

# Vegan Journal

*Health, Ethics & Environment since 1982*

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# Nutrition Hotline

## Choline Needs

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD



**QUESTION:** I've been hearing a lot about choline, and as a vegan, I wonder if I'm getting enough.  
**J.T., via email**

**ANSWER:** Choline is a nutrient that our brains and nervous system need to function properly. The liver makes a small amount of choline, but most of our needs are met by food. In the United States, for nonvegans, animal products are the main sources of choline. That's not to say that these are the only choline sources; it's simply that these are foods that are most commonly eaten. Plant-based foods that are rich in choline include cruciferous vegetables (such as cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and broccoli), wheat germ, and dried beans and lentils. Nuts, seeds, other vegetables, and whole grains are also good sources of choline.

There is too little information about choline needs to have a Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for choline. Instead, there is an Adequate Intake (AI), an intake level which is assumed to ensure nutritional adequacy. The AI for choline for adults is 550 milligrams per day for men and 425 milligrams per day for

women.<sup>1</sup> Only about 10% of Americans meet recommendations for choline.<sup>2</sup> No studies have reported choline intakes of vegans.

A vegan diet can provide adequate choline, especially if high choline foods are included along with a variety of other foods that supply smaller amounts. For example, a menu that includes a cup of soymilk, a cup of cooked quinoa, a cup of cooked dried beans, a cup of tofu, 2 cups of cruciferous vegetables, 2 Tablespoons of peanut butter, and 2 Tablespoons of wheat germ provides approximately 400 milligrams of choline. Additional choline would come from other foods such as whole grains, fruits, and other vegetables. A choline supplement can be used to add more choline. A prenatal supplement supplying choline is recommended in pregnancy.<sup>3</sup>

One study reported that choline intakes below approximately 210 milligrams per day were associated with an increased risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease,<sup>4</sup> so vegans with low choline intakes may benefit from increasing dietary or supplemental choline.

### REFERENCES:

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Medicine. Food and Nutrition Board. Dietary Reference Intakes: Thiamin, Riboflavin, Niacin, Vitamin B6, Folate, Vitamin B12, Pantothenic Acid, Biotin, and Choline. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Wallace TC, Fulgoni VL. Usual choline intakes are associated with egg and protein food consumption in the United States. *Nutrients*. 2017;9:839.

<sup>3</sup> Adams JB, Kirby JK, Sorensen JC, Pollard EL, Audhya T. Evidence based recommendations for an optimal prenatal supplement for women in the US: vitamins and related nutrients. *Matern Health Neonatol Perinatol*. 2022;8:4.

<sup>4</sup> Yuan J, Liu X, Liu C, et al. Is dietary choline intake related to dementia and Alzheimer's disease risks? Results from the Framingham Heart Study. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2022;116:1201-1207.

# Vegan Journal

(formerly *Vegetarian Journal*)

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*Vegan Journal* is one project of The Vegetarian Resource Group. We are a nonprofit that educates the public about veganism and the interrelated issues of health, nutrition, environment, ethics, and world hunger. To join VRG and receive *Vegan Journal* in the U.S., send \$25 to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203, or go to [vrg.org/donate](http://vrg.org/donate). Additional donations support our outreach and research.



[vrg.org](http://vrg.org)

# Note from the Coordinators



## Transparency

Not too long ago, there was a story in *The Washington Post* about dietitians with massive social media followings advocating certain products and positions (such as eating more sugar), but not indicating they were being funded by the food industry. Or if their funder was named, it may still not be clear from the name that this was a group with a certain point of view.

The Vegetarian Resource Group is constantly receiving emails asking to pay us to do postings on our social media. This is different from ads when the reader or consumer is clear that it's an ad. We do not take money for postings.

At a plant-based conference, Natural Products Expo, and dietetic meeting we attended recently, we heard many different opinions on the show floors concerning food. Some want healthy foods or items such as traditional beans and grains, while for others health doesn't matter as long as there are no animal ingredients. Others are against processed foods and cell-cultivated foods (replicas of animal DNA) for various reasons, while there are individuals who see these technologies as solutions to mega problems. However, it's difficult to know the sources of foods. For example, if you see animal-free, this can still be based on animal DNA, whether actual or virtual (real DNA is computer coded to create virtual clones/copies).

Recently a VRG member was telling us about a teenage family friend who was getting pushback because of being the only vegetarian in the family. At about the same time, a newspaper reporter contacted us about a story related to how vegetarians, vegans, and omnivores in the same family can peacefully coexist.

There is great division in this country, though Americans probably agree more than they disagree. We think that people can have different beliefs, but still get along and function together. One key element is feeling confident in your own beliefs and not being fearful. Your personality will impact your reactions, as well as becoming more educated on the issues from several sources.

Only giving one side of the story and not seeing other points of view, certainly gives you more followers, prestige, and income. However, it doesn't lead to a better world. Certainly, companies and individuals should be proud of what they are and advocate for themselves. But we hope that businesses and investors will have enough belief in their products so that they will be fully transparent on their labels, websites, social media, and other places. The sources of their ingredients, whether animal, cell-cultivated, or other, should be clearly stated. Then consumers (including each person in the family) can make their own choice about what they want to use. As always, when you ask companies about ingredients, we encourage you to do this in a positive way.

Debra Wasserman & Charles Stahler  
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 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Make checks payable to The Vegetarian Resource Group and mail to P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203, or donate at [vrg.org/donate](http://vrg.org/donate)

Thanks to all our anonymous donors!

Special thanks to Whitney McVerry for acknowledging all the individuals who entered VRG's Video Contest, as well as for doing VRG's Instagram posts.

Thanks to the following volunteers that help with VRG's online restaurant guide: Chelsea Chilewa, Carole Hamlin, Jessica Langeham, Julie Neild, Nadely Requena, Mae Seon, and Cheryl Van Beek.

## Saving Our Planet

In reference to your Issue 4, 2023 *Vegan Journal* review of Keith Akers' new book, *Embracing Limits*, the planet is finite and has a limited capacity to support human activities. Even with efficient food production, the only way to sustain the planet is to level out the population and its activities.

*Linda G., via VRG Blog*

## Being Veggie in an Omnivore Household Can Be Difficult

One of my daughter's friends was a vegetarian last year. She converted for ethical reasons. Her mother and sister agreed to respect her "experiment" of trying it for one year. She was 13 and her mother and sister complained about how inconvenient it was to make separate meals. They made her feel guilty that she would not be able to eat the special food at extended family gatherings. At the end of the year, they talked a lot about being relieved that that was over. I expect that my daughter's friend may try again in 5 to 6 years when she's out of the house. But this may also depend upon her relationships and social circles.

Having a key supporter who legitimizes your decision is important. Otherwise, the ethical-leaning person may decide to support some other cause... and may reflect that "no one is perfect," but at least they are doing something good. I think it's particularly hard to be a vegan or vegetarian while living in a household of omnivores, and my guess would be that this is where you have the highest recidivism rates.

*Angela J., via email*

*Note from the editors:* By coincidence, we received this letter a few days after a reporter for the *Deseret News*, based in Salt Lake City, Utah, contacted us while working on a column about mixed-diet households. She asked about tips so that vegans, vegetarians, and carnivores can peacefully exist. The reporter found information on social situations from our past interns helpful. See:

- Social—Dealing with Family
- Social—Dealing with Friends and Others
- Family, Religion, and Cultural Events

At [vrg.org/teen](http://vrg.org/teen)

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## Coming in the next issue...

# ANCIENT GRAIN DISHES

**Plus:** Glorious Cakes, The Cost of Beans vs. Meat, VRG Video Contest Winners, and More!

# Asian-Inspired Soups & Stews

by Nava Atlas

**W**inter soups and stews often come to mind as bowlfuls of beans, grains, roots, and tubers. Without a doubt, these kinds of thick mēlanges can be supremely warming on chilly winter days. Though skewing more to vegetables than to carbs, the Asian-inspired soups and stews presented here can be just as warming and comforting.

Some of the ingredient lists in these recipes may look a little long. Though these soups may seem more offbeat than the usual winter fare at first glance, there are few ingredients you couldn't find in natural foods stores or well-stocked supermarkets.

Substantial enough to be a meal's centerpiece, yet light enough to serve as a first course (or leave room for seconds), these soups might become the most crave-worthy part of your cold-weather rotation. Fear not—there's usually nothing more to do than add items to the soup pot in a certain order. And most of these cook up relatively quickly where soups and stews are concerned—30 minutes at best, an hour tops. That's a flash in the pan (or more accurately, the soup pot) compared with, for example, a chili or barley soup that need plenty of time to simmer.



# Hot and Sour Vegetable Soup

(Serves 6)

- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons dark sesame oil
- 1 medium-large onion, quartered and thinly sliced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- One 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup fresh shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 5 cups water, divided
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper or lemon pepper
- 3-4 stalks bok choy, stems sliced, and leaves chopped
- 1 cup snow peas, cut into 1-inch pieces
- One 15-ounce can baby corn with liquid
- 3-5 Tablespoons rice vinegar, to taste
- Chili oil, sriracha, or cayenne pepper, to taste
- 2 Tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 8 ounces extra-firm tofu, drained and diced
- 2-3 scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 Tablespoons cornstarch or arrowroot
- Cilantro leaves, as desired

In a soup pot, heat both oils over low heat. Add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the garlic and continue to sauté until both are golden.

Add tomatoes, shiitakes, 4¾ cups water, and pepper. Bring to a slow boil, then lower the heat and simmer gently with the cover ajar for 5 minutes.

Add the remaining ingredients except the cornstarch and cilantro. Taste frequently as you add the vinegar, hot seasoning, and soy sauce.

