

What Veggie Products Will Americans Purchase?

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VEGETARIAN JOURNAL

Science, Caring, and Vegan Living since 1982



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Nutrition Hotline

Understanding Evidence-Based Research

Reed Mangels, PhD, RD



QUESTION: I keep seeing articles referring to “evidence-based.” What does that mean?

CS, via email

ANSWER: One definition of evidence-based reads, “denoting an approach to medicine, education, and other disciplines that emphasizes the practical application of the findings of the best available current research.”¹ An example of evidence-based practice is when health care providers base their recommendations for treatment of a condition on high-quality research rather than on strictly anecdotal information or their own unsupported opinions. For example, a new medication is developed and tested to make sure that it is safe and that it effectively treats a disease—let’s say the flu. A health care provider should not recommend use of this medication for an unrelated condition, such as kidney stones, based on a feeling that the medication might work.

Similarly, in nutrition, recommendations should be made based on the best available current research and not on opinion. For example, if I really, really like apples and feel more awake when I eat one, I can’t say to someone

who consults me for nutrition advice, “Eat an apple whenever you feel tired.” There is a sizable body of evidence that eating more fruits and vegetables will reduce a person’s risk of several diseases, but I’m not aware of good evidence that eating an apple will make everyone feel less tired.

There are several kinds of studies that are commonly used in nutrition research. Some of the most common are prospective studies, retrospective studies, and randomized clinical trials. For example, to answer the question “What can I eat to keep from getting diabetes?” researchers could do a prospective study in which they collect information on the diets of groups of people for many years and see which people get diabetes, and which don’t, and look for dietary differences between those with and without diabetes. Other scientists might conduct a retrospective study and interview people with and without diabetes about what they ate as children. Other researchers might randomly give some people with pre-diabetes vitamin X and other people, also with pre-diabetes, a placebo and see if vitamin X is associated with less risk of pre-diabetes progressing to diabetes. This type of study is called a

randomized clinical trial. Results of all these types of studies are together used to develop evidence-based recommendations.

As you can imagine, different types of studies have different limitations, ranging from people’s faulty memories to the role of non-diet-related factors to the feasibility of doing a long-term clinical trial. Evidence-based nutrition practice involves looking at the totality of the evidence and seeing what most studies say. There are ways to evaluate the quality of studies that are used when developing nutrition recommendations so that they are based on the best quality evidence available. All of this—gathering evidence, assessing the quality of evidence, continually updating information—is part of evidence-based practice.

REFERENCE:

¹ *Oxford Dictionary*. lexico.com

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Note from the Coordinators



How Many Blacks, Latinos, and Asians are Vegetarian & Vegan?

Soon after we moved to Baltimore and started The Vegetarian Resource Group in 1982, we held a vegan potluck picnic in Druid Hill Park. We didn't realize white people didn't go to that gorgeous area. Many people told us Blacks weren't interested in our issues. However, when four of us attended a vegetarian conference in Baltimore around the same time, all of the other attendees were Black. While Debra taught in a Baltimore Public School, none of the children were white. The kids said they used to have white friends, but in middle school, somehow all the Black youngsters went to one school, and the whites to another. Though legal segregation was over, systemic separation was still prevalent.



In the early days of The VRG, many of us ate in Indian restaurants because of the vegan dishes. People assume most Asian Indians are vegetarians, but that is not necessarily true. See our blog on people from India at vrg.org/blog/2020/08/19/how-many-people-are-vegetarian-in-india. Interestingly, one of our vegan interns of India heritage said she was not raised vegetarian. She became vegan based on exposure to ideas like a typical American youth. So when making judgments about people, explore outside your own experience, learn more, and be sure not to assume.

The following is from our 2020 Vegetarian Resource Group Harris Poll of U.S. adults. Looking at the number of vegetarians (including vegan) by race/ethnic group shows few differences across the groups, which reflects information we have found in other polls we have conducted. Six percent of Latinos and Asians were vegetarian, while 5% of Blacks were vegetarian, which is pretty close to the U.S. total for all adults. However, of the 5% of Blacks who are vegetarian, included are 4% vegan and 1% not vegan. From our experience, vegetarians from India often have a hard time giving up dairy, which is a part of their culture, and so it makes sense that vegan is a small percentage of Asian vegetarians. See poll continuation on page 25.

	Black	Latino	Asian	Total
Vegetarians (not including vegans)	1%	3%	6%	3%
Vegetarians (including vegans)	5%	6%	6%	6%
Vegans	4%	3%	<1%	3%
Eats vegetarian meals including vegan sometimes or always when eating out	55%	64%	59%	54%
Eats vegan meals sometimes or always when eating out	27%	30%	23%	25%
Most important when making food choices	taste (58%)	taste (49%)	taste (55%)	taste (57%)
	health (43%)	cost (38%)	cost (40%)	cost (38%)
	cost (37%)	health (35%)	health (36%)	health (36%)

Debra Wasserman & Charles Stabler

Coordinators of The Vegetarian Resource Group

VRG's MEMORIAL and HONORARY GIFT PROGRAM

How often have you wanted to make a gift in honor of a loved one or friend but weren't sure which charities are vegan-friendly, pro-environmental, or pro-animal rights? Please remember The Vegetarian Resource Group. You can make a gift in memory of a loved one or as a living tribute to honor someone you care about on a special occasion, such as a wedding or birth. We'll send an acknowledgement to you and to the recipient(s) you choose. Your gift will support educational outreach programs and help promote veganism.

Memorials & Honorary Gifts

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

My name and address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Make checks payable to The Vegetarian Resource Group and mail to P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203, or donate at vrg.org/donate.

Thanks to Lauren Mattia Levine for her donation in memory of her dogs Claude & Margaux and their love of home cooking.

Thanks to Donna Almquist and Scenario International LLC for their donations.

Thanks to several Vegetarian Resource Group members who recently became Life Members!

Issue 3 is a Keeper

You guys have outdone yourselves! And during a pandemic! With the Bowled Over bowls and the Refreshing Mocktails, burger comparisons, chilled soups, and nutritional yeast information, this issue is a keeper! Thanks for all you do!

Kat W., via e-mail

Editor's Note: See Issue 3, 2020 online at vrg.org/journal/vj2020issue3/2020

Thanks for Doing Detailed Articles

Your online sugar article from 2007 by Jeanne Yacoubou was terrific. Thank you for such detailed information. So many poorly written articles are online. Seems like everyone thinks they are a writer, yet were never educated in journalism. Since the internet exploded it has given anyone with a computer the right to write. They just give one paragraph and ads for their blog. Will be reading more from you all.

Diane, via e-mail

Editor's Note: Here's a link to updated information on the topic of sugar and bone char usage: vrg.org/journal/vj2020issue3/2020_issue3_sweet_stuff.php

Update on VRG Scholarship Winner

I wanted to update you about Jasmine Westerdahl, who is a 2016 Vegetarian Resource scholarship winner. Jasmine received her B.S. degree (magna cum laude) in nutrition and dietetics from Loma Linda University in June. She just passed her registration exam and is now a registered dietitian nutritionist. She is into her second quarter in the M.S. degree program at Loma Linda. If all goes well, she should receive that degree in June. So far she is getting all A's in the M.S. classes. She is already talking about wanting to go on for a doctorate. Her professors are encouraging her to continue on to her doctorate after her master's degree.

John W., via e-mail

Thank You!

Thank you for all you do for us at PAN. Our pledges love the *Vegetarian Journal*. We would appreciate it if you let others know about our free Vegan Pledge Program; it guides people through 30 days of veganism with the personal support. You can sign up at peaceadvocacynetwork.org/veganpledge/
Tami Lynn Andrew, Peace Advocacy Network, via e-mail

Letters to the Editors can be sent to: Vegetarian Journal, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203. You may also e-mail letters to vrg@vrg.org or send a message to us on Facebook: facebook.com/thevegetarianresourcegroup

Coming in the next issue...

KALE SALADS & RICE DISHES!

Plus: Vegan Foods High in Calcium in Latin America, VRG Video Contest Winners, and More!

Flat Out Flavor Sheet Pan Meals

by Leslie Gray Streeter

It's not an overstatement to say that the world is currently unpredictable. With all this uncertainty, cooking shouldn't be one more thing to worry about. These five sheet-pan meals were conceived for minimum effort but maximum flavor, with lots of veggies and a variety of plant-based add-ins. The recipes can be made in any oven. You'll need a sheet pan with edges, a cutting board and knife, and very little else.

For brunch, lunch, or anytime, dive into Hash Brown Casserole, made with cashew cream and one-stop-shop salsa for flavor. Black Bean Taco Bake has the classic hand-held favorite coming together in just a few steps. Dinner for family or friends will be a hit with Chickpea Lasagna, an almost effortless take on elegant supper fare. A spin off on Pad Thai, Sriracha-Sesame Tofu will be a new dinnertime favorite. And sweeten things up with an Apple Oatmeal Crumble Bake.

Hash Brown Sheet Pan Brunch Casserole

(Serves 6)

5 cups frozen shredded hash browns, thawed
2 cups prepared Cashew Cream (recipe follows)
2 cups mushrooms, any variety, chopped
2 cups shredded fresh Brussels sprouts
1 cup chopped green beans
One 15-ounce jar salsa, your favorite variety
½ cup chopped red onion
1 teaspoon dried oregano
Salt and pepper, to taste
Chopped green onions, to garnish (optional)
Chopped fresh parsley, to garnish (optional)
Juice from 1 lemon, to garnish (optional)

Make Cashew Cream and set aside (can be made up to two days in advance.)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Drain thawed hash browns and place in bowl. Mix with Cashew Cream, mushrooms, Brussels sprouts, green beans, salsa, red onion, and oregano until blended. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spread into a sheet pan with sides, at least 9 x 13-inch. Bake at 350 degrees, stirring once, for

25-30 minutes or until desired brownness is achieved and top is crispy. Put under broiler for 5-10 minutes to make it even crispier. Serve warm, topped with chopped green onions, parsley, and/or lemon juice.

Total calories: 376
Carbohydrates: 52 grams
Sodium: 474 milligrams

Fat: 15 grams
Protein: 20 grams
Fiber: 6 grams

Cashew Cream

(Makes about 3½ cups; serving 2 Tablespoons)

**2 cups plain cashews, soaked for at least 2 hours
in warm water or up to overnight**
1 cup water
Juice from 1 lemon

Drain cashews and rinse the soak liquid away. Pour cashews, water, and lemon juice into a powerful blender or food processor. Purée until the nuts are a smooth, silky paste. Cashew Cream can be made up to two days ahead and stored in the refrigerator.

