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Vegan Journal

Health, Ethics & Environment since 1982

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Nutrition Hotline

Can You Hear Me Now?

Reed Mangels, PhD, RD



QUESTION: Is there any connection between diet and hearing loss?

M.W., via email

ANSWER: Hearing loss becomes more common as people grow older. Close to 80% of people in the United States age 70 and older have hearing loss in at least one ear.¹ In addition to difficulty communicating, the National Council on Aging reports that hearing loss can increase the risk of dementia, depression, and falls, which can negatively affect overall quality of life.

A specific type of hearing loss, called *age-related hearing loss*, is a gradual loss of hearing associated with aging. Most commonly, it is due to a degeneration of inner ear structures. There are many possible explanations for this deterioration, including reduced blood flow due to diabetes or hypertension, inflammation, oxidative stress, and exposure to excess noise.²

Nutrition may play a role in reducing the risk of age-related hearing loss. For example, one study found that, in women, an overall healthier diet reduced risk of hearing loss.³ There don't seem to be any published studies that examine age-related hearing

loss specifically in vegans. Still, a healthy vegan diet is likely to include many factors that are associated with a reduced risk. For example, higher intakes of fiber and nutrients found in abundance in plant foods, such as beta-carotene, folate, vitamin C, potassium, and magnesium, have been associated with a lower risk of hearing loss.⁴⁻⁷ In contrast, diets high in cholesterol have been associated with an increased risk of hearing loss.⁸ Diets with a high glycemic index and frequent use of sugary foods have also been associated with an increased risk of hearing loss.⁶⁻⁹

Higher intakes of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA were associated with a lower risk of hearing loss.¹⁰ Vegan omega-3 fatty acid supplements derived from microalgae can provide these.

What can you do to reduce your risk of age-related hearing loss? We don't know for sure, but eating an overall healthy vegan diet with generous amounts of whole plant foods has many health benefits and could possibly reduce your risk. Taking a vegan omega-3 fatty acid supplement may help, but more research is needed. Despite your best efforts, you

may develop age-related hearing loss since other factors, such as genetics, noise exposure, lack of physical activity, and chronic diseases may affect your risk.¹¹ Still, a balanced plant-based diet offers many benefits for health, for the animals, and for the environment.

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- ¹¹ *Antioxidants (Basel)*. 2023; 12:878.

Vegan Journal

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Note from the Senior Editor



Using My Words

For a kid who hated writing, I grew up into an adult who does a whole lot of it. Words, the basic building blocks of language that used to torture and taunt me, are now my primary creative currency. Writing doesn't always come easily and certainly not effortlessly, but after all of these years, I'm amazed that I still haven't exhausted my supply of words. Looking back on nine vegan cookbooks and over 2,500 blog posts to date, it's stunning to think that I had so much to say to begin with. What's more, I'm not even close to being done yet.

Vegan Journal was already a home to many of my articles, but since the spring of 2023, my connection has grown infinitely stronger. As the new Senior Editor, it's a surreal feeling to see my name printed prominently on the masthead, to know that as I flip through those crisp pages, countless other people are doing the same.

It's an honor and a privilege to join this team of brilliant, compassionate, and inspiring minds. Without their endless patience, kindness, and support, I would have surely buckled under the weight of my inexperience. Contributing a piece versus compiling multiple topics from different authors, proofreading and laying them out, designing spreads, and also shooting many of the photos are entirely different tasks. Editing wasn't a concern, but there's much more that comes with the title.

Perfection is a fallacy; progress is the real goal. With that, I can see marked improvements now in the third issue published under my watch. I relish the challenge of fitting concise stories into limited spaces, hopefully with some reasonable amount of aesthetic appeal. Fortunately, with that trajectory, it can only keep getting better from here. Thanks for joining me on the journey.

Hannah Kaminsky
Senior Editor of *Vegan Journal*

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: _____

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Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

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Name: _____

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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

Special thanks to Janet Steinberg for her generous donation in honor of Debra Wasserman and Charles Stahler.

Thank you so much to all our anonymous monthly donors. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Thanks to Jill Adler and Carole Hamlin for volunteering in the VRG office on a regular basis.