Dissolve the cornstarch in ¼ cup water. Slowly drizzle into the soup while stirring. Simmer over very low heat for 2 minutes. If the soup is too dense, add another cup or so of water.

Remove from the heat and serve at once. Garnish each serving with cilantro.

Total calories per serving: 160    Fat: 7 grams  
Carbohydrates: 16 grams    Protein: 9 grams  
Sodium: 356 milligrams    Fiber: 5 grams



# Miso Soup with Winter Vegetables

(Serves 6)

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 2 medium onions, quartered and sliced
- 4 potatoes or 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1½ cups shredded green cabbage, preferably napa
- 1 large celery stalk, cut into matchsticks
- 1 large carrot, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 1 cup peeled, diced daikon, turnip, or parsnip
- One 32-ounce carton low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- 8 ounces soft tofu, blotted and cut into small dice
- 1-2 teaspoons grated fresh or bottled ginger
- ¼ cup dry red wine or sherry, optional
- 2 rounded Tablespoons miso, any variety
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste

In a soup pot, heat the oil over medium-low heat. Add the onions and sauté until golden; about 8 minutes.

Next, add the potatoes, cabbage, celery, carrots, and daikon. Add the broth and water, then stir in the tofu, ginger, and optional wine. Bring to a slow boil, then lower the heat and simmer gently with the cover ajar for 20 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender but not overdone. Remove from the heat.

Dissolve the miso in just enough water to make it smooth and pourable. Stir it into the soup, then taste; repeat the process to add more if you'd like. Season with plenty of pepper and serve at once.

*Cook's Note:* Any variety of miso works in this soup—hatcho, mugi, shiro, or chickpea miso. The latter is soy-free, allowing anyone with soy sensitivity to finally enjoy miso soup!

If you prefer a lower-sodium recipe, you can replace the commercial broth with a homemade broth with no salt added.

Total calories per serving: 187	Fat: 3 grams
Carbohydrates: 33 grams	Protein: 5 grams
Sodium: 358 milligrams	Fiber: 5 grams





# Thai-Flavored Vegetable Stew

(Serves 6 or more)

- 4 ounces thin rice noodles (vermicelli)
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, quartered and thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups bite-sized broccoli florets
- 3 cups bite-sized cauliflower florets
- 2 cups slender green beans, trimmed and halved
- 1 large red bell pepper, cut into narrow 2-inch strips
- 1-2 fresh chili peppers, seeded and minced
- 1 cup water

Cook the noodles according to package directions until al dente. Drain, then rinse briefly with cool water and cut into shorter lengths. Set aside until needed.

In a soup pot, heat the oil over medium-low heat. Add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the garlic and continue to sauté until both are golden.

Layer the broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, bell pepper, and chili peppers in the pot without stirring them in. Pour in the water. Bring to a rapid simmer (you'll hear it rather than see it), then lower the heat. Cover and cook for 8-10 minutes, or until all the vegetables are tender-crisp.

## *Coconut-Peanut Sauce*

- ½ cup natural smooth or crunchy peanut butter
- ¾ cup light coconut milk
- Juice of 1 lime
- 2 Tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce or tamari
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh or bottled ginger
- 1 teaspoon sriracha or other hot sauce, to taste
- 2 teaspoons agave

Meanwhile, prepare the sauce. Combine the ingredients in a small mixing bowl and whisk together until completely blended. If the peanut butter is very dense, you might need to use a food processor or blender.

Add the peanut sauce to the soup pot once the vegetables are tender-crisp to your liking. Stir everything together well. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 5 minutes longer, uncovered, or until the sauce has enveloped the vegetables. Add a little more water if needed.



## *Garnishes (use any or all)*

- Chopped peanuts
- Sliced scallions
- Cilantro leaves

To serve, place some of the noodles in the bottom of each serving bowl and ladle the stew over them. Garnish with peanuts, scallions, and/or cilantro.

Total calories per serving: 317    Fat: 17 grams  
Carbohydrates: 35 grams    Protein: 9 grams  
Sodium: 337 milligrams    Fiber: 5 grams

## Tofu & Soba Noodle Soup

(Serves 6)

One 8-ounce package soba (buckwheat) noodles  
One 32-ounce carton low-sodium vegetable broth  
8-10 shiitake mushroom caps, stemmed and sliced  
2 Tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce or tamari  
1 Tablespoon rice vinegar  
2 teaspoons organic granulated sugar  
2-3 teaspoons grated fresh or bottled ginger  
3 scallions, thinly sliced  
8 ounces soft or firm tofu  
5 ounces baby spinach or other baby greens  
1 cup chopped baby bok choy, tatsoi, or mizuna  
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Break the noodles in half and in a large saucepan, cook them according to the package directions, until al dente. Drain and rinse briefly with cool water.

Meanwhile, in a soup pot, combine the broth, mushrooms, soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and ginger. Bring to a slow boil, then lower the heat and simmer gently with the cover ajar for 10 minutes.

Stir in the scallions, tofu, spinach, and bok choy or other Chinese greens. Cover and cook until the spinach is wilted but still bright green, about 3 minutes.

Stir in the noodles. Add about 2 cups water, or enough to give the soup a dense but not overly crowded consistency. Season with pepper to taste. Heat through and serve at once.

*Cook's Note:* If you prefer a lower-sodium recipe, you can replace the commercial broth with a homemade broth with no salt added.

Total calories per serving: 188    Fat: 2 grams  
Carbohydrates: 33 grams    Protein: 9 grams  
Sodium: 320 milligrams    Fiber: 3 grams



## Vietnamese “Beef” — Noodle Soup

(Serves 6)

3-4 ounces bean thread noodles or fine rice noodles  
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil  
3-4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 shallot, minced  
6 cups water  
2 vegetable low-sodium bouillon cubes  
2 Tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce or tamari  
2 teaspoons grated fresh or bottled ginger  
1 teaspoon five-spice powder, optional  
8-10 ounces seitan or plant-based “beef,” thinly sliced  
1 heaping cup fresh mung bean sprouts  
4 scallions, thinly sliced  
¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves  
2 teaspoons lime juice, or more to taste  
Freshly ground pepper to taste  
Thinly sliced lime sections for garnish  
Sriracha or other hot sauce for serving

Cook the noodles according to package directions until al dente, then drain. Rinse briefly with cool water, then cut into shorter lengths. Set aside until needed.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a soup pot. Add the garlic and shallots and sauté over medium-low heat until both are golden; about 8 minutes.

Add the water, bouillon cubes, soy sauce, ginger, five-spice powder (if using), and seitan. Bring to a slow boil, then lower the heat and simmer gently with the cover ajar for 10 minutes.

Next, add the bean sprouts, half of the scallions, and half of the cilantro. Season with lime juice, pepper, and if desired, some additional soy sauce. Simmer for 3 minutes longer, then remove from the heat.

Serve at once. Garnish the top of each serving with a thin wedge or two of lime, along with the remaining bean sprouts, scallions, and cilantro. Pass around the sriracha for everyone to spice up their soup as they wish.

*Cook’s Note:* If you prefer a lower-sodium recipe, you can replace the commercial seitan with homemade seitan made without added salt or soy sauce.

Total calories per serving: 128    Fat: 3 grams  
Carbohydrates: 13 grams    Protein: 14 grams  
Sodium: 509 milligrams    Fiber: 1 gram



# Kimchi Soup

(Serves 6-8)

One 14-ounce tub extra-firm tofu  
1 Tablespoon toasted sesame oil or vegetable oil  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
3-4 cloves garlic, minced  
4 cups green cabbage (preferably napa), sliced  
6-8 ounces mushrooms, stemmed and sliced  
2 teaspoons grated fresh or bottled ginger  
1 teaspoon *gochugaru* (Korean pepper flakes)  
6 cups water, plus more as needed  
2 low-sodium vegetable bouillon cubes  
2 Tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce  
One 14.5-ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes  
4 stalks bok choy or 1 medium baby bok choy, sliced  
1 Tablespoon *gochujang* (Korean pepper paste)  
1 cup vegan kimchi (mild or medium)  
2 scallions, thinly sliced, plus more for garnish  
1/3 cup fresh cilantro leaves, plus more for garnish  
Hot cooked rice for serving, optional

Cut the tofu into 6 slabs crosswise and blot between layers of clean tea towel or paper towel (or, if you have a tofu press, use it ahead of time). Cut the slabs into dice.

In a soup pot, heat the oil. Add the onion and sauté over medium heat until translucent. Add the garlic and continue to sauté until the onion is golden.

Add the cabbage, mushrooms, ginger, *gochugaru*, water, bouillon cubes, soy sauce, and tomatoes. Bring to a slow boil, then turn down the heat and simmer gently until the cabbage and mushrooms are wilted, about 5 minutes.

Add the reserved tofu along with the bok choy, *gochujang*, kimchi, and scallions. The broth will likely be a bit crowded, so add 1 to 2 cups of water, or as needed. Continue to cook over low heat for 5 minutes or so, just until everything is piping hot.

Remove from the heat. Stir in the cilantro. Serve at once, garnishing each serving with a little extra scallion and cilantro. If serving with rice, add a small amount to bowl as well.

*Cook's Note:* *Gochugaru* and *gochujang* are essential to the character of this soup, and you may be pleasantly surprised to find them in the Asian foods section of well-stocked supermarkets. If not, Asian groceries and online sources are a sure bet.

Total calories per serving: 180    Fat: 9 grams  
Carbohydrates: 14 grams    Protein: 15 grams  
Sodium: 490 milligrams    Fiber: 4 grams

Nava Atlas is the author of many cookbooks, most recently, the revised and updated edition of *Vegetariana* (now completely vegan) and the forthcoming fifth edition of *Vegan Soups and Stews for All Seasons*, now featuring gorgeous photography by Hannah Kaminsky. Visit Nava at [theveganatlas.com](http://theveganatlas.com) and [LiteraryLadiesGuide.com](http://LiteraryLadiesGuide.com)



# Celebrating Peanut Butter

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

In my opinion, every day should be peanut butter day, unless, of course, you're allergic to peanut butter. Peanut butter shines both for its versatility and for its nutritional quality.