Total calories per 2 TB serving: 69
Carbohydrates: 4 grams
Sodium: <1 milligram

Fat: 5 grams
Protein: 2 grams
Fiber: <1 gram



Black Bean Taco Bake

(Makes 6 tacos)

6 corn tortillas

Cooking spray

1 cup vegan crumbles (such as Alpha, Beyond, Boca, Gardein, or Lightlife)

1 cup salsa, your favorite variety

½ cup canned black beans, rinsed

½ cup canned or thawed/frozen corn

½ cup peeled and cubed sweet potatoes

1 small zucchini, sliced into thin half-moons

1 green pepper, seeds removed and sliced

1 teaspoon ground cumin

½ cup vegan cheese shreds, to serve (optional)

1 cup shredded cabbage, to serve

½ cup prepared guacamole, to serve (optional)

2 Tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro or parsley, or fresh jalapeño slices, to serve

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Arrange tortillas on the bottom of a sheet pan, approximately 9 x 13-inch or larger, sprayed lightly with cooking spray.

Cook crumbles using instructions on package in skillet or microwave.

In large bowl combine prepared crumbles, salsa, black beans, corn, sweet potatoes, zucchini, green pepper, and cumin. Pour over tortillas. If using optional vegan cheese shreds, sprinkle over the vegetables.

Bake at 325 degrees for 15-20 minutes depending on desired crispiness. Check potatoes for tenderness.

Serve warm topped with shredded cabbage, guacamole, and/or chopped fresh cilantro, parsley, or jalapeño.

Total calories: 154

Carbohydrates: 28 grams

Sodium: 507 milligrams

Fat: 1 gram

Protein: 13 grams

Fiber: 7 grams

Chickpea Lasagna

(Serves 6)

One 15.5-ounce can chickpeas, drained and rinsed

1-2 teaspoons dried oregano, to taste

1 teaspoon garlic powder

One 25-ounce jar vegan marinara sauce, divided

3 cups fresh spinach, roughly chopped

2 cups chopped portobello mushrooms

One 10-ounce package no-bake lasagna noodles

¼ cup nutritional yeast, plus 1 Tablespoon to serve

2 Tablespoons olive oil

Fresh basil, chopped, to serve

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a small bowl mix the chickpeas, oregano, and garlic powder. Mash into a paste using a fork or potato masher. If needed, add a little water to make smooth.

Cover the bottom of the sheet pan with edges at least 9 x 13-inch with ¾-1 cup of marinara sauce, then cover the sauce with 6-8 lasagna noodles, depending on the size of your pan. Spoon more sauce onto the noodles, followed by the chickpea-mash, spinach, and portobellos. Cover with 6-8 more noodles.

Finally, mix the remaining sauce with ¼ cup nutritional yeast and olive oil to give the mixture a cheesy consistency, and entirely coat the noodles with it.

Cover tightly with foil, as the lasagna may be taller than pan edges, and bake for 20-25 minutes. Remove foil and bake for another 8-10 minutes or until the edges are crispy. Serve warm topped with chopped fresh basil and sprinkle with reserved nutritional yeast.

Total calories: 348

Carbohydrates: 56 grams

Sodium: 305 milligrams

Fat: 8 grams

Protein: 15 grams

Fiber: 7 grams

Sesame Sriracha Tofu

(Serves 4)

One 14- to 16-ounce block extra-firm tofu
Cooking oil spray
½ cup nutritional yeast
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 shallot, chopped
1 cup chopped mushrooms (oyster, portobello, etc.)
2 cups small-chopped broccoli florets
1 red pepper, chopped
1 cup shredded carrots
1 cup shredded kale
1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, peeled and minced
1 Tablespoon sesame oil
Sriracha hot sauce, to taste
½ cup chopped peanuts (optional)
1 Tablespoon sesame seeds
4 cups prepared rice noodles or steamed brown rice, to serve (1 cup per serving)
1 cup fresh mung bean sprouts, to serve (optional)
2 Tablespoons chopped green onions, to serve
Soy sauce, to taste, to serve (optional)
Red pepper flakes, to taste, to serve (optional)

Drain and press tofu to squeeze the extra moisture out, for at least 30 minutes. Once the tofu is pressed, preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Cut tofu into 12 squares. Spray with cooking oil and toss in nutritional yeast. Coat 9 x 13-inch sheet pan with sides in cooking oil spray and place tofu squares on pan. Add garlic, shallots, mushrooms, broccoli, red pepper, carrots, and kale to the pan, spreading evenly around the tofu. Drizzle sesame oil and sriracha over pan evenly.

Bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Remove pan to flip tofu. If desired, sprinkle with peanuts and/or sesame seeds before returning to oven for another 15 minutes.

Remove from pan and serve over rice noodles or steamed brown rice. Top with mung bean sprouts, green onions, soy sauce, and/or red pepper flakes to serve.

Recipe pictured on the cover.

Total calories: 506

Carbohydrates: 68 grams

Sodium: 94 milligrams

Fat: 15 grams

Protein: 31 grams

Fiber: 12 grams



Oatmeal Apple Dessert Bake

(Serves 4)

4 apples, sliced into thin wedges (try pears, too)

½ cup raisins (or dried cranberries)

¼ cup vegan brown sugar

1 Tablespoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon dried ginger

Pinch ground allspice

Juice from ½ lemon

Non-stick cooking spray

Topping

½ cup rolled oats

1 Tablespoon vegan margarine (such as
Earth Balance)

1 Tablespoon vegan brown sugar

1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

⅓ cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Mix apples, raisins, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, and lemon juice in large bowl. Spray a 9 x 13-inch sheet pan with sides with non-stick spray and spread apple mixture over entire surface.

Mix topping ingredients except for almond slices and spread on top of apples. Bake 25 minutes at 350 degrees uncovered. At 25 minutes, sprinkle sliced almonds on top and bake another five minutes. Serve warm as is or with a scoop of vegan vanilla ice cream.

Total calories: 307

Carbohydrates: 57 grams

Sodium: 37 milligrams

Fat: 8 grams

Protein: 6 grams

Fiber: 5 grams

Leslie Gray Streeter is an author, blogger, and journalist who embraced veganism in 2017. She is an amateur cook who loves noodling around and admits to a casual relationship with exact measurements. Her debut book, *Black Widow*, was released in March 2020.



Photos by Rissa Miller

What's for Lunch?

50 Ideas for Vegan Lunch Bags

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

Whether your child's school is virtual, blended, or in person, lunch is an important part of the day. Many school cafeterias have few or no vegan options so packing a lunch is a part of the morning routine for a lot of vegan families. Even if your child's trip to school only involves turning on a laptop, a prepared lunch can simplify things mid-day.

You don't have to cook every morning, either. Many items on this list can be a leftover from dinner the night before or from the freezer. Knowing that some school districts don't allow nuts or nut butters, items on this list that have nut butters can be modified to use soy or sunflower seed butter. Add a beverage, some cut-up veggies, and/or a piece of fruit.

Sandwiches

1. Peanut butter and fruit spread on whole wheat bread
2. Hummus wrap
3. Bean burger on a whole grain bun (can make mini-burgers and serve in small buns)
4. Tofu burger on a whole grain bun (can make mini-burgers and serve in small buns)
5. Falafel in pita
6. Tofu salad on rye
7. Chickpea salad in pita
8. Red pepper hummus on a pumpernickel bagel
9. Vegan deli slices on a small sub roll
10. Almond butter (or sunflower seed butter) on a cinnamon-raisin bagel
11. Bean burrito
12. Baked tofu on an English muffin
13. Scrambled tofu on an English muffin
14. Lentil loaf on multigrain bread
15. Veggie sausage in a biscuit
16. Quesadilla with hummus or vegan cheese
17. Veggie dog in a bun
18. Peanut butter and sliced or dried fruit on whole wheat bread
19. Bagel with vegan cream cheese

Dips

20. Hummus with toasted pita chips
21. Vegan yogurt with fruit dippers
22. Peanut butter (or other allowed butter) sauce with vegetable dippers
23. Refried beans with tortilla chips
24. Marinara sauce with chewy breadsticks
25. Waffle sticks with fruit sauce

In the Thermos

26. Baked beans and veggie dog slices
27. Pasta with marinara sauce and chickpeas
28. Pasta salad
29. Pasta with peanut sauce (or sauce made with soy butter)
30. Chili
31. Rice and beans with salsa
32. Chana masala (curried chickpeas) and rice
33. Ramen noodles with vegetables and tofu cubes
34. Hearty bean soup
35. Barbeque tofu
36. Barbeque seitan
37. Pancakes
38. Pinto bean-potato salad
39. Sushi rice salad (sushi rice with vegetables and tofu cubes and a soy sauce dressing)
40. Vegan mac and cheese
41. Samosa
42. Vegan lasagna
43. Sloppy joe (pack a bun and spoon on the filling at lunch time)
44. Sesame noodles and vegetables

Miscellaneous

45. Peanut butter and jelly muffin
46. Homemade calzone
47. Corn and black bean muffin
48. Build-your-own-taco (taco shell plus fillings)
49. Sushi
50. Bean spread roll-ups (roll a bean spread in a tortilla and slice vertically)

SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

by Reed Mangels,
PhD, RD, FADA

A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

Dairy Product Intake Does Not Reduce Fracture Risk in Women Near or Post-Menopause

In the United States, about 25% of women age 65 or older have osteoporosis of the hips or spine. Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones and makes them more likely to fracture. A recent study examined dairy intake of almost 2,000 women in the U.S. to see if it affected bone loss over a 10-year period. The women were between 42 and 53 years at the start of the study. They were divided into four groups—those who typically had less than half a serving of dairy products a day, 0.5 to 1.5 servings, 1.5 to 2.5 servings, and more than 2.5 servings per day. The researchers looked at all dairy products together. There was no significant difference between the four groups in loss of bone density over the 10-year study period. There was also no significant difference in the risk of bone fracture related to osteoporosis. The results of this study suggest that dairy intake by middle-aged women does not offer benefits in terms of bone density or risk of fractures.

Wallace TC, Jun S, Zou P, et al. Dairy intake is not associated with improvements in bone mineral density or risk of fractures across the menopause transition: data from the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation. *Menopause*. 2020;27(8):879-886.

