

# 10 Tips For Going Vegetarian ©

This Savvy Vegetarian report is based on my own opinions, formed by almost 40 years of experience and observation as a vegetarian, and ten years of helping others go vegetarian. 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. Happy Vegging! Judy Kingsbury, Savvy Vegetarian

---

## Frequently Asked Questions:

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

### What are the different types of vegetarian?

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.

These vegetarian categories aren't set in stone. You can alternate between them, or create your own unique category. Things tend to change from time to time, especially when you first go vegetarian, so 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.

### What Do Vegetarians Eat?

This question could be, "What Should Vegetarians Eat?" Most vegetarians don't live on "rabbit food", as many people assume. But, obviously, a vegetarian is someone who eats (or should eat) vegetables, and grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, with sometimes a little dairy and egg. Or maybe not so obviously, since a lot of new vegetarians 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, vegetables and whole grains are the major food groups in a vegetarian diet.

### Why Go Vegetarian?

**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 diet is often seen as a way to rebuild health and strength, because a balanced vegetarian 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 when they realize that they have lost their taste for meat, or that it disagrees with them. Or they have gravitated toward a vegetarian diet because they like the variety of different foods. The change in most cases is gradual, but 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 lucky people were raised in a family and/or culture where vegetarian diet is the norm. Maybe they are lapsed vegetarians, or they may have things to learn about vegetarian diet, nutrition, cooking, and lifestyle. But, they have an advantage - it's not all strange and new, and the physiology doesn't have such a big adjustment to make.

## **What Kind Of Vegetarian Should You Be?**

This comes down to vegan vs non-vegan. It's politically correct these days to be vegan, so much so that it's almost embarrassing to admit that you're not.

It is possible to be well nourished on a vegan diet, it is true that vegans aren't harming any animals, and doing no harm is a worthy goal.

However, I'm convinced that becoming vegetarian should be a gradual process. It's a challenge for the most experienced vegetarian to eat a well-balanced vegan diet, with no nutritional deficiencies. It takes a lot of knowledge about the nutrient content of food, food combining, and constant close attention to your diet.

In going vegetarian, as in everything else, you can't jump the gap between the ideal and the real in a single bound. For a new vegetarian, jumping right into a vegan diet is a recipe for malnutrition, because it's too big an adjustment for the body to make quickly. It's like going from couch potato to tri-athlete in a week. New vegetarians need time for their bodies to de-tox, for their digestive systems to adjust, and to learn about vegetarian nutrition and cooking.

In an ideal world, we all would be vegan, but we have to start from where we are. It's a great step in the right direction just to give up red meat. Think about it. If all the meat eaters started eating half, or one quarter of the meat they now eat (still far more than they really need), what a boon that would be to the environment! And if they all gave up red meat completely, what a giant leap for mankind! For the animals, and the environment, it's better to eat a little milk or egg, from organic sources, than to eat the cows and chickens that produce them.

Give yourself as much time as you need to learn the territory, and do whatever makes you happy and healthy. Then be whatever kind of vegetarian works best for you.

---

## Ten Tips For Getting Started Going Vegetarian

### 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. At the same time, gradually introduce new vegetarian foods to your diet. When you're starting out as a vegetarian, 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 is 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. Get yourself a basic vegetarian cookbook, to start with

Your new cookbook should have lots of information about vegetarian 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

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.

I also recommend "The New Becoming Vegetarian", by Melina, Davis, and Harrison, as an excellent daily nutrition reference for new and old vegetarians.

### 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 and Wild Oats 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, no fat, raw food, etc., at least for the first few years, until you are more experienced. I include macrobiotic or vegan as extreme diets for beginning vegetarians, because they require more advanced knowledge of vegetarian cooking and nutrition.

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

Vegetarian food 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. So just 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 sources every day, other than egg and dairy.
- Try a variety of whole grains, and fresh vegetables, and different combinations of foods.

## 10. Enjoy your food!

If you don't like something, or it doesn't seem to like you, *you don't have to eat it!* Of course be adventurous, and try new things. But, there's such a variety of food available for vegetarians, 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, haven't eaten it since, and have done very well without it. But millet is very nutritious, and I know other people like it - I still see it in the bulk section of natural food stores. I prefer quinoa, which some people I know don't like. Each to his own!

---

More free Savvy Vegetarian reports: [Vegetarian Nutrition](#) [Eat Beans Without Gas](#)  
[Social Etiquette](#) [Veg Non-Veg Together](#)

### 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'](#)

Savvy Vegetarian supports vegetarian diet, healthy eating, and green living with [advice](#) [articles](#) [recipes](#) [resources](#) [reports](#) [sv blog](#)

I'd appreciate your feedback! Please [Contact Us](#) with questions or comments.

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