Here's what you can expect from 2 Tablespoons of peanut butter (note: this is for peanut butter made only with peanuts and salt and without added oil or sweeteners):



Photo by SpreadtheLovefoods.com

In 2018, the most recent year for which amounts are available, according to USDA's Food Availability Data System (see: [ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-availability-per-capita-data-system](https://ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-availability-per-capita-data-system)), 4.12 pounds of peanut butter were available each year per person in the United States. That's a lot of peanut butter!

What can you do with peanut butter? Of course, there are PB&J sandwiches, but don't stop there...

- Stir a couple of spoonfuls into oatmeal or other hot cereal.
- Blend with plant milk and either fresh or frozen fruit to make a smoothie.
- Use to add flavor to a tofu/vegetable stir-fry.
- Spread on carrots, bananas, apples, or any other fruit.
- Make my dad's favorite peanut butter and tomato sandwich.
- Create a signature peanut sauce, perhaps with lime juice or rice vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, and chili flakes and use to top pasta or rice paper rolls.
- Combine with a vinaigrette dressing, thinning with water or balsamic vinegar as needed.
- Use to replace tahini in hummus.
- Replace some of the oil or plant butter in a banana muffin or banana bread recipe with peanut butter.
- Make peanut butter cookies (chocolate chips optional).

To read more about peanut butter see:

[vrg.org/journal/vj2001nov/2001\\_nov\\_nuts.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2001nov/2001_nov_nuts.php)

[nationalpeanutboard.org/recipes/30-minute-vegan-peanut-butter-noodles.htm](http://nationalpeanutboard.org/recipes/30-minute-vegan-peanut-butter-noodles.htm) from the National Peanut Butter Board

Peanut photo by Freepik.com

# Prenatal Supplements for Vegans

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

Prenatal multi-vitamin/multi-mineral supplements are often recommended in pregnancy to help make sure that the higher nutritional needs of pregnancy are being met. In the United States, more than 70% of pregnant and lactating individuals use at least one dietary supplement, most often labeled as being a prenatal supplement.<sup>1</sup> There are a number of vegan prenatal vitamin/mineral supplements. If you're deciding among products or thinking about whether to use a supplement, here are some things to think about.

One consideration is the adequacy of your diet. If you generally eat a healthy vegan diet with a variety of dried beans, whole grains, nuts and seeds, vegetables, and fruits, you're likely getting enough of many vitamins and minerals. If you're concerned about the adequacy of your diet, it can be helpful to meet with a registered dietitian who specializes in prenatal nutrition and who is familiar with vegan diets.

There are a couple of nutrients where supplements are recommended for all pregnant individuals because of the important roles of these nutrients in pregnancy. Expert groups, including the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the American Thyroid Association, respectively, recommend that a 400-800 microgram

folic acid supplement and a 150 microgram iodine supplement be used in pregnancy.<sup>2,3</sup> A prenatal supplement that supplies these and other nutrients reduces the number of pills that you have to swallow. Don't assume that all prenatal supplements supply folic acid and iodine; it's important to check the label. A survey of the top-selling prenatal vitamin/mineral supplements sold in the United States found that only 58% contained iodine.<sup>4</sup>

Vegans also need a reliable, daily source of vitamin B12 during pregnancy; this reliable source can be fortified foods, a stand-alone vitamin B12 supplement, or a prenatal vitamin/mineral supplement that provides vitamin B12. Vegan Health, a website that provides evidence-based nutrition recommendations, suggests use of a once-daily supplement in pregnancy that supplies 10-250 micrograms of vitamin B12.<sup>5</sup>

Other nutrients that can be challenging for vegans in pregnancy include iron, zinc, calcium, vitamin D, and choline.

Thinking about your diet can help you to determine if it's important that your prenatal supplement supplies one or more of these nutrients. Iron is especially challenging because so much is needed to support pregnancy. You don't need to

Here's the amount of each needed in pregnancy:

	RDA for Adult Pregnancy	Sources Include
<b>Iron</b>	27 milligrams (vegans may need 80% more – 48.6 milligrams)	Dried beans, whole grains, fortified foods
<b>Zinc</b>	11 milligrams	Dried beans, wheat germ, tofu
<b>Calcium</b>	1,000 milligrams	Leafy green vegetables, fortified plant milk
<b>Vitamin D</b>	15 micrograms (600 IU)	Sunlight exposure, fortified plant milk
<b>Choline</b>	450 milligrams (Adequate Intake)	Soy foods, dried beans, quinoa, peanuts, and peanut butter

Photo by Freepik.com

get 100% of the RDA for these nutrients from a supplement; your diet should provide at least part of your needs. Depending on your diet, there may be other nutrients that you need to supplement. For example, if you don't eat many fruits or vegetables, you should be concerned about vitamin C and vitamin A.

If you think your diet is low in one or more of these nutrients, look for a vegan prenatal supplement that supplies the nutrients of concern. Many prenatal multi-vitamin/multi-mineral supplements don't supply much calcium, so if you aren't using a calcium-fortified plant milk or eating plenty of green leafy vegetables, a separate calcium supplement may be needed.

DHA supplements or food sources of DHA appear to reduce the risk of having a premature or low birth weight infant.<sup>6</sup> Sources of DHA for vegans are limited and a vegan supplement supplying at least 200 milligrams per day of DHA may be beneficial. DHA is rarely included in vegan prenatal supplements, and so a separate supplement may be needed.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Jun S, Gahche JJ, Potischman N, et al. Dietary supplement use and its micronutrient contribution during pregnancy and lactation in the United States. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2020;135(3):623-633.
- <sup>2</sup> US Preventive Services Task Force, Bibbins-Domingo K, Grossman DC, et al. Folic acid supplementation for the prevention of neural tube defects: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *JAMA.* 2017;317(2):183-189.
- <sup>3</sup> Alexander EK, Pearce EN, Brent GA, et al. 2017 Guidelines of the American Thyroid Association for the diagnosis and management of thyroid disease during pregnancy and the postpartum. *Thyroid.* 2017;27(3):315-389.
- <sup>4</sup> Patel A, Lee SY, Stagnaro-Green A, et al. Iodine content of the best-selling United States adult and prenatal multivitamin preparations. *Thyroid.* 2019;29(1):124-127.
- <sup>5</sup> Vegan Health. Daily needs. *Vitamin B12.* [veganhealth.org/daily-needs/#Vitamin-B12](http://veganhealth.org/daily-needs/#Vitamin-B12)
- <sup>6</sup> Middleton P, Gomersall JC, Gould JF, et al. Omega-3 fatty acid addition during pregnancy. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2018;11(11):CD003402.

### To read more about vegan pregnancy see:

[vrg.org/nutrition/vegan\\_pregnancy\\_brochure.pdf](http://vrg.org/nutrition/vegan_pregnancy_brochure.pdf)  
[vrg.org/nutrition/veganpregnancy.php](http://vrg.org/nutrition/veganpregnancy.php)

### To read more about dietary supplements see:

- [vrg.org/blog/2015/04/29/do-vegetarians-vegans-lacto-vegetarians-lacto-ovo-vegetarians-have-to-take-vitamin-b12-supplements](http://vrg.org/blog/2015/04/29/do-vegetarians-vegans-lacto-vegetarians-lacto-ovo-vegetarians-have-to-take-vitamin-b12-supplements)
- [vrg.org/journal/vj2015issue1/2015\\_issue1\\_nutrition\\_hotline.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2015issue1/2015_issue1_nutrition_hotline.php)
- [vrg.org/blog/2023/02/13/nihs-office-of-dietary-supplements-offers-a-helpful-dietary-supplement-label-database](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/02/13/nihs-office-of-dietary-supplements-offers-a-helpful-dietary-supplement-label-database)



# Vegetable Sushi Renaissance

by Hannah Kaminsky

Vegetable sushi isn't what it used to be. Looking back on the limp, thin cucumber rolls of yore, that's a very good thing indeed. No one misses the obligatory meatless option, stripped of flavor, excitement, and appreciable nutrition. Innovative plant-based is finally breathing new life into sushi bars globally, raising the art to entirely new culinary heights.

It's a common misconception that sushi necessarily contains fish; in fact, the word itself simply refers to the vinegared rice creating the foundation of all these unique creations. It came about as a method of preservation, wrapping morsels in these edible packages to prevent spoilage. Dating back to the samurai era, this is all ancient history that western countries are still working to catch up with. Simple *maki* (cut sushi rolls) and *nigiri* (oval mounds of rice with toppings) are well understood, but additional formats lack that same recognition. While we're expanding the boundaries of what sushi should contain, we might as well appreciate the wider range of ways sushi can take shape, too.

Lacquered with a glossy sweet and savory sauce, slender Japanese eggplants make a convincing dupe for grilled eels. Alluring crosshatches sliced through the skin create the same visual impact, while the meltingly tender bite of this baked version drives the full experience home. Perched on top of gently packed rectangles of rice, these classic *nigiri* are perennial crowd-pleasers for good reason.

Watermelon may sound like an inauspicious start to a fish alternative, but suspend your disbelief long enough to try these ruby red cubes of spicy poke.

Paired with the crunch of julienned cucumbers, the contrast between hot and cool, supple and crisp will keep you coming back for more. These morsels are wrapped in conical *temaki* (single-serving hand rolls), meant to be enjoyed as they're assembled at the table.