Plant Protein May Play a Beneficial Role in Longevity

By Kavitha Shankar MS, MBA, VRG Intern

Plant proteins seem to have certain health and cardio-protective benefits that may increase longevity. Researchers from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) recently published the results of a study that followed approximately 400,000 men and women, 62 years old on average at the start of the study, over a period of

16 years. At the start of the study, the subjects' median protein intake from plants was about 40%. Plant protein sources included bread, cereal, pasta, nuts, beans, legumes, and other plant proteins. The remaining protein was from animal sources including meat and dairy. The researchers compared these plant proteins to animal proteins from red meat, white meat (defined as poultry and fish), dairy, and eggs. They found that consuming more plant protein was related to a lower risk of dying from cardiovascular diseases and of death, in general.

The overall risk reduction in death, regardless of the cause, was independent of smoking status, diabetes, fruit consumption, and supplement use, indicating that switching to plant proteins may reduce risk of death despite certain lifestyle choices. Additionally, the researchers showed that replacing 3% of the calories that came from animal protein overall with plant protein resulted in a 10% reduction in risk of dying for both men and women irrespective of the type of animal protein.

When the researchers examined different sources of animal protein, using the same 3% substitution model, replacing eggs with plant protein was associated with a 24% lower risk of death in men and a 21% lower risk in women; replacing red meat with plant protein also resulted in risk reduction of death in men (13%) and women (15%); and substitution of dairy with plant protein resulted in 8% reduction across both genders. Interestingly, the substitution model for white meat with plant protein did not show significant benefits. In summary, plant proteins may be superior to animal protein for overall longevity and reduction of risk of dying from heart disease. Even small substitutions of certain animal proteins with plant proteins could help increase life span.

Huang J, Liao LM, Weinstein SJ, Sinha R, Graubard BI, Albanes D. Association between plant and animal protein intake and overall and cause-specific mortality. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2020;e202790.

Are Creatine Supplements Effective?

By Jacqueline Tang, VRG Intern

Creatine is an amino acid that is naturally produced and stored in muscles. Creatine helps provide rapid energy to muscles during high-intensity interval training (HIIT). Although our body naturally makes creatine, humans can consume additional creatine from supplements, meat, and fish. Vegetarian and vegan athletes who regularly partake in HIIT or strength training may benefit from taking a supplement. This can help increase the amount of creatine that is stored in the muscle and boost exercise performance. Creatine in supplements is usually synthetically produced; vegan supplements are available in both powder and pill form. Although the creatine in supplements is generally vegan since it is usually synthetically produced, other ingredients, such as the capsule used to enclose the pill, might be made from animal-derived gelatin. To ensure that the supplement is vegan, verify with the label or website.

A recent systematic review utilized data from nine scientific studies to investigate the effect of creatine supplements on exercise performance in vegetarians and omnivores. The authors of the review concluded, based on one study, that 1 gram of creatine per day is the minimum amount that can help build muscle and aid in anaerobic training, like strenuous weightlifting and high intensity forms of exercise (such as short bursts of jumping exercises or sprints). Experts debate whether creatine supplementation use is more beneficial for vegetarians engaged in high intensity exercise than for omnivores. Some studies have shown that vegetarians may achieve higher stored concentrations of creatine than omnivores after supplement use. Yet this difference may not be important, since exercise performance was roughly equal for both vegetarians and omnivores after using creatine supplements.

From these studies one can conclude that creatine could be a useful supplement for some vegan and vegetarian athletes. Although creatine is generally safe to take at appropriate doses, this review did not find that it was needed to give vegetarians an edge in exercise performance.

Kaviani M, Shaw K, Chilibeck PD. Benefits of creatine supplementation for vegetarians compared to omnivorous athletes: A systematic review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2020;17(9):3041.

What Do Vegetarians Eat?

A recent large study from France looked at 500 self-reported vegetarians and more than 250 self-reported vegans and compared them to approximately 20,000 nonvegetarians. Food records were used to verify that vegetarians and vegans were correctly categorized. The researchers were interested in consumption of what they called ultra-processed foods. These foods included commercial veggie burgers, plant-based dairy substitutes, mass-produced packaged breads and buns, packaged snacks, sodas and sweetened beverages, reconstituted meat products processed with the addition of preservatives (like chicken nuggets and hot dogs), instant noodles and soups, and frozen entrées. They asked subjects to record what they ate for three days. They then compared their intakes of ultra-processed foods.

Vegetarians and vegans got more calories from ultra-processed foods than did meat-eaters mainly because of the higher consumption of plant-based meats and plant-based milk by vegetarians and vegans. It was surprising that meat-eaters didn't use ultra-processed foods to the same extent. Perhaps in France, "reconstituted meat products" are less popular than they seem to be in the U.S. In this study, meat-eaters ate an average of about 1 ounce per day of processed meat.

Vegetarians, especially vegans, had higher intakes of unprocessed plant foods than did meat-eaters and ate fewer sweets and fatty foods. For example, vegans ate 1.5 times more fruit, 1.75 times more vegetables, 4 times more nuts, and 5.5 times more legumes than did nonvegetarians. Nonvegetarians ate 1.7 times more sweets and fatty foods than did vegans. Those who had been vegetarian for a short time were more likely to use ultra-processed foods than were those who had been vegetarian for a longer time. Being younger when first becoming vegetarian was also associated with a greater likelihood of using ultra-processed food.

It would be interesting to see a similar study done in the U.S.

Gehring J, Touvier M, Baudry J, et al. Consumption of ultra-processed foods by pesco-vegetarians, vegetarians, and vegans: associations with duration and age at diet initiation [published online ahead of print, 2020 Jul 21]. *J Nutr*. 2020;nxaa196.

2020 Essay Winner

Going Plant-Based During a Pandemic

You only eat grass! How will you survive on that during the lockdown? My friends would mock me as I devoured my plant-based tacos. I am a fifth-generation vegetarian, so excluding meat products from my diet is not new for me, nor is the stigma surrounding my diet; but I would've never thought that my lifestyle choice would also be my biggest asset during this pandemic.

A sudden (and even indefinite) period of quarantine is very stressful, and running out of food is not a problem I'd like to add to the situation at hand. As grocery stores run out of stock world over, my meat-eating counterparts fret over egg shortages, chicken and beef expiration dates, while I recount my three-week supply of tofu and oats in my pantry, and a sigh of relief overcomes my stress: "Phew! All good."

As layoffs, furloughs, and unemployment unfortunately consume many across the world, food costs are only on the rise. My meat-eating peers worry over the rising costs of their favorite chicken breasts (which cost roughly \$6.00 per pound in my area). One pound of chickpeas, however, costs me almost half that price. Whole plant-based items often last longer,



Ishva Mehta
Age 17

and also offer more servings than animal products.

I also stay safe within the boundaries of my home as I, in comparison to my meat-eating peers, am not forced to make repeated trips to the grocery store. Chopped vegetables can be easily stored in sealed storage containers. If stored correctly in the freezer, cabbage, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, and frozen vegetables, all last for about a month. Beans, pastas, cereals, and lentils, paired correctly with vegetables, make great meals.

One of the biggest complaints I get regarding plant-based diets is that "it's like working from scratch; it's tedious and I don't have the time!"

Well, if like many, you are currently homebound, chances are you are spending more time than ever in your kitchen! After endless hours in front of the television, food is the most popular entertainment option for many people. Most plant-based

dishes are very approachable. With a little bit of education and an open mind, anyone can venture into the world of plant-based diet this quarantine season.

Plus, during a time of social-distancing, there is no (or very little) judgment. Now is the perfect time to tackle food experiments and lifestyle changes without fear of judgment from peers. Veganism,

vegetarianism, and plant-based diets are extremely stigmatized even today; I, myself, was uncertain of my body's capabilities of surviving solely on a plant-based diet during these uncertain times. I thought I would find myself reaching for the ice creams, eggs, and other animal based products to sustain myself. However, I found a plant-based lifestyle to be optimum during this pandemic.

The deadline for the next Vegetarian Resource Group Annual Essay Contest for kids is May 20, 2021. For details and information about the contest and previous winners, see: vrg.org/essay

Bequests

The VRG depends on the generous contributions of our members and supporters to continue our educational projects. Though the world may not become vegan in our lifetimes, we realize that we are planning and working for future generations.

- Your will and life insurance policies enable you to protect your family and also to provide a way to give long-lasting support to causes in which you believe. Naming The Vegetarian Resource Group in your will or life insurance policy will enable us to increase our work for vegetarianism.
- One suggested form of bequest is: *I give and bequeath to The Vegetarian Resource Group, Baltimore, Maryland, the sum of _____ dollars (or if stock, property, or insurance policy, please describe).*
- To be sure your wishes are carried out, please speak with your attorney specifically about writing the correct information in your will.

NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

The Vegetarian Resource Group Testimony

The VRG Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels PhD, RD, submitted VRG's comments to USDA and USDHHS on the Scientific Report of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. See: vrg.org/blog/2020/09/01/the-vegetarian-resource-group-testimony-on-the-dietary-guidelines/

Vegan Education

VRG Research Manager Jeanne Yacoubou responded to an email inquiry from a PhD student in Food, Agriculture & Resource Economics. He asked: "...In preparing for a PhD next year, I'm working on research around the economic impacts of plant-based diets, e.g., consumption, production, externalities, trends, etc. Would you have any suggestions for papers or people in this area?" For helpful resources see: vrg.org/blog/2020/08/31/plant-based-economics-research/. Jeanne also did a posting on "Are Vegan Cosmetics Halal?" Go to: vrg.org/blog/2020/08/10/are-vegan-cosmetics-halal/

VRG Intern Kavitha Shankar, a PhD nutrition student, answered a question from a dietitian seeing patients with kidney dysfunction. She wanted to know about phosphorus and potassium content of non-dairy milks. See: vrg.org/nutrition/milk_alternatives/kidney_dysfunction.pdf. Kavitha also researched how many people are vegetarian in India. See: vrg.org/blog/2020/08/19/how-many-people-are-vegetarian-in-india/

A reader asked about the crispy noodles in Chinese restaurants to see if they are vegan. See what VRG interns and volunteers Simon Brown (Johns Hopkins), Abby Mudd (Kansas State University), Adhi Muthukumar (Cornell), and Jacqueline Tang (Johns Hopkins) found out at vrg.org/blog/2020/09/23/crispy-chinese-noodles-whats-in-those-wonton-strips-anyways

Breakfasts to Savor

by Hannah Kaminsky

A new day is dawning in the kitchen, jostling the soundest of sleepers awake. Far removed from the dusty boxes of cereal and granola bars, bold, bright aromas infused with spice and umami fill the air. Though the standard American diet leans heavily on sweets for the “most important meal of the day,” polls have shown that the majority of those chowing down before noon prefer a savory breakfast.