Love All the Asian Recipes in Vegan Journal

Absolutely love Issue 1 2024 of *Vegan Journal*! Especially the articles on vegan Asian soups and stews—and the article on vegan sushi is outstanding! I'm going to be in Austin for Austin Jugglefest, and wish I could thank the author in person! When I was in Hawaii working before the pandemic, I took my team to a vegan sushi restaurant called Tane Vegan Izakaya, and all of them said it was the best restaurant we went to while there.

Russ K., via email

Note from the Editors: To find out about other veggie restaurants in the USA and Canada, visit vrg.org/restaurant

Thanks to The Vegetarian Resource Group

I received your wonderful cookbook (*Vegans Know How to Party*) today; thank you very much. I'm looking forward to preparing some of those lovely recipes for the family very soon. I appreciate the inspiring work you do on behalf of animals and good health for all in such an easy, non-threatening manner. It is

a great example for all of us to follow.

Maureen S., via email

Vegan at Pizzeria Uno

Yes, I have had their vegan pizza and had them add Daiya cheese. Pizza was the only thing I missed as a vegan, but these pizzas are delicious.

Vickie S. via VRG Blog

The Vegetarian Resource Group's Vegan Networking Dinner During The Annual Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE)

Place and Time: Minneapolis, Minnesota on Sunday, October 6, 2024, 6 PM

Come meet dietitians from the Vegetarian Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group and other VRG members. The public is invited. You must preregister. For details and to register, go to bit.ly/VRG-Dinner2024

Letters to the Editors can be sent to: Vegan 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...

SAVORY PIES

Plus: 2024 VRG Scholarship Winners, *Cooking with Collard Greens, Protein for Kids, and More!*

Economical Vegan Meals

by Lauren Bernick

Eating healthy vegan meals can be surprisingly affordable. If you're sticking to whole plant foods instead of processed convenience foods, a well-stocked pantry isn't expensive. Oats, beans, potatoes, rice, pasta, and vegetables will get you the best bang for your buck. They can be made into sandwiches, stir-fries, tacos, burgers, dressings, and all kinds of dishes!

The notion that it costs more to be vegan is a fallacy. Check out the cost of some common non-vegan foods versus vegan staples. This information is from Walmart.com as of fall 2023:

- **Non-vegan:** A pound of ground beef is \$5. One pound of chicken averages \$3.50. A pound of steak averages \$12 per pound.
- **Vegan:** A pound of dried beans is \$1.25. A pound of sweet potatoes runs \$1.08. Fourteen ounces of organic tofu is \$2.86. A pound of portobello mushrooms runs about \$6.50. A pound of brown rice is \$2.65. A pound of walnuts is \$6. A pound of pumpkins seeds is \$7.
- **Non-vegan:** A dozen eggs will cost you \$3.
- **Vegan:** A pound of flaxseed (used in place of eggs in baking) is \$3.50; however, it will last about six months or longer; so a package comes out to be a lot less than a carton of eggs.

Lentils (\$1.34/lb) are most commonly substituted for ground meat and can be used in chili, Sloppy Joes, bolognese, and tacos. Cauliflower (\$2.47/head) can

be used as a steak, Buffalo wings, chicken substitute (especially in Asian dishes), and rice. Tofu (\$2.86/lb) can be made into "chickenless" salad, breakfast scramble, stir-fries, and breaded like nuggets or chicken fingers. Mushrooms such as portobellos (\$6.50/lb) can be used as steaks or burgers, as bacon, in chilies, for Sloppy Joes, and in pasta dishes. This is just scratching the surface.

There will be some specialty items that you'll occasionally need to stock up on, such as nutritional yeast (used to make things cheesy) or cocoa powder that are a bit pricey, but they generally last a long time.

I always urge new vegans to keep it super simple. My go-to meal is something that I call "Home Base." It's a basic bowl that consists of legumes (beans, peas, or lentils), a whole grain such as brown rice or quinoa, and maybe some cubed tofu or sweet potatoes. I add to that a variety of steamed or roasted vegetables. What makes this meal is the sauce drizzled on top. It can be salsa, balsamic vinegar, Pumpkin Seed Sauce (see page 9), an oil-free salad dressing, or whatever you like.