Caviar is synonymous with luxury, but this version is one you can afford every day of the week. Chia seeds soak in an oceanic brine to replicate the taste of salty fish eggs. *Gunkan*, aka "battleship" *nigiri*, sail away into bold new culinary waters with this precious cargo in tow. Wear your life preserver because you just may go overboard when you realize it's entirely plant-based.

California rolls are the gateway sushi for many westerners, presenting accessible, affordable ingredients in a novel package. It's time we shake up that routine. *Temari*, which are round sushi balls, move the spicy "crab" salad made of shredded enoki mushrooms into the center for a delightful surprise inside. Thinly sliced cucumbers and buttery avocado adorn the tops, making each sphere as pretty as an

edible present.

Dessert sushi can take many forms, often interpreting the title very loosely, making it more of a visual pun than anything else. In the case of sweet dragon maki, you'll get the full sushi experience, minus the nori. Square rice paper wraps everything up instead, using naturally sweet fruits to forgo the need to add any other forms of organic sugar. Vegan cream cheese adds richness to this light final course, perfect for dipping in chocolate or caramel sauce if you need an extra sweet finish. All told though, such a show-stopping grand finale needs no additional garnishes to shine.

The real  
secret  
to sushi  
isn't fish!





## Basic Sushi Rice

(Makes about 2 cups cooked rice)

**1 cup dry sushi rice**

**1½ cups water**

**1 Tablespoon rice vinegar**

**1 teaspoon organic granulated sugar**

**⅛ teaspoon salt**

Rinse rice in a fine mesh sieve until the water runs clear. Transfer to a medium saucepan and add water.

Bring rice to a boil over medium heat; immediately turn heat to low, and cover. Cook for 10 minutes, remove from heat, and let sit, covered, for 15 minutes.

In a small bowl, mix together the vinegar, sugar, and salt and add it to the rice. Gently fold with a spatula to incorporate. Let sit at room temperature for about 15 minutes longer, until just warm to the touch, before using to make sushi.

Calories per ½-cup serving: 164

Carbohydrates: 37 grams

Sodium: 75 milligrams

Fat: 0 grams

Protein: 3 grams

Fiber: 1 gram



## Eggplant Unagi Nigiri

(Makes 14-16 pieces)

- ¼ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ cup brown rice syrup
- ¼ cup mirin
- 2 medium Japanese eggplants
- 1 batch basic sushi rice (recipe on page 17)

In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the soy sauce, brown rice syrup, and mirin. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to low, keeping the mixture at a gentle simmer. Cook for about 5 minutes, until thickened slightly. Let the *unagi* sauce cool.

Slice the eggplants in half lengthwise. Use a sharp knife to slice crosshatches through the skin and place on a lightly oiled baking sheet with the skin side up.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Bake for 5 minutes, baste with *unagi* sauce, and bake for another 5 minutes. Baste once more and cook for a final 4-6 minutes, until fork-tender and lightly caramelized. Cut into 2½-inch-long pieces.

To assemble the *nigiri*, use lightly moistened hands to take about 2 Tablespoons of rice at a time and gently press it into a rectangle shape. Top each rectangle with a piece of marinated eggplant and repeat until all components are used up.

*Cook's Note:* Mirin is a sweetened Japanese rice wine; sake can be used as a substitute. For a non-alcoholic option, use mushroom stock.

Total calories per piece: 93	Fat: <1 gram
Carbohydrates: 21 grams	Protein: 1 gram
Sodium: 164 milligrams	Fiber: 1 gram



## Spicy Tu-Not Temaki

(Makes 10 pieces)

- ½ cup mushroom stock
- 2 Tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon sauerkraut brine
- 1 Tablespoon instant wakame (seaweed) flakes
- 1½ teaspoons rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon chickpea or white miso paste
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¾ pound seedless watermelon, finely diced
- 1-2 teaspoons sriracha
- 5 sheets nori, cut in half
- 1 batch basic sushi rice (recipe on page 17)
- ½ seedless English cucumber, shredded

In a small saucepan, combine mushroom stock, soy sauce, sauerkraut brine, wakame, vinegar, miso, garlic powder, and watermelon. Set over medium-low heat and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook for about 15 minutes, until the melon seems slightly translucent. Turn off the heat, transfer to a large bowl, and chill before proceeding.

Once cooled, drain any excess liquid. Add sriracha to taste and toss to combine.

To assemble, place one piece of nori with the shiny side down and cover the left third with a thin layer of sushi rice. Place shredded cucumber and a spoonful of spicy watermelon tuna vertically across middle of the rice.

Fold the bottom left corner of nori over and begin rolling into a cone shape. Keep rolling until a cone shape is formed. Lightly moisten the edge of the nori to seal, placing it with the seam side down on a plate. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.

*Cook's Note:* If you're struggling to make a cone shape, you can cut the nori into quarters instead, then place the rice and filling in the center, and fold up the sides like a taco.

Total calories per piece: 82  
Carbohydrates: 18 grams  
Sodium: 195 milligrams

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

## Chia Caviar Gunkan

(Makes about 12 pieces)

- 1 small square kombu (seaweed)
- 1 Tablespoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup mushroom stock
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chia seeds
- 4 sheets nori
- 1 batch basic sushi rice (recipe on page 17)
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced

In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the kombu, soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, and mushroom stock. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to low. Sprinkle in the chia seeds while stirring continuously, keeping the mixture at

a gentle simmer. Cook for about 5 minutes, until the chia seeds have absorbed all the liquid. Let cool; compost, save for another use, or discard the kombu.

To assemble the *gunkan*, cut each sheet of nori into 3 long strips. Lightly moisten hands, take about 2 heaping Tablespoons of rice at a time, and gently press it into a rectangle shape. Wrap each piece of rice with one strip of nori, making sure it goes slightly above the rice.

Spoon chia caviar on top, covering the surface of the rice. Top with a pinch of sliced scallions. Repeat until all components are used up.

*Cook's Note:* Cooked kombu can be a tasty addition to salads, rice bowls, soups, and stews.

Total calories per piece: 81	Fat: 2 grams
Carbohydrates: 14 grams	Protein: 2 grams
Sodium: 76 milligrams	Fiber: 1 gram



## California Temari

(Makes 6-8 pieces)

- 8 ounces enoki mushrooms
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced
- 1½ teaspoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1½ teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon nutritional yeast
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon celery seeds
- 2 Tablespoons vegan mayonnaise
- ½ seedless English cucumber, thinly sliced
- 1 ripe avocado, thinly sliced
- 1 batch basic sushi rice (recipe on page 17)
- 1-2 Tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

Break apart the enoki mushrooms into small clusters and roughly chop into ½- to 1-inch pieces. Place in a bowl along with the scallion, soy sauce, lemon juice,

nutritional yeast, garlic and onion powder, celery seeds, and vegan mayonnaise. Stir vigorously to combine.

To assemble, start by placing a sheet of plastic wrap over a small bowl. Arrange sliced cucumber and avocado on top. Add about 3 Tablespoons of sushi rice over the vegetables and press it out into an even sheet that completely covers the toppings. Spoon roughly 1 Tablespoon of the enoki “crab” salad into the center.

Bring together the edges of the plastic wrap to gather the sushi into a compact ball. Use your hands to squeeze and shape it as round as possible, making sure the “crab” filling is completely enclosed.

Remove the plastic wrap and place the sushi ball on a plate. Sprinkle each with a pinch of sesame seeds. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.

*Cook's Note:* For variety, replace the vegan mayonnaise with plain, unsweetened vegan yogurt.

Total calories per piece: 209	Fat: 9 grams
Carbohydrates: 31 grams	Protein: 4 grams
Sodium: 72 milligrams	Fiber: 4 grams





## Sweet Dragon Maki

(Makes 4 rolls, 6-8 pieces each)

4 square sheets rice paper

1 batch basic sushi rice (recipe on page 17)

½ cup vegan cream cheese, at room temperature

1 medium mango, peeled, pitted, and cut into thin strips

½ cup diced strawberries

4 kiwis, peeled and thinly sliced

Line a bamboo mat (found with kitchen tools in most Asian markets) with plastic wrap and place one sheet of rice paper on top. There's no need to moisten it in advance, as it will soften while you work.

Top the bottom third of the rice paper with about ½ cup of the sushi rice, pressing it out into a thin, even layer. Spread about 2 Tablespoons of cream cheese down the center, topped by ¼ of the mango and 2 Tablespoons of diced strawberries. Let stand for 5 minutes until the rice paper is pliable and will bend easily without cracking.

Start rolling the rice paper over the filling, starting from the bottom, using the bamboo mat to help squeeze it firmly together. Continue until you get to the top and seal the edge with a small amount of water.

Arrange 1 thinly sliced kiwi over the top in overlapping rounds. Squeeze tightly to adhere and smoothly wrap around the surface.

Slice into 6-8 pieces with a very sharp knife. Transfer to a plate and repeat with the remaining ingredients.

*Cook's Note:* Serve as is, or with a side of caramel sauce or chocolate sauce for dipping.

Total calories per piece: 61

Carbohydrates: 11 grams

Sodium: 26 milligrams

Fat: 1 gram

Protein: 1 gram

Fiber: 1 gram

Hannah Kaminsky has been happily vegan for over 20 years, but would have made the switch sooner if not for the temptation of sushi! Passionate about big flavors and simple techniques, they're a plant-based food photographer, recipe developer, and ghost writer in Austin, TX.

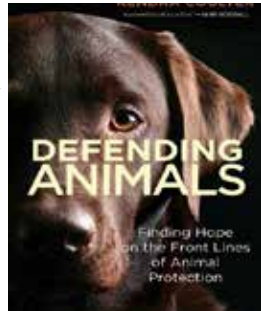


Photos by Hannah Kaminsky

# Book Reviews

## Defending Animals by Kendra Coulter

Kendra Coulter is a Professor in Management and Organizational Studies at Huron University College at Western University in Canada and a Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. Her latest book, *Defending Animals*, explores the many individuals and organizations that work on the front lines of animal protection, primarily in the USA and Canada and to some extent worldwide. As the author states in her preface, "...animal protection work includes both care and advocacy. Crucially, the term animal protection emphasizes that animals need protecting—from humans."