Skip the batter, forget the flour, and stick firm slabs of tofu straight into the waffle iron for a high-protein foundation to hold a deeply umami lashing of espresso-spiked gravy. Waffled Tofu with Red Eye Gravy (next page) provides a hearty, gluten-free vehicle for enjoying this thick, creamy sauce enriched with sautéed mushrooms without any regrets.

If dry cereal is more your speed, you’ll be bowled over by Curried Coconut Granola (page 18). Warmly spiced clusters of thick oats and coconut flakes are baked to golden-brown perfection with minimal added oil. They’re perfect for sprinkling over unsweetened yogurt, plain oatmeal, soups, salads, or simply out of your hand.

Craving buttery pastries, flaky and crisp? Skip the sugary frosting and syrupy fruit filling with Cheesy Broccoli and Bac-un Toaster Tarts (page 19).

White bean-based cheese sauce fills flaky pastry pockets along with smoky bites of tempeh bac-un and tender-crisp broccoli florets.

Some Americans consume eggs in the morning, but have you heard of the latest Indian street food sensation taking the world by storm? Bread Omelets (page 20) wrap up a fusion of French toast, scrambled eggs, and an egg sandwich all in one neat package. My vegan version is made with chickpea flour seasoned with black salt for the same sensation, without the eggs or dairy.

South of the border, Chilaquiles (page 21) have been an essential staple for using up stale tortilla chips but take on greater flavor when prepared fresh, from scratch. Homemade corn tortilla chips are baked and not fried in this take on breakfast nachos. Little prep or planning is needed to throw together fresh salsa, black beans,

and diced avocado in a meal that can be scaled for one or one dozen.

Tall stacks of pancakes dripping with syrup may sound dreamy, but the sugar crash soon to follow isn’t quite as satisfying. For a substantial morning meal that will power you through the day, skip the sugary stuff. The breakfast revolution will not be sweetened.

**The breakfast
revolution
will not be
sweetened.**

Waffled Tofu with Red Eye Gravy

(Serves 3-4)

Waffled Tofu

One 14-ounce firm or extra-firm tofu, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick slices

1 Tablespoon olive oil

1 Tablespoon reduced-sodium tamari or soy sauce

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground black pepper

Non-stick cooking spray

Red Eye Gravy

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 cup diced cremini or button mushrooms

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon poultry seasoning

2 Tablespoons whole wheat flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup brewed espresso or strong coffee

1 teaspoon maple syrup

1 teaspoon chickpea miso paste

$\frac{3}{4}$ -1 cup unsweetened, unflavored vegan milk

Begin by preheating your waffle iron and lightly grease with non-stick cooking spray.

While it comes up to temperature, slice the tofu into 6-8 equal rectangles, about $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. Place in a large bowl and gently toss with the olive oil, tamari, and black pepper, to coat.

Place the tofu in the hot waffle iron, allocating one square per piece, and gently but firmly close the lid. Let cook, undisturbed, for about 4-8 minutes, depending upon your appliance. When golden brown all over, carefully transfer the tofu to a wire rack.

Repeat until all the tofu is cooked. Keep the finished pieces warm in a 250-degree oven.

Meanwhile, for the gravy, heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Sauté the mushrooms for about 5 minutes, until softened and aromatic. Sprinkle with poultry seasoning and flour, stirring well.

Cook for just 1 minute to lightly toast the flour before pouring in the espresso, whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Follow immediately with the maple syrup, miso paste, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vegan milk.

Continuing to whisk, cook until the gravy has thickened and bubbles start to form rapidly on the surface. Thin with additional vegan milk if desired, to reach your ideal consistency.

Serve red eye gravy immediately, drizzled on top of the hot waffled tofu.

Cook's Tip: The gravy will continue to thicken as it cools. If prepared in advance, you may need to incorporate more vegan milk, vegetable stock, or espresso prior to serving, as desired.

Total calories: 269
Carbohydrates: 10 grams
Sodium: 319 milligrams

Fat: 20 grams
Protein: 15 grams
Fiber: 3 grams





Curried Coconut Granola

(Serves 10-12)

2 cups quick-cooking rolled oats

2 cups coconut flakes

1½ cups crispy brown rice cereal

2 Tablespoons ground flaxseeds

2 Tablespoons curry powder

½ teaspoon salt

½ cup aquafaba (liquid from canned chickpeas)

¼ cup coconut oil, melted

Preheat oven to 300 degrees and line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the oats, coconut, cereal, flaxseeds, curry powder, and salt. Toss thoroughly to ensure equal distribution of all the ingredients throughout the mixture.

Pour the aquafaba and melted coconut oil into the bowl and stir well, until fully incorporated.

Distribute the granola evenly between the prepared baking sheets, spreading it into as thin and consistent a layer as possible.

Bake for 30-40 minutes, stirring halfway through, until lightly toasted and dry to the touch. It will get crisper as it cools, so don't panic if it still seems a bit soft fresh out of the oven.

Allow to cool completely before storing in an airtight container.

Total calories: 255

Carbohydrates: 20 grams

Sodium: 120 milligrams

Fat: 18 grams

Protein: 4 grams

Fiber: 4 grams



Cheesy Broccoli and Bac-un Toaster Tarts

(8 servings)

Meatless Bac-un and Broccoli Filling

- 4 ounces tempeh, crumbled
- 1 Tablespoon reduced-sodium tamari or soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ cup fresh broccoli florets, finely chopped

White Bean Cheese Sauce

- ½ cup cooked white beans
- ¼ cup unsweetened, unflavored vegan milk
- 1 teaspoon rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon chickpea miso paste
- 3 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 Tablespoon melted vegan butter or coconut oil

Whole Wheat Pastry Dough

- 2½ cups whole wheat flour, plus extra for rolling
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup vegan butter or coconut oil, chilled
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- ¼ cup ice cold water, divided
- 2–3 Tablespoons aquafaba (liquid from canned chickpeas)
- ½ teaspoon Italian seasoning blend

Begin by preparing the filling. Place the tempeh, tamari, liquid smoke, and paprika in a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Sauté for 4–5 minutes until it begins to brown. Toss in broccoli and cook 3–4 minutes longer, until it's bright green and the mixture is dry. Transfer to a large bowl and set aside.

For the cheese sauce, toss all the ingredients into a blender and purée until smooth, pausing to scrape down

the sides of the canister as needed. Add vegan butter or coconut oil for a bit more richness.

Pour the silky-smooth sauce over the tempeh and broccoli, stirring well to combine. Chill in the fridge about an hour before moving on to the pastry.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

To make the dough, place the flour and salt in a large bowl and use a pastry cutter or two forks to cut in Tablespoon-sized pieces of vegan butter. A few small chunks of the butter should remain visible throughout the mixture, but nothing larger than the size of peas.

Sprinkle lemon juice and first Tablespoon of water into the bowl and stir well with a wide spatula. Sometimes it can be difficult to get the liquids properly incorporated, so it may be helpful to simply mix with your hands. Keep adding water and mixing thoroughly, a teaspoon at a time, until the dough is cohesive.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured counter or large cutting board. Top with another light sprinkle of flour and use a rolling pin to flatten out the dough. It should be one very large rectangle, about ⅛-inch thick.

Slice off the rough edges and cut into 16 smaller, equal rectangles. Spoon about 1–2 Tablespoons of the filling into the center of 8 pieces.

Working with one piece of dough at a time, lightly brush the edges with water before carefully placing an empty rectangle of dough on top. Seal the edges by crimping firmly with the tines of a fork. Prick the top to create steam vents, and transfer with a large spatula to the prepared baking sheet. Brush the top with aquafaba and sprinkle with Italian herb blend.

Bake for 18–24 minutes, until golden brown. Enjoy hot, or cool completely before storing in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days or in the freezer for up to 4 months. Reheat in a toaster oven for 1–2 minutes, or microwave for 30–60 seconds.

Total calories: 409
Carbohydrates: 35 grams
Sodium: 515 milligrams

Fat: 26 grams
Protein: 12 grams
Fiber: 6 grams

Bread Omelet

(Serves 1)

- 1/3 cup chickpea flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons nutritional yeast
- 1/4 teaspoon black salt (*kala namak*)
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup unsweetened, unflavored vegan milk
- 2 teaspoons olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon rice vinegar
- 2 slices multigrain or whole wheat sandwich bread
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach or arugula
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced

In a large bowl, mix the chickpea flour, nutritional yeast, black salt, onion powder, turmeric, and black pepper. Separately, whisk the non-dairy milk, 1 teaspoon olive oil, and vinegar. Pour the liquid mixture into the bowl of dry ingredients whisking vigorously to combine. Make sure there are no lumps remaining before proceeding.

Set a medium skillet over moderate heat. Coat the bottom with the remaining teaspoon of olive oil. When the oil is shimmering, place the two pieces of bread next

to each other in a single layer. Toast for two minutes before pouring the chickpea batter all around and on top of the bread.

Quickly turn the bread over to coat both pieces in the batter. Turn down the heat to medium-low.

Scatter the fresh spinach or arugula and green onions on top. When the batter appears set and lightly browned on the bottom, use your spatula to gently fold the excess inward, on top of the bread. Fold one slice on top of the other, making a sandwich with the greens locked within.

Transfer to a plate and enjoy hot. Serve with ketchup, hot sauce, or any other condiments you might slather over an omelet.

Cook's Tip: Black salt, otherwise known as *kala namak*, isn't actually black in color. Rather it's named for the black volcanic ash which gives it a distinctively sulfuric flavor, similar to scrambled eggs. It's readily found online and in Indian specialty markets, but regular table salt can be used instead.