The thing that can't be measured in dollars and cents is your health. Eating fresh fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds fuels your body with what it was meant to eat. It makes you feel vibrant, energetic, and alive; you can't put a price on that! In the long run, it may even save you money on medication, doctors, and beauty products.

Incredible Carrot Dogs

(Serves 5)

6-10 medium carrots, depending on size

½ cup reduced-sodium vegetable broth

¼ cup apple cider vinegar

¼ cup coconut aminos or tamari

1 Tablespoon liquid smoke

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

1 Tablespoon maple syrup

1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 garlic clove, minced

½ teaspoon ground fennel seed

1 teaspoon onion powder

1 teaspoon vegan Worcestershire sauce

⅛ teaspoon ground cloves

Peel carrots and cut into hot dog lengths.

In a medium bowl, prepare the marinade by whisking together the remaining ingredients.

Boil the carrots for about 10 minutes, until fork tender. Be careful not to overcook so they don't become mushy. Drain and run under cold water to immediately stop the cooking process.

Pierce carrots all over with a fork for the marinade to seep in. Place in the marinade in a flat-bottomed glass container or zip top plastic bag and let soak for at least four hours, or up to eight hours, in the fridge.

My preferred method for cooking the carrot dogs is on a grill for a few minutes, until lightly charred. You can also sauté the carrots in a non-stick pan, bake in a preheated oven at 400 degrees for about 15 minutes, or slice the carrots in half and cook them in a panini press.

Serve on a whole grain bun, potato roll, or Ezekiel bread with your favorite toppings such as ketchup, mustard, sauerkraut, chopped onions, chopped pickles, or pickled jalapeños.

Total calories per serving*: 45

Carbohydrates: 10 grams

Sodium: 252 milligrams

*not including buns and toppings

Fat: <1 gram

Protein: <1 gram

Fiber: 1 gram



Portobello Mushroom Fajitas with Mango Salsa

(Serves 3)

Marinade

- 1/3 cup coconut aminos
- 1/3 cup water
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Juice from half a lime
- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin

In a small bowl, whisk all marinade ingredients together.

Fajitas

- 3 large portobello mushrooms
- 1 medium yellow onion, sliced
- 1 medium bell pepper (any color), seeded and sliced
- 1 medium poblano pepper, seeded and sliced

Wipe the mushrooms with a clean dish towel and scoop out the gills under the caps. Remove the stems and save them for another use. Slice the caps lengthwise into strips and marinate for 30 minutes.

Sauté the onions in a nonstick pan over medium heat. Once softened, add the mushrooms and other vegetables, and cook until tender, 6-8 minutes.

Mango Salsa

- 1 medium mango, diced
- 1 Tablespoon diced red onions
- 1 Tablespoon diced red peppers
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 teaspoon diced jalapeños (optional)
- Juice of half lime
- 1/2 teaspoon lime zest

In a small bowl, combine all the salsa ingredients.

To Assemble

- 6 corn tortillas

Steam or gently warm the tortillas in a skillet over low heat. Fill tortillas with mushroom/veggie mixture. Top with mango salsa and serve.

Total calories per serving: 232
Carbohydrates: 50 grams
Sodium: 390 milligrams

Fat: 2 grams
Protein: 6 grams
Fiber: 6 grams

Pumpkin Seed Sauce

(Serves 8)

- 1 cup pepitas (hulled pumpkin seeds), lightly toasted
- 1 cup fresh cilantro (stems and all), tightly packed
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1 Tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- ¼-inch jalapeño, seeded (one slice)
- Salt, to taste (optional)
- 1 cup water for sauce, or more for making salad dressing

Blend all ingredients in a high-speed blender until smooth and store in a refrigerator up to five days. The sauce can be served with tacos or enchiladas, as a dip with tortilla chips, or drizzled over salads.