Much of the book is devoted to animal welfare issues surrounding dogs and cats; however, Chapter 11 focuses on chickens and other farm animals. Some of the topics covered include the methods utilized to kill male chicks as soon as they are born for economic reasons, intensive confinement of animals, slaughterhouses, and more.

The author states, "Legally defined as property and livestock, farmed animals normally have only thin and porous protective nets. Practices 'generally accepted' within agriculture are normally exempt from standard definitions of animal cruelty the world over. Kicking a chicken is illegal. Fighting chickens is a felony in all fifty states because it's deemed too violent. But burning chickens' beaks off and killing them at seven weeks old is legal. Not only permitted, it is deemed normal. Chickens are among the most abused animals on the planet."

This book is extremely well-researched and a fascinating read. The author interviewed numerous individuals doing animal protection work and spent time learning about the various groups doing this job in urban areas and rural locations. She goes out of her way to point out that organizations may disagree on the best method to use when dealing with some animal protection issues. Differences between an animal welfare philosophy versus an animal rights perspective are also discussed.

*Defending Animals* (ISBN 978-0-2620-4828-6) is a 256-page book. It is published by MIT Press and retails for \$24.95. Order this book online or at your local bookstore.  
*Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator*

## The Plant-Powered Plan to Beat Diabetes by Sharon Palmer, MSFS, RDN

*The Plant-Powered Plan to Beat Diabetes* is a guide and cookbook designed for those with type 1 or type 2 diabetes, gestational diabetes, or prediabetes. All recipes and menus are vegan.

The book begins with an understandable discussion of the value of a plant-based diet in reducing the risk for and treating diabetes. Recent scientific research and guidelines from professional organizations are the basis for this section. The plant-powered plan that the book promotes can also reduce the risk of common chronic diseases that frequently accompany diabetes, such as hypertension and heart disease. Additionally, the plan offers a health-promoting way for anyone to eat.

The book is filled with practical suggestions, such as a Plant-Powered Diabetes Plate, that provides a useful graphic for meal planning. There are also ideas for reducing sodium and a one-week meal plan.

*The Plant-Powered Plan to Beat Diabetes* includes 100 creative vegan recipes that use readily available ingredients. Some recipes that I'm excited about include Savory Tomato-Basil Steel-Cut Oats, Poke-Style Watermelon Bowl, Kimchi Noodle Skillet, Roasted Orange-Ginger Carrots, and Banana Coconut Quinoa Pudding. Nutrition information is provided for all recipes.

This book is an excellent resource for those wanting to beat diabetes.

*The Plant-Powered Plan to Beat Diabetes* (ISBN 978-1-4549-4510-9) is a 238-page book. It is published by Union Square & Co. and retails for \$24.99.  
*Reed Mangels/VRG Nutrition Advisor*



# Vegan Dinners On the Road

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

Imagine a 10-day road trip to some of the most scenic areas of the American West; days filled with hikes and nights filled with star-gazing. Now, imagine doing a combination of car camping and staying in small motels in remote areas. My husband and I took such a trip. We suspected that we weren't going to find vegan restaurants and that vegan offerings at local restaurants would be limited. We weren't even sure if local grocery stores would have much to offer other than fresh fruit and fresh or frozen vegetables.

We opted to bring most of our food from home and supplement it with a stop or two at grocery stores near where we were staying. Neither of us wanted to spend a lot of time cooking. We prepared food on either an old camp stove or in a motel microwave.

## Here's what we ate:

- Day 1:** Sesame noodle salad with tofu and vegetables—Leftovers from home kept cool in an ice chest
- Day 2:** Canned vegan chili beans over microwaved sweet potatoes
- Day 3:** Reconstituted TVP with vegan sloppy Joe sauce over microwaved potatoes, carrot sticks
- Day 4:** Canned vegan lentil soup with bread and carrot sticks
- Day 5:** Ramen noodles with cubed silken tofu and frozen vegetable medley
- Day 6:** Coconut Squash Dahl (in pouch) over 10-minute farro with frozen vegetable medley, bread
- Day 7:** Ramen noodles with TVP and canned green beans, bread
- Day 8:** Canned vegan baked beans with canned sliced potatoes, carrot sticks
- Day 9:** Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches (not motivated to cook), fruit

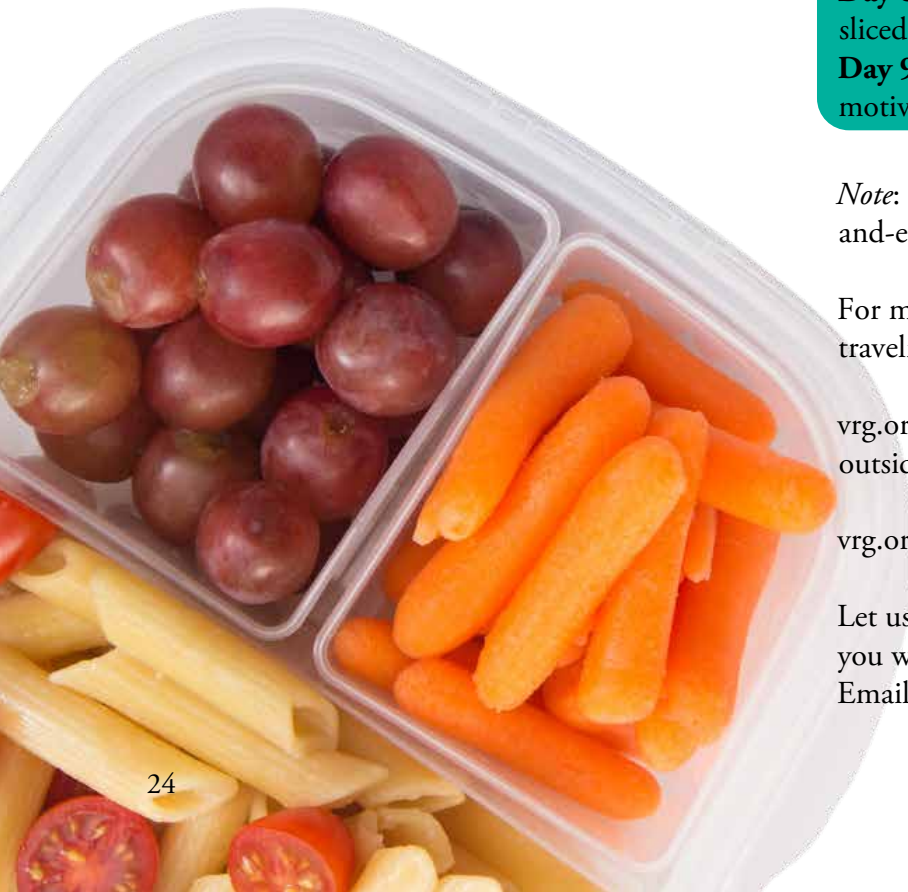
*Note:* These dinner ideas would work for quick-and-easy meals whether or not you are traveling.

For more ideas for quick and easy meals while traveling see:

[vrg.org/journal/vj2020issue2/2020\\_issue2\\_take\\_outside.php](http://vrg.org/journal/vj2020issue2/2020_issue2_take_outside.php)

[vrg.org/blog/2022/09/26/vegan-on-the-road](http://vrg.org/blog/2022/09/26/vegan-on-the-road)

Let us know what type of meals you bring with you when traveling in not so vegan-friendly places. Email suggestions to [vrg@vrg.org](mailto:vrg@vrg.org)





## NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT

### VEGAN EDUCATION

Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, did a presentation, “Vegan at Every Age: A Guide to Healthy Vegan Diets from Conception to Older Adulthood” to the Vegan Society of Hawaii. The talk was recorded and will be rebroadcast on the Vegan Society of Hawaii weekly TV series, *The Vegan Hour*.

VRG Foodservice Advisor Chef Nancy Berkoff did a presentation titled “Beyond Lentil Loaf... Healthy and Tasty Vegan Food Service Menus” for the Maryland Dietitians in Health Care Conference, which is attended by health care professionals working in long-term care facilities.

The Vegetarian Resource Group gave away over 1,800 copies of *Vegan Journal* at Maryland’s Baltimore Vegan SoulFest. The amount of interest and questions about vegan diets was amazing. Thank you to our interns, Howard University student Chelsea and Baltimore School for the Arts student Ruby, for helping at the VRG booth.

VRG volunteer Phil Becker coordinated a booth at the San Francisco, California, 24th annual World Veg Festival. Volunteer Elsa Spencer staffed a VRG booth at VegFest Richmond, Virginia.

We were contacted by the *Deseret News*, based in Salt Lake City, Utah, concerning a column about mixed-diet households and tips so that vegans, vegetarians, and carnivores can peacefully exist.

VRG had a booth at the Luvins Arms Sanctuary Fall Festival in Denver, Colorado. Also in Denver we had a booth at the annual meeting of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and hosted a networking vegan dinner for dietitians and local individuals.

## 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 veganism.
- 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.

# SCIENTIFIC UPDATE by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, FADA

## A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

### Vegetarian Diet Reduces Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

The term cardiovascular disease refers to conditions that affect the heart or blood vessels. These conditions can lead to events like heart attacks, strokes, and heart failure. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one person in the United States dies from cardiovascular disease every 33 seconds. We know that vegetarians and vegans have a lower risk of having or dying from cardiovascular disease. A recent study of people with cardiovascular disease or at a high risk for developing cardiovascular disease found that their condition improved when they followed a vegetarian diet for at least six months.