Total calories: 401
Carbohydrates: 48 grams
Sodium: 917 milligrams

Fat: 16 grams
Protein: 19 grams
Fiber: 10 grams

Photos by Hannah Kaminsky





Black Bean Chilaquiles

(Serves 2)

Chilaquiles

Four 6-inch corn tortillas

1 Tablespoon olive oil

¼ cup diced red onion

1 clove garlic, minced

2 large tomatoes, diced (about 2 cups)

1 cup cooked black beans

2 Tablespoons pickled jalapeños, minced

½ teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon chipotle powder

¼ teaspoon dried oregano

¼ teaspoon salt

⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper

2 Tablespoons pepitas (shelled pumpkin seeds)

¼ cup fresh cilantro

Basic Guacamole

½ ripe avocado

1-2 Tablespoons lime juice

⅛ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice the tortillas into sixths or eighths to make neat, equal triangles. Spread pieces out in an even layer on two large baking sheets. Bake for 10-15 minutes, until golden brown and crisp. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Meanwhile, place the oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Swirl gently to coat the bottom of the

pan. Once shimmering, add the onion and garlic. Sauté for 3-5 minutes or until the vegetables have softened, the onion is translucent, and the mixture is highly aromatic. Add the tomatoes, black beans, jalapeño, cumin, chipotle powder, oregano, salt, and pepper. Simmer gently, cooking for 5 minutes while stirring occasionally.

Divide the baked tortilla chips between two shallow, oven-safe dishes. Top with equal amounts of the black bean mixture and sprinkle with pepitas. Bake for 5 more minutes to slightly soften the tortillas and warm through.

While the chilaquiles finish, mash together the avocado, lime juice, and salt in a small bowl. Adjust the seasoning to taste.

Top the chilaquiles with fresh cilantro and a dollop of guacamole. Serve hot.

Cook's Tip: Speed through this quick-fix meal by starting with a handful of ready-made tortilla chips. Just omit the salt from the black bean mixture to keep sodium in check.

Total calories: 476

Carbohydrates: 58 grams

Sodium: 936 milligrams

Fat: 22 grams

Protein: 18 grams

Fiber: 18 grams

Hannah is a serious food lover who hates early mornings, but will wake at any hour for a good breakfast. She is the author of many cookbooks including *Easy as Vegan Pie*, *Real Food Really Fast*, and *Sweet Vegan Treats*. She works in Austin, Texas developing recipes and photographing food from dusk to dawn.



Veggie Bits

Luscious Yogurt

Because Follow Your Heart is expert in all things vegan, it is no surprise that they created a line of luscious vegan yogurts. The range of flavors includes Blueberry, Cherry, Key Lime, Peach, Pina Colada, Plain, Raspberry, Strawberry, Strawberry-Rhubarb, and Vanilla Bean. These yogurts are thick, smooth, and silky. They will remind you of retro yogurts from the '90s, with a balance of whipped, velvety texture and just the right amount of fruity sweetness. Testers enjoyed all the varieties, and both Blueberry and Cherry were standouts for their spoon-coating creaminess and classic taste. Topped with vegan granola, Vanilla Bean was a tasty breakfast option. Gluten-free with live probiotic cultures. Available at retailers nationwide. followyourheart.com

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



Oat-So-Creamy Vegan Chocolate

Treat yourself to a heavenly chocolate treat with a bar from Vesta, a New Jersey-based chocolatier. They use oat flour for every batch of vegan chocolate, which offers a creamy mouthfeel and no strong aftertaste like coconut. A selection of bars is available for Valentine's Day, including Ashwagandha Maca, Black and White Roasted Coconut, and Strawberries and Cream. Other always-available vegan dark varieties include Belize 84% cacao; Caribe 66% cacao; Guatamala 79%; and Vegan Non-Dairy Milk 60% cacao. Indulge in other chocolatey treats such as Dark Mini-Squares, Orange-Ginger Cacao Nib Granola, and Vegan Cacao Hazelnut Spread. Find them online: vestachocolate.com/collections/shop-vegan

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



Veggie-Packed Burgers & Sides

For those who love vegetables in their veggie burgers, Strong Roots has you covered. The entire product line features veg-packed and convenient frozen foods that are familiar enough to please picky kids and savory enough to satisfy adults. Most of the line is ready in 10-15 minutes in the oven. Burgers include Beetroot & Bean Burgers, Kale & Quinoa Burgers, and Pumpkin & Spinach Burgers. The Kale & Quinoa Burgers were a tester favorite with their crunchy outside and hearty flavor. The sides are secretly healthful—add Cauliflower Hash Browns to your breakfast line-up to sneak in a portion of veggies. Testers also raved over Spinach Bites, especially served with vegan ranch dip. Other sides include Beetroot Wedges, Broccoli and Purple Carrot Bites, and Mixed Root Vegetable Fries. Available at major retailers including Fresh Market, Walmart, and Whole Foods. More online at strongroots.com

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



Cheers to Vegan Wine!

With a vegan label directly on the bottle, Avaline wines are easy-drinking and refreshing. Both varieties were designed to accompany meals. The White is dry and crisp with European-style complexity, made with grapes from Spain. The airy flavors have hints of citrus and flowers, with a fruity aroma. Avaline White finishes with a subtle sweetness and was the tester favorite. The Rosé offers a blend of five grapes from France. It's dry and the delicate flavor makes the ideal brunch wine that will complement food without overpowering it. Avaline's Rosé is drier than most rosés and has hints of berry with a light finish. Both wines are free of added sugar, colorings, and isinglass (protein from fish bladders used in wines); contain organic grapes; sell for about \$25 each; and are available in 43 states and online. Serve chilled. drinkavaline.com

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



Veggie Bits

Speedy Plant "Eggs"

In a follow-up to their successful bottled plant eggs, Just Foods has released a folded plant egg. It's wildly fast to prepare in a microwave, oven, skillet, or toaster and makes an ideal stuffer for breakfast bowls, sandwiches, and burritos. Breakfast before school or work will take only minutes to prepare, and these "eggs" have the same fluffy texture of actual scrambled chicken eggs. Try it in vegan Pad Thai or brunch bakes. Only 100 calories each, mung bean protein is the main ingredient and brings in 7 grams of protein per serving. Just Egg Folded is non-GMO, is free of cholesterol, and according to the company, uses less water and carbon emissions than conventional chicken eggs. Available in the freezer case at major retailers nationwide. Find more online at ju.st/en-us#!

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



Crunchy Sweet Potato Puffs

Crunch on some sweet taters with Spudsy's new Sweet Potato Puffs. Using leftover "ugly" potatoes, as well as pea protein, rice flour, and tapioca starch, these snacks are fun to eat and are on a mission of sustainability. Spudsy sources their potatoes from the 150 million pounds of sweet taters that are mishapen, or oddly colored, helping to save "imperfect" food from landfills. Testers loved the snap and crunch, as well as the traditional junk food taste reminiscent of old school puff-curl snacks from childhood. Speaking of which, children loved them too, especially the Churro variety! Flavors include Bangin' BBQ, Cinnamon Churros, Vegan Cheesy Cheddar, and tester favorite Vegan Sour Cream and Onion. Available at Food Lion, Wegmans, Whole Foods, or check online, spudsy.com

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



Savory Baby Food Pouches

Testers of all ages—from babies to adults—enjoyed Serenity Kids

Organic Savory

Veggie pouches. The brand features simple ingredients with healthy fat, and no added sugars or colors. Advised for eaters age 6 months and older, Serenity's purées made a wonderful baby meal as well as a tasty adult on-the-go snack. The well-blended veggies and oils were not only savory but deeply flavorful—simple enough to please a child's palate and yet hearty enough to satisfy nutritional needs. Varieties include Butternut Squash and Spinach with Avocado Oil, Roots (Sweet Potato, Carrot, Beet, and Olive Oil), the tester favorite—Squashes (Kabocha, Butternut, Pumpkin, and Olive Oil), and Sweet Potato and Spinach with Avocado Oil. All varieties are vegan, gluten-free, and non-GMO. myserenitykids.com

Rissa Miller, Senior Editor



Exotic Dinner in a Flash

While sourcing ingredients for their jackfruit line, Upton's Naturals became inspired by the flavors of Thailand to create a line of Real Meal Kits. Each meal is a little different. Massaman Curry, Pad See Ew, Thai Curry Noodle, and Thai Spaghetti all have bold flavors and fresh ingredients that come together in just minutes. Each shelf-stable kit comes with a curry sauce, either rice or noodles, tofu or tempeh, fresh vegetables, and crunchy topping packets. My personal favorite is the Massaman Curry. The combination of the savory peanut tofu, purple rice, and potato, carrot, and green bean veggie mix all bathed in a creamy coconut curry sauce reminded me of a meal I would order in a Thai restaurant. Available nationwide, uptonsnaturals.com.

Clare Broud, VRG Intern



Book Reviews

Veducated!

By Laura Chepner

Veducated! is an educator's guide for vegan-inclusive teaching written by a former special education coordinator in the United Kingdom. She is a vegan and the mother of a young daughter. Chepner left the education field when she found her ethics clashing with curriculums and ethos at her school. She then opened and ran a vegan restaurant for several years before starting her firm named Primary Veducation.

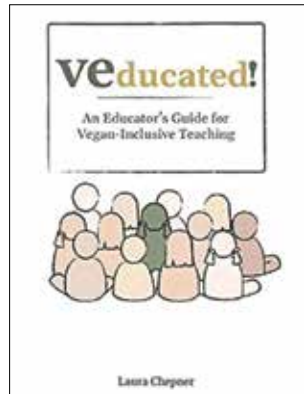
This book was written for teachers who are inclusive and understand the needs of each child in their class. It's also a terrific resource for vegan parents to hand to their child's teacher so they can learn that vegan children see the world differently than other kids and have a different belief system.

Chapter 1 describes the reasons why someone is vegan including animal rights, health, and the environment, etc. Chapter 2 shows teachers how they can make their classroom more inclusive for vegan students. Topics include language choices, school trips, cooking projects, school milk served, school fairs, and more. Chapter 3 explains what benefits you may see by incorporating this book's suggestions such as more compassion, healthier relationships with food, included children, etc. Finally, Chapter 4 offers sample lesson plans for early school grades. For example, one lesson encourages class trips to a natural habitat (pond, lake, river, forest, beach) to study wildlife rather than trips to a zoo, aquarium, etc. Another lesson deals with language choices and suggests that teachers be mindful of songs you sing (some are cruel to animals) and books you display on shelves (be sure to offer books with veg-friendly themes).

Although this book has a British slant, Chepner's ideas are suitable for any vegan parent and child. Many of the resources are European; however, you can always visit vrg.org for educational materials that can be utilized in America.

Veducated! (ISBN: 978-1-940184-62-3) is a 160-page book. It is published by Vegan Publishers and retails for \$15.