Total calories per serving: 108
Carbohydrates: 4 grams
Sodium: 4 milligrams

Fat: 9 grams
Protein: 5 grams
Fiber: 1 gram





Meaty Texas Chili

(Serves 6)

- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 1-2 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth or dark beer, divided
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large bell pepper (any color), seeded and diced
- ¾ cup chopped vegetables (such as zucchini, shredded carrots, and/or mushrooms)
- One package spicy chili seasoning mix (make your own by combining: 2 Tablespoons chili powder, 1 Tablespoon garlic powder, 1½ teaspoons cumin, ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper, ½ teaspoon oregano, 1 teaspoon coriander seasoning, ¼ teaspoon allspice, ¼ teaspoon ground cloves, and salt and pepper to taste, or use store-bought such as Simply Organic brand)

3 Tablespoons tomato paste

1 Tablespoon date syrup, coconut nectar, or maple syrup

Three 15-ounce cans fire-roasted diced tomatoes

Two 15-ounce cans low-sodium beans (such as kidney, pinto, or chili bean blend), drained and rinsed

Optional 8-ounce package meatless chorizo (such as Upton's Naturals Chorizo Seitan)

Place a large stock pot over medium-high heat and add the onions. Sauté for about 3 minutes. When the onions start sticking, add about a third cup of vegetable broth or beer.

Once the onions are translucent, reduce the heat to medium and add the garlic, peppers, and the other chopped vegetables. Sauté for about 2-3 minutes, until softened. Add more broth or beer if it starts to stick. Stir frequently.

Add chili seasonings and stir to combine. You'll probably need to add more liquid to coat veggies. Next, add the tomato paste and sweetener of choice. Stir well, then add diced tomatoes and beans. Add the vegan chorizo, if using, crumbling it thoroughly. Add more liquid as needed to make it saucy.

Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to simmer for 10-15 minutes. Stir every few minutes so nothing sticks to the pot. I like to simmer it for about 15 minutes, then turn the heat off and let it sit for about 15 more minutes before serving. The longer it sits, the better the flavors get.

If desired, garnish with jalapeños, baked tortilla chips, or vegan queso. The chili is also great served over a baked potato.

Total calories per serving: 206
Carbohydrates: 42 grams
Sodium: 91 milligrams

Fat: 1 gram
Protein: 10 grams
Fiber: 11 grams



Old-Fashioned Biscuits

(Serves 6)

- 1¼ cups unsweetened vegan milk
- 1½ Tablespoons white vinegar
- One ¼-ounce packet active dry yeast
- 1 Tablespoon maple syrup
- 3 cups white whole wheat and/or oat flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup unsweetened applesauce

Preheat oven to 475 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a small bowl, mix the plant milk and vinegar and set aside for 10 minutes. It should look slightly curdled. Mix in the yeast and maple syrup and stir gently.

In a large bowl, sift together the flour and salt. Add the applesauce, followed by the wet ingredients, stirring gently with a fork until it comes together.

Flour a clean surface and knead the dough about 15 times. You can add a tiny bit of flour if it gets too sticky. Roll out the dough ½-inch thick and use a 3½-inch round biscuit cutter to form small circles. Transfer to your prepared baking sheet, spaced about 1 inch apart. Bake for 9-10 minutes until golden brown.

Cook's note: If you are using all oat flour, roll out the dough 1-inch high as they won't rise much.

Total calories per serving: 264
Carbohydrates: 50 grams
Sodium: 216 milligrams

Fat: 3 grams
Protein: 10 grams
Fiber: 7 grams

Photos by Hannah Kaminsky

Lauren Bernick, when diagnosed with coronary artery disease, adopted Dr. Esselstyn's heart-healthy diet and transformed into a health advocate. She reversed her heart disease, lowered her blood pressure, and lost 20 pounds naturally. Today, she promotes plant-based living through speaking, online classes, and wellelephant.com



SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

by Reed Mangels,
PhD, RD, FADA

A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

Red Meat Consumption Is Associated with an Increased Risk of Type 2 Diabetes

More than 36 million people in the United States have type 2 diabetes, the most common form of diabetes. In 2021, the most recent year for which information is available, diabetes was the eighth leading cause of death in the United States. In 2022, the total estimated cost of diagnosed diabetes in the United States was \$412.9 billion.¹ These facts highlight the importance of identifying ways to reduce the risk of diabetes. A recent comprehensive study² provided strong, consistent evidence that red meat consumption is associated with increased risk of type 2 diabetes.