This study was a meta-analysis, which means that the results from a number of other studies were combined using statistical techniques. The authors of this meta-analysis combined the results of 20 studies in which some people were randomly assigned to follow a vegetarian diet and some were randomly assigned to follow a nonvegetarian diet. The most common type of vegetarian diet that was prescribed was a vegan diet, but the meta-analysis also included studies using lacto-ovo and lacto vegetarian diets.

Overall, those assigned to a vegetarian diet (vegan/lacto-ovo vegetarian/lacto vegetarian) had modest but clinically significant decreases in risk factors for cardiovascular disease, including LDL-cholesterol, weight, and hemoglobin A1C. Hemoglobin A1C is an indicator of blood sugar levels. In eight of the studies, the dose of medications for high blood sugar, high blood cholesterol, and/or high blood pressure could be reduced in subjects following vegetarian diets. This study suggests that vegetarian diets could be useful for reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Wang T, Kroeger CM, Cassidy S, et al. Vegetarian dietary patterns and cardiometabolic risk in people with or at high risk of cardiovascular disease: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2023;6:e2325658.

### Iron-Fortified Vegetables

The form of iron that is found in plant foods is better absorbed when eaten with a source of vitamin C. That's why some researchers propose increasing the amount of iron in vegetables that are naturally high in vitamin C, such as bell peppers and broccoli. The iron content of vegetables could be increased by breeding vegetables so that they better absorb iron from the soil and transfer it to the parts of the plant that are eaten. Another method could be to selectively breed plant varieties that are rich in iron and vitamin C and low in substances that interfere with iron absorption. German researchers wondered if consumers would accept vegetables that had been bred to have a higher iron content. They surveyed 1,000 adults and asked them if they would prefer iron-biofortified vegetables, an iron-fortified fruit drink, or a dietary supplement containing iron. The majority of respondents rated iron-biofortified vegetables higher for being healthy, sustainable, safe, and suitable for everyday use, and 77% indicated that they would prefer iron-biofortified vegetables to improve their iron supply. These iron-biofortified vegetables could be a way to increase dietary iron intake on a plant-based diet.

Welk AK, Mehlhose C, Daum D, Enneking U. Vegetables with enhanced iron bioavailability-German consumers' perceptions of a new approach to improve dietary iron supply. *Nutrients*. 2023;15:2291.

### Muscles Without Meat

There is good evidence that a combination of resistance exercise and a relatively high protein intake increases muscle mass and strength. Most studies in this area have used animal-derived protein supplements to increase protein intake. A recent study compared the effect of high-protein vegan and omnivorous diets during resistance exercise training on muscle development. In the first part of the study, 16 healthy young adults were placed on either a vegan or a

nonvegetarian diet for three days. All diets were high in protein and provided 1.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight (0.8 grams of protein per pound of body weight). The main protein source for vegans was mycoprotein (protein from mushrooms), which provided over a third of the vegan group's protein. Participants did resistance exercise on one leg only on the three days of this part of the study. As would be expected, the rate of muscle growth was higher in the exercised leg compared to the rested leg. Participants on vegan and nonvegetarian diets had similar rates of muscle growth in their exercised leg.

In the second part of the study, 22 healthy young adults were placed on either a vegan or a nonvegetarian diet, similar to the diet in the first part of the study. The second part of the study lasted for 10 weeks and during this part, all participants completed a high-volume resistance exercise program. At the end of the study, muscle growth, lean body mass, and strength were measured. After the resistance training, subjects on the vegan diet had an increase in their muscle size, lean body mass, and strength that was similar to what was seen in the subjects on a nonvegetarian diet.

The results of this study suggest that a combination of a higher protein vegan diet and resistance exercise training can effectively increase muscle growth and strength.

Monteyne AJ, Coelho MOC, Murton AJ, et al. Vegan and omnivorous high protein diets support comparable daily myofibrillar protein synthesis rates and skeletal muscle hypertrophy in young adults. *J Nutr.* 2023;153:1680-1695.

## Longer Family Meals = More Vegetables and Fruits Eaten

Many children fall short when it comes to eating vegetables and fruits. Researchers in Germany wondered what would happen if children's meals lasted a little longer. Would they eat more of everything or only of certain foods? They studied 50 parent-child pairs in a family meal laboratory. The children were 6-11 years old. Study participants were observed eating two evening meals. The meals were typical German evening meals of sliced bread, slices of cheese and meat, and bite-sized pieces of fruits and vegetables. The foods served reflected each child's food preferences. In the control meal, each pair ate

the evening meal in the same amount of time they usually spent on their dinner meal. In the second part of the study, each pair had 50% more time (or about 10 minutes more) to eat their meal.

The children ate 7-10 more pieces of vegetables and fruit at the longer meal. This increase was the equivalent of about one portion of fruits and vegetables combined. They did not eat more bread, cheese, or meat in the longer meal compared to the control meal. This simple strategy, of staying at the table for a little more time, could be a way to improve children's diets.

Dallacker M, Knobl V, Hertwig R, Mata J. Effect of longer family meals on children's fruit and vegetable intake: A randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2023;6:e236331.

## Distance Racing While Vegan

Researchers from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland surveyed 245 physically fit long-distance runners who were mostly from Germany and Austria. The runners were not professional athletes. About 45% were nonvegetarians, almost 40% were vegans, and the remainder were nonvegan vegetarians. Almost half of the men followed a vegetarian or vegan diet. A greater proportion of women followed a vegan diet, compared to men.

The runners reported their best times for distance events. No significant difference was found between diet groups for their best time for a half marathon or a marathon. This suggests that vegan diets are well-suited for distance running performance. The authors of this study suggest that vegan women may have a performance advantage in distance events; additional research is needed to investigate this possibility.

Wirnitzer K, Tanous D, Motevalli M, et al. Racing experiences of recreational distance runners following omnivorous, vegetarian, and vegan diets (Part B)-Results from the NURMI Study (Step 2). *Nutrients.* 2023;15:2243.

# Vegan Shelf-Stable Entrée Pouches: How Do They Compare?

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

## A Multitude of Meals Ready to Eat

When I was grocery shopping for a 10-day camping trip, I was struck by the shelves filled with shelf-stable pouches. These squeeze packs offer a variety of foods, are usually quick to prepare, and are relatively lightweight. An additional plus for those of us whose camping stove is temperamental, is that, in a pinch, many of them could be eaten without having to be heated. Of course, these pouches are not just for camping. They offer the same convenience and variety for meals eaten at home or at work. They could be useful to have on hand in case of a power outage also.

With the help of Vegetarian Resource Group volunteer Stephanie Kumar, I examined the nutritional content of pouches of vegan entrées from several different companies. These companies included A Dozen Cousins, Backpacker's Pantry, Beanvivo Organics, Fillo's, Loma Linda, Maya Kaimal, Nature's Earthly Choice, Saffron Road, Somos, Tasty Bite, and The Good Bean. We collected information on 73 products that were identified as vegan on the package, or the company website, or both. Note that some companies make both vegan and nonvegan products, so check the package or website before buying.

## Worldwide Flavors

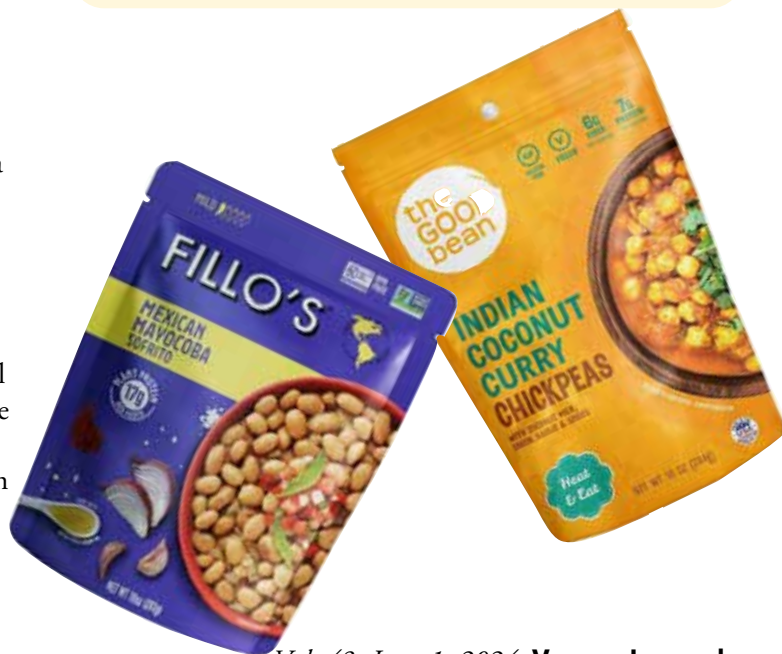
Many pouches featured Indian foods including Chana Masala; Spinach Dal; Chickpea Tikka Masala; Delhi Potatoes; and Dal with Green Garbanzos, Corn, and Coriander. Others offered beans with a variety of seasonings such as Puerto Rican Pink Beans, Cuban Black Beans, Chipotle Refried Black Beans, Peruvian Lentils, and Creole Red Beans. There were also several different kinds of chili including Santa Fe Green Chile Stew and Three Bean Chili. If you're looking for a hearty meal, you could try Three Sisters' Southwestern Quinoa and Beans, Puerto Rican Rice and Gandules (pigeon peas) Sofrito, Pad Thai with gluten-free noodles, and a Jamaican Jerk Bowl with Jackfruit.

