels like the people around you don't understand or respect your decision, this can be tough. But it doesn't change the fact that you're doing an amazing thing – for the animals, for the planet, for yourself.

- **Find a community** of like-minded people. It's important not to feel isolated, so if you don't know any vegans – find some! Search for groups in your area, go to vegan events, and get chatting to like-minded people online. You are not alone.

- **Hang in there!** Remember you're going to get most awkward questions when you first go vegan. Once those around you see that you're happy and you're sticking with it, they will accept it as part of you, and maybe even look into getting involved themselves.





Sign up to our 30 Day Pledge
for a daily email providing tips,
advice and recipes:
vegansociety.com/pledge



YouTube

The Vegan Society, Donald Watson House, 21 Hylton Street,
Birmingham, B18 6HJ, United Kingdom

t +44 (0)121 523 1730 info@vegansociety.com www.vegansociety.com