The study included more than 200,000 U.S. participants who were followed for 25-30 years and whose diet was assessed every 2-4 years. Intake of total red meat, processed red meat (e.g., hot dogs and sausage), and unprocessed red meat (e.g., hamburgers and pork chops) were all strongly associated with an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. For example, when subjects were divided into five groups based on their reported red meat consumption, those who ate the most red meat had a 62% higher risk of developing diabetes compared to those who ate the lowest amount of red meat. Every serving per day increase in processed red meat consumption was associated with a 46% greater risk for type 2 diabetes; a one-serving-per-day increase in unprocessed red meat was associated with a 24% greater risk of type 2 diabetes. The researchers calculated that replacing a serving of red meat with a serving of legumes and nuts per day would be associated with a 30% lower risk of type 2 diabetes. Nuts and legumes appeared more effective as substitutes for red meat than other foods, including fish, poultry, eggs, and dairy products.

The study's authors conclude, "Our study... emphasizes the importance of different alternative sources of protein [other than red meat] for type 2 diabetes prevention."

This report provides solid evidence of the benefits of eliminating red meat consumption.

¹ Parker ED, Lin J, Mahoney T, et al. Economic costs of diabetes in the U.S. in 2022. *Diabetes Care*. 2024;47:26-43.

² Gu X, Drouin-Chartier JP, Sacks FM, et al. Red meat intake and risk of type 2 diabetes in a prospective cohort study of United States females and males. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2023;118:1153-1163.

Vegans Using a Vitamin B12 Supplement Have an Adequate Vitamin B12 Status

Vitamin B12 is not found in significant amounts in plant-based foods. Vegans need to use foods fortified with vitamin B12 and/or a supplement providing vitamin B12 to meet their needs for this essential nutrient. A recent study of German vegans, lacto-ovo vegetarians, and nonvegetarians examined vitamin B12 status of these groups. The subjects were young (over 18 years; average age was 28 years), were healthy, and had consistently followed their current diet for at least the past 24 months. There were 38 vegans, 37 lacto-ovo vegetarians, and 40 nonvegetarians. All subjects kept records of what they ate for 4 days and which supplements they used. The subjects' vitamin B12 status was assessed by measuring several different substances in their blood. As one would expect, dietary vitamin B12 intake was highest in nonvegetarians and lowest in vegans. Most vegans (almost 90%) took a supplement containing vitamin B12 with a median intake of 250 micrograms daily. Based on analysis of their blood, both vegans and nonvegetarians had an adequate vitamin B12 status. Lacto-ovo vegetarians, who were less likely to use a vitamin B12 supplement than were vegans, had a poorer vitamin B12 status. This suggests that using vitamin B12 supplements can reduce the risk of vitamin B12 inadequacy in vegans.

Storz MA, Müller A, Niederreiter L, et al. A cross-sectional study of nutritional status in healthy, young, physically-active German omnivores, vegetarians and vegans reveals adequate vitamin B12 status in supplemented vegans. *Ann Med.* 2023;55:2269969.

Vegan and Vegetarian Diets May Offer Benefits to Sports Performance

A recent review and analysis combined results from 10 studies of plant-based diets and athletic performance. Study subjects on plant-based diets were either lacto-ovo vegetarians (6 studies) or vegans (4 studies). Three studies were of aerobic performance and seven were of strength/power performance. Aerobic performance is important for activities such as running, bicycling, swimming, and brisk walking. Strength/power performance is relevant for weight training.

Compared to nonvegetarians, vegetarians (including lacto-ovo vegetarians and vegans) showed higher aerobic physical performance and similar strength/power performance. Overall physical performance was similar between the groups. When vegans were analyzed separately, the results were similar to those for vegetarians. Vegans had higher aerobic performance, similar strength/power performance, and similar overall physical performance compared to nonvegetarians. These results provide important evidence that a vegan/vegetarian diet does not compromise sports performance and may benefit performance in some sports.