## Nutritional Considerations

The labels on about 80% of pouches reported a serving size of half a pouch, while about 20% said the entire pouch was a serving. Regardless of the label's serving sizes, hungry folks may eat the entire pouch. Products where the serving was a half-pouch had between 80 and 310 calories per serving, while products where the serving size was listed as the entire pouch had 190 to 480 calories per serving. I found that I needed to add grains and vegetables to the products that I tried to have a filling dinner. For example, I mixed one of the dals with couscous, cauliflower, and broccoli to make a meal for two people.

### For hungry hikers, here are the products with the most calories per serving:

- Loma Linda bowls (Greek, Hawaiian, Sweet Potato Harvest), 360 to 480 calories per pouch
- Backpacker's Pantry Louisiana Red Beans and Rice, 330 calories per pouch
- Backpacker's Pantry Chana Masala, 310 calories per half pouch



The products we looked at had 4 to 18 grams of protein per serving, making them a reasonable source of protein. Adding grains and vegetables and chopped nuts will increase the protein content. Generally speaking, these were not high-fat products, with fat ranging from 0 to 16 grams per serving. Most products were very low in saturated fat; 85% had fewer than 3 grams of saturated fat per serving. Products that contained coconut or coconut milk were often higher in saturated fat, having 3.5 to 10 grams of saturated fat in a serving.

The sodium content of products ranged from 65 milligrams per serving to a whopping 1,490 milligrams per serving. Label reading is important if you are looking for a lower sodium product.

### Here are the lowest sodium products that we found:

- The Good Bean Santa Fe Green Chili and Mexican Smoky Chipotle, 65 milligrams in a half-pouch serving
- The Good Bean Low-Carb Classic Chili, 115 milligrams in a half-pouch serving
- The Good Bean Indian Coconut Curry, 210 milligrams in a half-pouch serving (Despite containing coconut, this product is low in saturated fat.)
- Nature's Earthly Choice Barley & Lentils, 290 milligrams in a one-cup serving

The fiber content of the products we surveyed ranged from 1 to 15 grams of fiber per serving.

### Higher fiber products include:

- Loma Linda Ultimate Chili, 15 grams in a one-pouch serving
- Loma Linda Sweet Potato Harvest Bowl, 13 grams in a one-pouch serving
- Backpacker's Pantry Cuban Coconut Rice & Beans, 13 grams in a half-pouch serving
- Fillo's Mexican Mayocoba Sofrito, 11 grams in a half-pouch serving

## Everyday Convenience

Most of these pouch meals are super-quick to prepare. Typically, they are ready after 1-1½ minutes in the microwave or 3-5 minutes on the stove. Backpacker's Pantry products call for adding boiling water, sealing, and letting the pouch sit for 15-20 minutes.

For those looking for gluten-free options, try products from A Dozen Cousins, Backpacker's Pantry, Beanvivo Organics, The Good Bean, Loma Linda, Saffron Road, Somos, and Tasty Bite (most products). And, if you prefer products with organic certification, look for pouches from Beanvivo Organics, Maya Kamal (most products), Nature's Earthly Choice, and Tasty Bite.

A drawback of these products is that they may not be recyclable because their packages consist of multiple materials. In addition, they are relatively expensive compared to preparing dishes from scratch using dried or canned beans. Still, they are convenient and can provide a quick meal.

*Thank you so much to volunteer Stephanie Kumar for her extensive work on this project.*



# Veggie Bits

## Broma Lentil & Almond Butters

You might feel like you need more smooth, creamy chocolate in your life. Broma's Dark Chocolate Lentil & Almond Butters are here to answer your call. These dreamy spreads have recognizable ingredients like cacao and coconut sugar, with the surprising addition of lentils.



This is not at all lentil-y, by the way. Testers didn't detect the savory beans in taste or texture. Instead, these chocolatey butters—which come in Cherry, Coconut, Mint Chip, and Original—are heavenly without too much sweetness on warm waffles, smeared across a toasted bagel, or stirred into oatmeal. If you enjoy baking, the website offers up suggestions for brownies, cookies, and granola bars using the butters, too. Sold in jars or small travel pouches. Gluten-free, kosher, low-sugar, organic, and soy-free with no refined sugars. Available at independent grocers throughout the Northeast and online at [eatbroma.com](http://eatbroma.com)

*Rissa Miller/Former Senior Editor*

## Fruit Powders

Elevate your breakfast game with Pitaya's freeze-dried Acai Berry and Dragon Fruit. Not just for smoothies, these fruit powders are vivid additions to yogurt parfaits, homemade popsicles, fruit salad dressings, agua frescas and other drinks, chia pudding, oatmeal, and non-bake cookies. These powders are bold and colorful, and bring the exotic into your kitchen. The Acai Berry is unsweetened and has the fruit's characteristic tart earthiness. It's a great balance against sweeter fruits like banana, mango, or pineapple. The Dragon Fruit has more natural sweetness, though it is not cloying and works well with blackberries and strawberries. The fruits are sustainably grown in Central America and are kosher, non-GMO, and organic. Available online at [pitayafoods.com](http://pitayafoods.com) or from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or [Thrive Market](http://Thrive Market).

*Rissa Miller/Former Senior Editor*



## Gluten-Free Cookie Mixes

Soft, melt-in-your-mouth cookies that hold together and are safe for school sound



like a fairy tale. However, Raised Gluten Free has made this a reality, and one so simple, their Cookie Mixes are designed to be made by kids (with the supervision of an adult, of course). These handy mixes come in Chocolate Chip, Confetti, and Double Chocolate flavors. The tester-favorite was Chocolate Chip; it has a classic comfort taste and paired well with both vegan milk and hot coffee. The Confetti had a vanilla birthday-cake vibe that made it fun to eat and popular with child-testers. Double Chocolate has a more intense flavor, but no chocolate bitterness. The ease of preparation really deserves highlighting: you mix the package with vegan butter, applesauce, and vanilla; chill; then scoop and bake. That's it. They're in the oven at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes. The quality of the gluten-free and vegan cookies with the simplicity in the kitchen is a triumph. Made in small batches at a dedicated, certified gluten-free bakery. Free of the top eight allergens, kosher, and non-GMO. Raised Gluten Free items are in over 3,500 stores nationwide. To learn more, visit [raisedglutenfree.com](http://raisedglutenfree.com)

*Rissa Miller/Former Senior Editor*

## Joi Oat Milk Coffee Creamer

Get a quicker, cleaner coffee fix at home or on the go with these single-serving powdered creamer packets. Made with limited ingredients and lightly sweetened, they're specifically designed to blend smoothly into hot beverages for a perfectly velvety, rich brew. They can even be mixed with water and steamed separately to make the ideal foam for lattes and cappuccinos. Added fiber helps create more sustained energy than just caffeine alone. Non-GMO, kosher, and packaging made from post-consumer recycled materials. Available on [Amazon](http://Amazon) and [addjoi.com](http://addjoi.com)



*Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor*

# Veggie Bits

## Cavi.art Black Seaweed Pearls

Add a touch of elegance and affordable, sustainable opulence to your next party with a dollop of kelp-based caviar. Subtly oceanic in flavor, the crunchy, popping texture is a delightful contrast to any creamy dairy-free spread. You can add them to both hot and cold dishes without fear of the color running or having them melt away. The bottles are also shelf-stable for up to three years unopened, or three months in the fridge after you've broken the seal. Gluten-free, kosher, and no GMOs. Available on Amazon, at Walmart, and at some specialty grocers. More information at [caviart.com](http://caviart.com)  
*Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor*



## Hiker's Hummus

Whether you're traveling by air, bicycle, car, or foot, Hiker's Hummus is a terrific way to fuel your journey with no need for refrigeration. Available in Chipotle (spicy), Cilantro Lime, Roasted Garlic, and Thai Basil, these light-weight pouches contain freeze-dried hummus that was made in small batches. All you need to do for a hearty meal is add cold water directly to the bag, reseal the zip-top, and knead with your hands. After it sits for about 3-5 minutes, it's ready to eat with your favorite hummus delivery system, such as carrots and celery, crackers, or pita. Testers raved over the bright and refreshing flavor of the Cilantro Lime, and Thai Basil had an easy-to-love Asian twist on the classic dip. The Chipotle has more bite and is ideal for adventurous eaters, and the Roasted Garlic will remind you of your favorite restaurant-style hummus. These would also be a simple workplace snack or store well in dorms for students. They're all gluten-free, non-GMO, and sesame-free. Shop online at [ubufoods.com/collections/hiker-s-hummus](http://ubufoods.com/collections/hiker-s-hummus)  
*Rissa Miller/Former Senior Editor*



## Tree Top Fruit Pouches

Busy parents (and anyone who loves applesauce) are going to want to try Tree Top's FAVS fruit snacks. These single-portion sized pouches come in Banana, Orange, Peach, and Strawberry flavors, but each is packed with many other fruits and vegetables. The Banana variety, for example, contains apples, banana, and sweet potato with a nutrient blend sourced from other fruits and shiitake mushrooms. All that, and the taste is light and fruity but with no added sugars. These are easy to pack for lunches, picnics, sporting events, travel, camping, and work, making a fun and healthful dessert option for any on-the-go situation. Gluten-free, non-GMO, and nut-free, with no artificial colors or flavors in BPA-free packaging. Buy nationwide at major grocers or on Amazon. For more information, visit [treetop.com/consumer/fruit-products/apple-sauce/fruit-and-vitamins](http://treetop.com/consumer/fruit-products/apple-sauce/fruit-and-vitamins)  
*Rissa Miller/Former Senior Editor*



## WunderEggs

A new era of plant-based eggs has dawned. WunderEggs by Crafty Counter is sold in Whole Foods Markets, right alongside cartons of conventional chicken eggs, as well as online. Almonds, cashews, and coconut sounds like a dubious combination for replicating that essential hard-boiled staple, but somehow, once sprinkled with the sachet of sulfurous black salt, this unlikely trio is transformed into boldly, undeniably egggy decadence. Rich, creamy yolks contrast to smooth, bouncy whites, working together to create a savory sensation that the humble tofu scramble could only aspire to replicate. Soy-free, dairy-free, gluten-free, non-GMO. For more information, visit [craftycounter.com](http://craftycounter.com)  
*Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor*



## Support VRG Outreach

# Nadely Requena

## My Eleanor Miltimore Wolff Internship

### Creating A Vegan World



I am a Latina student journalist at the University of Texas at Austin. I was a virtual intern for the Eleanor Miltimore Wolff Internship organized by The Vegetarian Resource Group.