Reviewed by Debra Wasserman



Vegan for Life, 2nd Edition

By Jack Norris, RD and Virginia Messina, MPH, RD

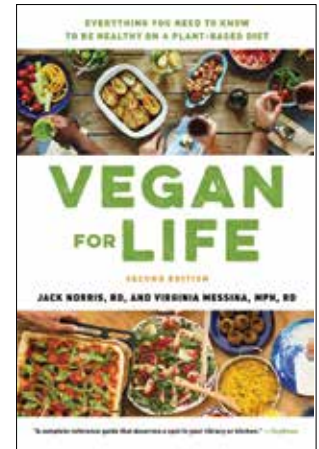
I can't think of a more perfect book title than *Vegan for Life*. This classic, first published almost 10 years ago, is a practical handbook for being vegan for life—for your life, for the animals' lives, and for our planet's life.

Recently, Jack Norris, RD, and Virginia Messina, MPH, RD, extensively updated and revised their book. This edition has the same calm, sensible tone as the original edition did, but it's been updated to incorporate the latest research on topics relevant to vegans including fat (How much? What kind?), vitamin B12, digestive health, food allergies, and even lesser known nutrients like choline and selenium. The authors are both vegan dietitians, and the book reflects their commitment to honest, evidence-based information.

This is not a dry, nutrition text, however. The authors provide lots of practical information including sample menus, lists of foods, and a food guide. There are also chapters on vegan pregnancy, children and teens, older people, and athletes. The chapter on transitioning to a vegan diet was one of my favorites because of its ideas for simple dinners, packed lunches, and ways to use beans. Even as a long-term vegan, I found lots of helpful ideas for fine-tuning my diet.

This book offers resources for new vegans, for those considering being vegan, for vegans of all ages, and for seasoned vegans. I plan to urge my local library to order several copies—it's that good.

Vegan for Life 2nd Edition (ISBN: 978-0-7382-8586-3) is published by Hachette Books. It has 334 pages and retails for \$17.99. *Reviewed by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD*



WHAT VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN PRODUCTS WILL AMERICAN ADULTS PURCHASE?

QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP IN A NATIONAL POLL

VRG asked the following in a national Harris Poll. (For a more complete report, see *Vegetarian Journal* Issue 4, 2020, which you can find online at vrg.org)

Which of the following, if any, best describes your eating behavior?

- I never eat meat, fish, seafood, poultry, dairy, or eggs.
- I never eat meat, fish, seafood, or poultry.
- I never eat meat, fish, seafood, poultry, dairy, or eggs when eating out or getting takeout, but eat one or more of these foods at home.
- I never eat meat, fish, seafood, or poultry when eating out or getting takeout, but eat one or more of these foods at home.
- When eating out or getting takeout, I sometimes eat meals without meat, fish, poultry, dairy, or eggs.
- When eating out or getting takeout, I sometimes eat meals without meat, fish, or poultry.
- None of these.

We considered those who never eat meat, fish, seafood, or poultry—plus those who never eat meat, fish, seafood, poultry, dairy, or eggs—as vegetarian. We classified that second category of vegetarians who don't eat dairy or eggs also as vegan. Because we use the word “never” and don't just ask if a person considers him/herself vegetarian, our numbers may be lower than others. Be wary of comparing to polls in other countries that ask if you are vegetarian or vegan, since people may self define differently. We didn't ask about honey.

More than half of the U.S. adult population (54%) always or sometimes eats vegetarian (including vegan) meals when eating out. One fourth (25%) of U.S. adults always or sometimes eats vegan meals when eating out. Six percent of American adults are vegetarian (including vegans) all the time, and half of the vegetarians (three percent of American adults) are also vegan.

We asked the following additional question, which may interest food companies, food services, restaurants, marketers, researchers, and students.

If you're looking to buy a vegetarian product, which of the following would you purchase? (Please select all that apply.)

- Your favorite veggie burger cooked on the same grill where meat is cooked, if the grill is cleaned first.
- A vegan burger at a fast food restaurant (e.g. Burger King, Subway, Hardee's).
- Your favorite dessert containing sugar, if the source of sugar isn't specified.
- A vegetarian dish containing leafy greens such as broccoli, kale, or collards.
- A vegetarian dish containing whole foods such as lentils, chickpeas, or rice.
- A meat alternative grown from animal cell DNA obtained 10 years ago, which does not currently involve the raising of animals.
- Your favorite dessert containing sugar whitened through a bone char filter, if bone char is not in the sugar.
- None of these.



WOULD PURCHASE A VEGETARIAN DISH CONTAINING LEAFY GREENS SUCH AS BROCCOLI, KALE, OR COLLARDS

33% Total
43% Vegetarians including vegans
39% Those who sometimes or always eat vegan meals when eating out
40% Those who sometimes or always eat vegetarian, including vegan, meals when eating out
26% Presumably never eats vegetarian or vegan meals
28% ages 18-34
29% male
37% female
36% urban
31% suburban
36% rural
32% Black
27% Latino
42% Asian

Of note is that about two in five of those who eat vegetarian, including vegan, meals sometimes or always when eating out (43%) would purchase a vegetarian dish containing leafy greens such as broccoli, kale, or collards if they were looking to buy a vegetarian product, as your favorite dietitian and mom/dad may have suggested. For restaurants, foodservices, and companies that are only thinking meat analogs, producing items with green vegetables should seriously be taken into consideration.

On the other hand, since over one half of all adults are not saying they would purchase leafy green dishes, it should not be assumed that a vegetarian or someone eating vegetarian meals (or not eating vegetarian meals) is automatically meeting suggestions by the USDA/USDHHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans that a healthy eating pattern includes a variety of vegetables from all of the subgroups, which includes dark green vegetables. When evaluating a vegetarian (or non-vegetarian) client's diet, a dietitian or other medical professional would specifically have to ask what is being consumed to know if all the subgroups are being included.

WOULD PURCHASE A VEGETARIAN DISH CONTAINING WHOLE FOODS SUCH AS LENTILS, CHICKPEAS, OR RICE

33% Total
49% Vegetarians including vegans
43% Those who sometimes or always eat vegan meals when eating out
41% Those who sometimes or always eat vegetarian, including vegan, meals when eating out
23% Presumably never eats vegetarian or vegan meals
33% ages 18-34
30% male
35% female
34% urban
33% suburban
30% rural
27% Black
30% Latino
43% Asian

One in three American adults and nearly half of vegetarians including vegans (49%) would purchase a vegetarian dish containing whole foods such as lentils, chickpeas or rice if they were looking to purchase a vegetarian product. The USDA/USDHHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans said that a healthy eating pattern includes legumes (beans and peas).

WOULD PURCHASE A VEGAN BURGER AT A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

25% Total
34% Vegetarians including vegans
34% Those who sometimes or always eat vegan meals when eating out
32% Those who sometimes or always eat vegetarian, including vegan, meals when eating out
17% Presumably never eats vegetarian or vegan meals
26% ages 18-34
26% male
24% female
32% urban
22% suburban
21% rural

- 25% Black
- 28% Latino
- 31% Asian
- 22% high school or less education
- 22% some college
- 30% college grad or more
- 24% Annual household income less than \$50,000
- 28% Annual household income over \$100,000

Many chains and restaurants have added vegan burgers to their menus, and a quarter of Americans (25%) say if they were looking to buy a vegetarian product, they would purchase a vegan burger at a fast food restaurant. About one third of those who live in urban areas (32%) say the same. However, if looking to buy a vegetarian product, more Americans say, they would purchase a vegetarian dish containing leafy greens such as broccoli, kale, or collards (33%) or vegetarian dishes containing whole foods such as lentils, chickpeas, or rice (33%) than a vegan burger at a fast food restaurant (25%).

WOULD PURCHASE YOUR FAVORITE VEGGIE BURGER COOKED ON THE SAME GRILL WHERE MEAT IS COOKED, IF THE GRILL IS CLEANED FIRST

- 23% Total
- 25% Vegetarians including vegans
- 30% Those that sometimes or always eat vegan meals when eating out
- 31% Those that sometimes or always eat vegetarian, including vegan, meals when eating out
- 13% Presumably never eats vegetarian or vegan meals
- 30% ages 18-34
- 25% male
- 21% female
- 28% urban
- 22% suburban
- 17% rural
- 23% Black
- 26% Latino
- 27% Asian

WOULD PURCHASE YOUR FAVORITE DESSERT CONTAINING SUGAR, IF THE SOURCE OF THE SUGAR ISN'T SPECIFIED

- 19% Total
- 23% Vegetarians including vegans
- 23% Those who sometimes or always eat vegan meals when eating out
- 24% Those who sometimes or always eat vegetarian, including vegan, meals when eating out
- 14% Presumably never eats vegetarian or vegan meals
- 23% ages 18-34
- 21% male
- 18% female
- 20% urban
- 21% suburban
- 12% rural
- 19% Black
- 21% Latino
- 22% Asian

WOULD PURCHASE YOUR FAVORITE DESSERT CONTAINING SUGAR WHITENED THROUGH A BONE CHAR FILTER, IF BONE CHAR IS NOT IN THE SUGAR

- 10% Total
- 13% Vegetarians including vegans
- 16% Those who sometimes or always eat vegan meals when eating out
- 15% Those who sometimes or always eat vegetarian, including vegan, meals when eating out
- 5% Presumably never eats vegetarian or vegan meals
- 15% ages 18-34
- 13% male
- 7% female
- 15% urban
- 8% suburban
- 6% rural
- 11% Black
- 12% Latino
- 9% Asian

We were surprised that among individuals who presumably never eat vegetarian or vegan meals, nearly three times as many say if they were looking for a vegetarian product they would purchase their favorite dessert containing sugar if the source isn't specified than would purchase their favorite dessert with sugar whitened through bone char filter, if bone char is not in the sugar (14% vs. 5%). Since they already eat meat, why would they care? Meanwhile, vegetarians including vegans are more likely to say, if they were looking for a vegetarian product, they would purchase their favorite dessert containing sugar if they didn't know the source of the sugar than would purchase their favorite dessert containing sugar processed through bone char filter, if bone char is not in the sugar (23% vs. 13%). To meet the needs of all consumers, companies should label the sources of their ingredients so customers can make their own decisions.