One of the most life-changing things that occurred during my internship was that I finally went vegan! I initially began my vegetarian journey in 10<sup>th</sup> grade after learning the appalling practices of the meat industry and its long-lasting effects on the environment. I'm very proud that I've made the change to become vegan in hopes of living and promoting an eco-friendlier lifestyle.

I assisted VRG with their phenomenal online restaurant guide, interviewed folks for the Vegan Action column in the *Vegan Journal*, and reviewed a Korean vegan cookbook and a newly opened vegan Mexican restaurant in Austin. I also led two vegan cooking classes at Christopher Place, a residential program

providing education, training, and recovery support to formerly homeless men of the Baltimore area. Adding on, I participated in the University of Maryland dietetic intern in-service and learned about the importance of obtaining proper nutrition and being well-educated to speak about different types of diets, avoiding common stereotypes and misconceptions.

Throughout my time with VRG, I continued to combat the stereotypes that exist for Latino and Hispanic people, educating others on living an eco-friendly lifestyle while still being budget-friendly. I had the opportunity to experiment with recipes from different cuisines with ingredients I had never interacted with. It definitely helped me reconquer my confidence in the kitchen as I am now living on my own and not in the university dorms where I had a meal plan.

My internship further established that journalism is the field I want to be in, and that environmental advocacy and education are vital. My conversations with others showed me how important it is to be well-educated in the field one is choosing to write about. VRG has allowed me to dabble with different types of writing styles and to meet others, further increasing my experience in the field.

Without this internship, I wouldn't be here with these realizations and most certainly, wouldn't be able to say that The VRG was a part of my story as a journalist. This organization is also incredibly helpful in providing financial support for their interns. It definitely comes in handy to people such as myself who are low-income college students and are financing their education and life by themselves.

For information about VRG internships, see [vrg.org/student/index.php](http://vrg.org/student/index.php)  
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# Vegan Cooking Tips

## Quick and Easy Ideas for

# Seitan



by Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD

Seitan is plant-based “meat” made from wheat gluten, unlike tofu or tempeh, which are both made from soybeans. Seitan is higher in protein than most other wheat products like bread and crackers, and is a good source of selenium and phosphorus. Seitan has a remarkably chewy texture and can withstand moist, high heat for searing, braising, and stewing beautifully. Next time you think about vegan burgers, meatballs, steaks, ribs, deli slices, or long-simmering pho or curries, think seitan.

The easiest way to use seitan is to purchase it prepared and refrigerated, frozen, or canned. It’s even easier to take the plunge by purchasing pre-seasoned seitan that’s ready to use right out of the package. Depending on your local market, you may find seitan with Italian herbs and spices, smoky bacon-like flavor, barbecue, and even roast turkey seasoning. For the most versatility when using seitan for several different dishes, you’ll want to look for unseasoned seitan. You can also start from scratch and make your own seitan at home if you have the time for making and cooking the raw dough.

Seitan works best when kept moist. If you purchase unseasoned seitan, you might want to try slicing or dicing some and storing it in a basic marinade made with vegan Worcestershire sauce, liquid smoke, red wine or vinegar, miso, soy sauce, or garlic or onion powder, depending on your flavor preference.

If you are using moist heat cooking methods, such as stewing, steaming, braising, adding to soups, or slow-cooking, you can let the seitan cook for a long time. If you are using dry heat cooking methods, such as grilling, pan-frying, air-frying, or broiling, then you’ll want to cook quickly. This will help to prevent the seitan from becoming too tough. If you would like to roast or bake seitan, it’s a good idea to include a gravy or sauce to keep the moisture in.

If you have the time, you can add chunked seitan to a food processor and process until you have created your own meatless grounds that approximate lean ground beef. This can be used in chili, spaghetti sauces, stroganoff or soups, or sautéed for a burrito, taco filling, or pizza topping.

Seitan can be breaded and fried or air-fried to create your own fried chik’n, too. You can coat a long piece of seitan with barbecue sauce and roast or grill for seitan ribs. Seitan can be sliced very thin, seasoned with soy sauce and maple syrup, and roasted for vegan bacon. Seitan can be thickly sliced; marinated in wine or vinegar, mushroom broth, or liquid smoke and sliced mushrooms; and then grilled for a seitan steak. Marinate seitan in liquid from pickles or sauerkraut; slice as you would with deli meat and roast. Allow to cool; and you have seitan deli slices for hot or cold sandwiches, including Reubens!

### Quick Seitan Serving Suggestions

- Chop or grind seitan, sauté with onions and garlic, and add to tomato sauce for spaghetti sauce; or add to cooked beans with barbecue sauce for chili beans; or add to vegetable or tomato soup for extra flavor and texture; use as a pizza topping or a calzone filling; or add to a creamy mushroom sauce to create a stroganoff.
- Cut seitan into small cubes and sauté with black or white pepper, a small amount of vegetable oil or spray, and chopped bell peppers or chilies of your choice. Add to a package of homemade curry sauce to create a green, yellow, or red curry; add to heated leftover mashed potatoes with sautéed onions and green cabbage to create an Irish-inspired colcannon or a shepherd’s pie; or use as a focaccia topping.

# Corey Evatt

## Founder of Chattavegan

by Amy Burger

Photo by J. Adams



Corey Evatt is the founder of ChattaVegan, a volunteer-based vegan advocacy organization in Tennessee that launched in 2016. The organization’s mission is “to inform Chattanoogaans that sustainable, compassionate, and healthy foods can be accessible and delicious!” The organization achieves this mission through its website, which lists information about local restaurants that feature vegan menus or vegan options and provides links to local vegan groups, vegan resources, and recommendations for documentaries, organizations, recipes, podcasts, and sites to shop for clothing and shoes. One of the group’s most notable projects was planning and running the city’s first vegan festival, ChattaVegan Fest, which was an overwhelming success in October 2019. Evatt estimates that around 1,500 people attended the event, which featured 40 vendors and organizations.

The purpose of ChattaVegan, Evatt says, is “to help show consumers where to find vegan food and help show local restaurants that a market for vegan food [is] growing.” Evatt and other volunteers work with restaurants to advocate for changes such as clear labeling of vegan items, introduce new vegan dishes,

and host “vegan takeover” events, “where a restaurant goes fully vegan for a night,” often on a typically slow night, to help fill otherwise empty seats. He adds that “many restaurants don’t even need to add brand new dishes. Sometimes it’s just a small tweak to an existing entrée that could be better communicated to customers with a revamped menu. Adding language like ‘vegan by changing egg to tofu’ means an existing breakfast burrito can now serve multiple audiences.”

Evatt believes that ChattaVegan’s efforts could be replicated elsewhere and has advice for getting started. When working with restaurants, he recommends connecting directly with chefs, whose “curiosity to experiment” helped the group gain buy-in from restaurants. Evatt cautions that “work with businesses must be paired with community building efforts,” adding that “advocates need to have customers ready and willing to spend money when new items or events pop up. If not, restaurants will quickly pivot away from vegan offerings and be hesitant to add them again.” The key to growing demand for vegan offerings, he says, is to cultivate a community of supporters, which ChattaVegan does through its social media channels and by hosting events like potlucks and volunteer days.

Ultimately, ChattaVegan’s role is to provide “a resource for the growing community seeking vegan food in Chattanooga.” To learn more about ChattaVegan, visit its website at [chattavegan.com](http://chattavegan.com)

Amy Burger is a former VRG intern who writes for *Vegan Journal* as a volunteer. Amy lives in Georgia, where she works as a college librarian and part-time teacher. Her hobbies include cooking and traveling.





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*The Animal Law & Policy Program at Harvard Law School and the Center for Environmental & Animal Protection at New York University recently released a report titled Animal Markets and Zoonotic Disease in the United States.*

See: [vrg.org/blog/2023/08/15/report-examines-the-risk-of-another-pandemic-and-animal-markets-in-the-united-states](http://vrg.org/blog/2023/08/15/report-examines-the-risk-of-another-pandemic-and-animal-markets-in-the-united-states)

### VRG INTERACTIVE ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR DIETETICS STUDENTS

Polls show that consumer interest in vegan, vegetarian, and other plant-based diets is high. The food industry, long-term care facilities, colleges and universities, hospitals, dietitians in private practice, and many others will need more registered dietitians with expertise in vegetarian/vegan nutrition.

In the past, The VRG welcomed dietetic interns from the University of Maryland, College Park, to our office and recently to an online training where they've learned about vegetarian/vegan nutrition, interacted with our interns, and sampled vegan foods. We plan to offer a similar online training to other programs that educate undergraduate students and dietetic interns.

The free training programs provide students with a firm grounding in veggie nutrition and allows them to explore and engage with VRG Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, a recognized expert in vegetarian/vegan nutrition. Thank you to Phyllis McShane, MS, RD, LD, former dietetic internship director at the University of Maryland, College Park, for generously sharing her extensive experience in dietetic training and to Megan Lutz, MS, RD, CSCS, TSAC-F, for designing flyers promoting the training programs.

If you are involved with a dietetic internship or an undergraduate dietetics program and would like more information about VRG's training programs, please contact us at [vrg@vrg.org](mailto:vrg@vrg.org)

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