WOULD PURCHASE A MEAT ALTERNATIVE GROWN FROM ANIMAL CELL DNA OBTAINED TEN YEARS AGO, WHICH DOES NOT CURRENTLY INVOLVE THE RAISING OF ANIMALS

- 12% Total
- 19% Vegetarians including vegans
- 19% Those who sometimes or always eat vegan meals when eating out
- 18% Those who sometimes or always eat vegetarian, including vegan, meals when eating out
- 5% Presumably never eats vegetarian or vegan meals
- 20% ages 18-34
- 14% male
- 10% female
- 17% urban
- 10% suburban
- 6% rural
- 16% Black
- 16% Latino
- 15% Asian

Will consumers buy a meat alternative grown from animal cell DNA? As of now, those who don't eat vegetarian or vegan meals don't seem to be ready for this. About five times as many of those who presumably don't eat vegetarian or vegan meals say, if they were looking for a vegetarian product, they would purchase a vegetarian dish with leafy greens such as broccoli, kale, or collards (26%) or a vegetarian dish containing whole foods such as lentils, chickpeas, or rice (23%) than a meat alternative grown from animal cell DNA obtained ten years ago, which does not currently involve the raising of animals (5%).

BEVERAGES LABELED SOYMILK

We also asked: Which of the following do you expect from a beverage labeled soymilk? Please select all that apply. If a beverage is labeled soymilk I expect:

	TOTAL	VEGETARIAN RESPONDENTS (INCLUDES VEGANS)
To be able to use it in a similar way on cereal as cow's milk.	43%	53%
To be able to use it in a similar way in cooking as cow's milk.	38%	41%
It to have the exact same amount of Vitamin D as cow's milk.	22%	20%
It to have the exact same amount of calcium as cow's milk.	21%	15%
To have the same allergic reaction or lack of allergic reaction as I might have to cow's milk.	10%	13%
It to have milk from a cow.	8%	8%
None of these.	23%	15%

Some groups believe that plant milks should not be labeled milk, as people will confuse these items with cow's milk. However, according to the survey, only 8% of American adults say, if a beverage is labeled soymilk, they expect it to have milk from a cow.

Seven percent of individuals with a high school education or less say they expect a beverage labeled soymilk to have milk from a cow, 8% with some college education expected this, and 9% of college grads or more expected a beverage labeled soymilk to have milk from cow. Education does not seem to have much impact.

As about half of vegetarians (including vegans) (53%) expect that a beverage labeled soymilk can be used in a similar way on cereal as cow's milk, calling this item a milk could be helpful to the consumer. However, as some vegetarians (including vegans) expect soymilk to have the same amount of calcium (15%) and vitamin D (20%) as cow's milk, this suggests clear nutrition labeling of all food products is important.

REASONS FOR FOOD CHOICES

The survey also asked, “Which of the following is most important to you when making food choices? Please select up to two choices.”

	TOTAL	VEGETARIANS INCLUDING VEGANS	EATS VEGETARIAN MEALS ALWAYS OR SOMETIMES WHEN EATING OUT (includes vegan meals)	EATS VEGAN MEALS ALWAYS OR SOMETIMES WHEN EATING OUT
Taste	57%	27%	48%	46%
Cost	38%	24%	31%	29%
Personal health	36%	39%	42%	45%
Convenience	10%	10%	10%	9%
The Environment	10%	16%	14%	16%
Animal welfare	10%	31%	13%	15%
Ethics	8%	17%	12%	11%
Religious beliefs	5%	7%	7%	8%

For those who always or sometimes eat vegetarian meals when eating out, taste (48%), personal health (42%), and cost (31%) top the list of what is most important to them when making food choices. Similarly, among those who always or sometimes eat vegan meals when eating out, taste (46%) tops the list of what is most important to them when making food choices, followed by personal health (45%) and cost (29%). For vegetarians (including vegans) personal health (39%) tops the list of most important to them when making food choices, followed by animal welfare (31%), taste (27%), cost (24%), ethics (17%), and the environment (16%). While all groups find importance for personal health, taste, and cost, vegetarians (including vegans) are more likely to say animal welfare is important to them than taste or cost. To expand the market beyond current consumers, businesses may want to pay attention to the cost of their products or meals.

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of The Vegetarian Resource Group from June 22-24, 2020 among 2,074 U.S. adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact vrg@vrg.org. Please note that this poll was taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not know what influence, if any, that may have had on the survey answers.

See: vrg.org/nutshell/faq.htm#poll for more poll details, as well as survey information on these topics:
 How many Blacks, Latinos, and Asians are vegetarian and vegan?
 When is ethics at least one consideration when people are making decisions?



Prisoners' Rights, Religious Practice, and Vegan Meals in Prison

by Emilio Gironda

Before 1964 courts considered prisoners to be charges of the state with minimal rights even when their constitutional violations were at issue. Since then, the Supreme Court and Congress have given, and often taken away, prisoners' basic constitutional protections. For our purposes, these protections filter down to the issue of vegan meals for vegan prisoners, with broader implications as to what constitutes religion and also what it means to be vegan.

I will start by tracing the evolution of prisoners' rights to the free exercise of religion, then review what constitutes "religion," and finally try and discover how veganism fits into this schema. Should vegans in prison receive the same constitutional protections that members of religions are given? In the larger sense, at least as far as the right to vegan meals in prison is concerned, it comes down to whether veganism needs to be a formal religion to be protected under the constitution. From there the inquiry leads to a very fundamental and almost existential question—what is a religion?

Being vegan myself, I do, of course, have my own ideas on religion and veganism. For me veganism is not a religion, nor does it need to be one to qualify for constitutional protection. It does not involve any formal rituals, it does not involve any worship services, it does not have a deity, it does not have a priesthood, it does not have any idols, no sacred texts, no holidays, no Mecca, no Jerusalem, no St. Peter's, no Buddha, no Jesus, no Moses... You get the idea. Here is a brief summary of prisoners' rights to practice religion and how they impact vegan prisoners' rights to vegan meals.

The Right to Practice Religion

My investigation starts by tracing the earliest articulations of prisoners' rights to basic constitutional protections and the subsequent expansion of those rights insofar as they impact the free exercise of religion.

- In 1964 the Supreme Court in *Cooper v. Pate*¹ held that the Bill of Rights applies to prisoners, finding that they have the right to possess religious texts.
- Ten years later, in 1974, the Supreme Court in *Wolff*

*v. McDonnell*² and *Procunier v. Martinez*³ established that inmates have a First Amendment right of free speech.

- In 1987 the Supreme Court, in *Turner v. Safley*⁴, held that restrictions can be placed on inmates' First Amendment rights if they have a "rational basis"—but the Court stressed that deference should be given to prison policies.
- Also in 1987 in *O'Lone v. Estate of Shabazz*⁵, the Supreme Court held that restrictions on inmates participating in religious services were constitutional when the religious services conflict with prison safety policies.
- In 1989 in *Thornburgh v. Abbott*⁶ the Supreme Court somewhat backtracked on prisoners' rights, holding that restrictions on publications and letters did not violate their First Amendment right to free speech.
- In 1990 the Supreme Court held in *Employment Division v. Smith*⁷ that the First Amendment does not require religious exemptions from a "neutral law of general applicability," further backtracking on earlier decisions.
- In 1993 Congress, perhaps in reaction to the watering down of prisoners' rights by the courts, passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)⁸, which mandated strict scrutiny for all government actions burdening religious exercise.
- In 1997 in the *Boerne v. Flores*⁹ case, the Supreme Court held that the RFRA was unconstitutional as an improper exercise of Congress's enforcement power.
- After *Boerne v. Flores*, the states began to pass their own versions of RFRA or to reinterpret their state guarantees of religious freedom to require strict scrutiny.

The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA)¹⁰

In 2000 Congress passed the RLUIPA, which clearly states that prisons cannot impose substantial burdens on the religious exercise of prisoners. It defines religious exercise as any exercise of religion, whether or not compelled by, or central to, a system of religious beliefs. These two cases based on the RLUIPA, articulate a three pronged analysis:

- In a decision from 2014, *Haight v. Thompson*¹¹, the court established that a prison can restrict the religious exercise of prisoners if the restriction furthers a compelling governmental interest and does so in the least restrictive way.
- In 2018 *New Doe Child #1 v. Congress of the United States*¹², the court decided that when considering a plaintiff's allegation concerning a protected religious exercise, the court must ensure that the claim is based on a sincere religious belief.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)¹³

With restrictions imposed on RLUIPA by the Courts, we can also come at the right to practice religion from the perspective of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which protects against employment discrimination, including religious discrimination in the workplace. As part of that function, the commission has had to address and determine what constitutes a religious belief to be protected. The basic statute states that religion or religious practice includes (1) beliefs that are not part of a formal church or sect, (2) non-theistic, moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong, and (3) beliefs that are "religious" in the person's own scheme of things. This sounds promising.

BUT it goes on to say that social, political, or economic philosophies, as well as mere personal preferences, are not religious beliefs to be protected. It further states that whether a practice is religious is a situational, case-by-case inquiry. The same practice might in one case be subject to reasonable accommodation because an employee engages in the practice for religious reasons, and in another case might not be subject to reasonable accommodation because the practice is engaged in for secular reasons. In law school, we were taught that the law gives with one hand and takes away with the other. This is a perfect example.

Other Cases on Religious Belief

- In 1944 the Supreme Court in *US v. Ballard*¹⁴ held that whether a religious belief is true or false is irrelevant, as long as the belief is sincerely held.
- In the 1965 case *US v. Seeger*¹⁵, the Supreme Court held that religion includes any "sincere and meaningful" belief that "occupies a place in the life of its possessor parallel to that filled by the orthodox belief in God."
- In 1970 the Supreme Court in *Welsh v. US*¹⁶ held that if "an individual deeply and sincerely holds beliefs that are purely ethical or moral in source and content...

those beliefs certainly occupy in the life of that individual a place parallel to that filled by God in traditionally religious persons."

Do Vegans, Unconnected to Any Religion, Get the Same Constitutional Protections as Members of Religions?

It was not until 1964 that the Supreme Court first held that the Bill of Rights applies to prisoners. This was almost 100 years after the Civil War, and, for someone born in 1957, a date not so distant. It was almost 35 years later that Congress codified the rights of prisoners to the free exercise of their religion. Pushback was almost immediate, but the basic protections are still in place. Prisoners' rights to dietary restrictions in conformity with their religious precepts have been granted, again with pushback and restrictions. The fate of vegan meals served to prisoners outside of religious dictates has not been addressed by the Supreme Court.

As I see it, the strongest argument on the side of vegans is that veganism, though not a "religion," qualifies for the protections given religions as an ethical, moral, sincere, and meaningful belief that occupies a place parallel to that filled by the orthodox belief in God. Any decision that gives veganism the same standing and protection as, say Jainism (which by the way is non-theistic), will not only be subject to pushback, but it will be subject to all the restrictions already imposed on religious practice. It will not be a panacea. As vegans, and vegetarians, we know about pushback. Vegans in prison, if granted some sort of protected status, will still have to deal not just with pushback, but with surfing the sea of bureaucracy. But, as Taoist's say, a journey of 1,000 miles starts with one step. Step away!

References for this article can be found online here: vrg.org/blog/2020/06/12/prisoners-rights-religious-practice-and-vegan-meals-in-prison

This is not legal advice, for which you should consult your own legal professional. For other information, see: vrg.org/journal/vj2001mar/2001_mar_prison.php

Emilio Girona practiced law for 35 years. He has come to the vegan table late in his journey of self discovery and evolution. He believes that all living beings deserve our love and compassion and that to live any other way is to fill our lives with dust.



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Jacqueline Tang's VRG Intern Experience

Creating a Vegan World



In the midst of COVID-19, I was searching for volunteer opportunities. I happened across The Vegetarian Resource Group. I was immediately drawn to The VRG due to my interest

in vegetarianism and veganism. I had just finished a class titled Environment and Your Health where we talked about the multitude of ways the environment directly and indirectly impacts your health and well-being. In one particular lecture, we discussed food and health. I remember a specific quote stating, if everyone ate a vegetarian diet on Mondays, it would save the carbon dioxide equivalence of taking 5 million cars off the road. This figure immediately stood out to me and I kept on going back to this one fact months later.

I was always interested in vegetarianism but was not sure if I could take the jump. After taking this class and moving home from college early due to the pandemic, I began exploring veganism and vegetarianism. My time and research at The VRG allowed me to understand the importance of my individual dietary choices. Ethics and environmental concerns drove me towards veganism. Humans are all interconnected by our planet and eco-system. We cannot continue trashing our planet with waste and toxic

gases. I believe veganism is the future and one way to help alleviate climate change.

As a public health major, pre-medicine student, and a personal trainer/group fitness instructor at Johns Hopkins, I understand the importance of health. I hope to educate others about the benefits of veganism for individual health and the ecosystem.

During my time at The VRG, I was able to assist on a number of projects. I worked with Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, on an article about creatine, that allowed me to further understand the dietary needs of vegans. I also worked on the noodle project alongside fellow interns; we researched whether the crispy noodles in Chinese restaurants are vegan. Working closely with fellow interns made me feel connected to this virtual internship. I also wrote restaurant reviews for VRG's online guide: vrg.org/restaurant/index.php. These were so fun! I want to visit all these places in the future.

Finally, with Jeanne Yacoubou, I worked on researching the risk of a viral pandemic from factory farms versus wet markets. This project was challenging, yet informative. I was able to put my research skills learned at Hopkins to the test. It was exciting to research something that has present-day impact.

I enjoyed my time at The VRG and hope to apply what I have learned to future endeavors. In the future, I would like to further study the intersection of health, dietary choices, and well-being. I also hope to educate my future patients about the benefits of vegetarianism and veganism on their health.

For more information about VRG internships, visit vrg.org/student/index.php

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Vegan Cooking Tips

Quick and Easy Ideas for Nuts



by Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD

Many health experts suggest that we limit saturated fat and replace it with unsaturated fat. Unsaturated fat can be found in some vegetables and vegetable oils (avocados and olives come to mind) and nuts! If you feel the need for something luscious and creamy as well as healthful, nuts are the way to go.

Yes, nuts have lots of calories from fat. You still need to calculate so your diet is 30% or fewer calories from fat. With your fat allowance you can choose from almonds, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, pecans, peanuts (which are actually a legume), pine nuts, pistachios, walnuts—you get the idea.

Nuts are not just fat calories. The fat that the nuts have is polyunsaturated and monounsaturated, the “heart healthy” kind. Many people avoid nuts, seeds, and their butters because of concerns that they are too high in fat and calories. Americans, on average, eat less than half an ounce of nuts and nut butters daily. An ounce of nuts or seeds has between 150 and 200 calories. A Tablespoon of nut butter has about 80-100 calories. Nuts and seeds have 12-22 grams of fat in an ounce (but most of this is unsaturated fat), and they contain no cholesterol. Nut butters have 7-10 grams of fat in a Tablespoon, also mostly unsaturated fat. Nuts, seeds, and their butters are good sources of many nutrients, including protein, zinc, fiber, vitamin E, folic acid, copper, and potassium.

Here are some ideas for using almond, cashew, hazelnut, peanut, and soy butters: spread nut butters on fruit, celery, or carrots, or add dried or chopped fresh fruit or grated carrots to a nut butter sandwich.

Slice an apple into rounds and spread with peanut butter. Raisins stick easily to the peanut butter, and you can make smiley faces to delight children. Use nuts as a garnish for salads or stir-fries. Make pesto with pecans, pine nuts, or walnuts.

Prepare a creamy sauce or salad dressing with nut butter by blending nut butters with a small amount of vegan milk or water and vinegar, dried seasonings, and sesame seeds. For example, combine almond butter in a blender with a small amount of water and balsamic vinegar, dried parsley, powdered ginger, and red pepper flakes, or combine peanut butter with water, sesame seeds, and garlic powder.

Nuts, seeds, and nut butters can be added to baked goods such as breads, cobblers, cookies, muffins, and even pie crusts.

Here are more ideas for adding nuts to your menu...

- **Add to salad dressings:** Creations include a basil walnut vinaigrette or creamy salad dressing with almonds, mustard, and dill with added chopped pine nuts.
- **Add to sandwiches:** Chopped walnuts, almonds, peanuts, and pecans add a toasty flavor and extra texture to grilled vegetable sandwiches, falafel, and hummus. Or add chopped nuts to smooth peanut, almond, or soy butters to make a crunchy sandwich.
- **Use as garnish:** Increase protein, flavor, and texture by adding to bean and rice casseroles, baked potatoes, hot and cold cereal, baking batters, puddings, or vegan ice cream sundaes.
- **Add to pasta:** Top tomato-sauced pasta with chopped almonds or pine nuts, creamy-sauced pastas with walnuts or pecans, or toss pasta with olive oil, sautéed garlic, and chopped almonds.
- **Add to sauces:** Stir peanut butter or soy butter into mushroom sauces for a Thai effect; add ground almonds or pine nuts to creamy sauces and pecans or pistachios to fruit sauces.
- **Add to breakfast:** Baked apples, oatmeal, hot cereals, cold cereals, and muffins can all benefit from a variety of chopped nuts.

Chef Stephanie Rich, RD

Eating with Intention



by Anayeli Camacho

earned a master's in nutrition science.

"I was and am passionate about nutrition," said Rich. "The vegan diet is the healthiest way of living."

Rich wanted to help others see this themselves and started the vegan food blog *Ripe Cuisine* in 2010 to share recipes for nutrition-packed options. She even attended culinary school at Natural Gourmet Institute in New York, New York to further develop her skills.

The *Ripe* blog became a success, gaining followers and fans. It inspired Rich to move forward with her goals of sharing healthful vegan food, and in September 2014, she opened a food truck.

Serving locally-sourced, produce-based entrées, the food truck's main focus was plant-based nutrition. The truck was in operation all over Houston, including three weekly farmers markets, coffee shops, office buildings, local breweries, and private events. In 2019, the truck closed and Rich moved on to her next great accomplishment: Verdine.

With the success of her food truck she felt the need to have a vegan restaurant where purposeful eating was the number one intention.

"I wanted to see more restaurants that provide people with food that supports their well-being," Rich said.

Verdine is in Houston, and menu highlights include Tempura Hand Rolls, Green Forest Pizza with cauliflower crust and almond ricotta, and Wings & Waffles, with tempeh wings and house-made gluten-free waffles.

Info on Verdine can be found at eatverdine.com

Even as a teenager, Stephanie Rich didn't want to see food go to waste. While volunteering at a summer camp she saw food go to the dumpster. It didn't sit right with her. Wasting food wastes the resources needed to produce the food item—and since meat has a great environmental impact, she didn't want to support that lifestyle.

"Full sheet trays of whole chicken breasts being thrown in the garbage didn't seem right," she said. The same year, at age 17, Rich went vegetarian. She transitioned to veganism at 20.

Today Rich is a registered dietitian, CEO, marketing manager, head chef, and mentor devoted to helping people live the healthiest version of themselves. She owns vegan eatery Verdine, named "Houston's Best Vegan Restaurant" by *Houston Press* and in the "Top 100 Restaurants in Houston" by *Houston Chronicle*.

Once becoming vegan, she learned the nutritional aspects of the lifestyle and obtained her Registered Dietitian (RD) title in 2011 after attending Texas Woman's University in Houston, where she

Anayeli was a long-distance Vegetarian Resource Group intern and is a 2020 VRG Scholarship winner. She enjoys cooking, baking, and creating food pictures, and she resides in Texas.





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Maryland Student Emma Sodie Wins The Vegetarian Resource Group 2020 Runner-Up Scholarship Sponsored by the St. Louis Vegetarian Society

Emma Sodie's vegan journey began when she was 13-years-old. She stopped purchasing and consuming all animal products—meat, dairy, eggs, leather—“and I never looked back,” she stated.

Emma did internships at Compassion Over

Killing and The Humane League. She assisted with a MeatOut campaign, volunteered at Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary, and helped with an NBC 4 Health and Fitness Expo tabling event. She also conducted research on veganism in local media, wrote articles and created presentations on factory farming, and attended an *I'm Not Lovin' It* protest.

While leading her Environmental Ethics Club in high school, Emma screened the movies *Earthlings* and *Cowspiracy*. She also arranged a vegan food tasting at her school sponsored by VegFund. In addition, she set up a meeting with her school's lunch program coordinator to advocate for more vegan options. They have since added tofu to the salad bar and made sure that at least one vegan option is available every day.

Emma's favorite subjects are physics and chemistry. She hopes to pursue a career that helps animals in some way, whether that means working for an animal rights organization or opening her own vegan restaurant.

We had 280 incredible applicants for The VRG Scholarship Contest in 2020. We wish we could give awards to all of these amazing teens. The deadline for applications for 2021 graduating high school seniors for college scholarship awards is February 20, 2021. To see rules and other scholarship winners, go to vrg.org/student/scholar.htm

To support other scholarships and internships, donate at vrg.org/donate

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