Damasceno YO, Leitão CVFS, de Oliveira GM, et al. Plant-based diets benefit aerobic performance and do not compromise strength/power performance: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Br J Nutr.* 2024;131:829-840.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans Could Be Adapted for Lactating Vegans

Dietary Guidelines for Americans is a document that the U.S. government produces every five years. It is the basis for federal food policy including programs such as WIC and school meals. The most recent *Dietary*

Guidelines, released in 2020, endorses “a Healthy Vegetarian Dietary Pattern” as one of three recommended dietary patterns. While the “Healthy Vegetarian Dietary Pattern” provides alternatives for cow’s milk, it includes eggs and is not a vegan plan.

Updates for the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* are in process. As a part of this process, computer modeling is being done to determine if the “healthy vegetarian dietary pattern” could be modified to meet the needs of vegans, lacto vegetarians, and others. A recent study used these modeling techniques to modify the “healthy vegetarian dietary pattern” so that it included only vegan foods and to evaluate adequacy during lactation.

In this study, the “dairy food group” was replaced with fortified soymilk and fortified soy yogurt. Eggs were replaced with a combination of beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, and soy foods. Vegan patterns that supplied 2,200 and 2,400 calories per day were created and evaluated both with and without the addition of a prenatal multivitamin/multimineral supplement. The resulting vegan dietary patterns were analyzed for nutritional adequacy and compared to the original Healthy Vegetarian Dietary Patterns that contained dairy products and eggs.

All patterns, including the original Healthy Vegetarian Dietary Pattern, without the use of a prenatal supplement were quite low in vitamin D, vitamin E, and choline. The vegan pattern was also slightly below recommendations for vitamin A and zinc. When a prenatal supplement was added, only vitamin D and choline were below recommendations for all vegetarian patterns, including the vegan pattern. Iodine, an important nutrient, was not evaluated.

This study suggests that use of a multivitamin, multimineral supplement can be beneficial in lactation, depending on an individual’s diet. Vegan diets can be developed to meet needs for most nutrients in lactation. This study included only fortified soy beverages and fortified soy yogurt as replacements for dairy products. Additional studies should examine the use of other fortified plant milks and determine the minimum amount of these products needed.

The results of this study and similar studies support the inclusion of vegan dietary patterns in the 2025-2030 edition of *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

Hess JM, Comeau ME, Swanson K, et al. Modeling ovo-vegetarian, lacto-vegetarian, pescatarian, and vegan USDA food patterns and assessing nutrient adequacy for lactation among adult females. *Curr Dev Nutr.* 2023;7:102034.

Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) What Are You Making With That?

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

I was squatting down in front of a bin in the bulk foods section when someone asked, “What are you making with that?” He was curious about the textured vegetable protein (TVP) chunks that I was scooping into a container. I told him that I planned to use the chunks in a curry sauce with cauliflower. More questions followed: *How do you cook TVP chunks? What else can you do with them? How do they taste? Do TVP chunks have protein?* We chatted for a while. Afterwards, I kept thinking about TVP chunks, a product I use every few weeks.

TVP is made from defatted soy flour that is made into a paste and formed into different shapes like strips, chunks, and flakes. The shapes are dehydrated and thus shelf-stable. I often use the chunks in recipes in place of seitan strips or cubes or instead of diced tofu. Since the dehydrated TVP chunks are shelf-stable, they can be kept on hand to use anytime.

According to USDA’s nutrient database, one ounce of dried TVP has approximately 125 calories, 17 grams of protein, 1 gram of fat, 11 grams of carbohydrates, and 6 grams of fiber. TVP supplies iron, zinc, and some calcium and is low in sodium.

To rehydrate TVP chunks, I put them in a heatproof bowl and add boiling water to cover. I let them sit for about 10 minutes and then drain off any excess liquid. Rehydrated TVP has a fairly neutral, bland taste. Some recipes call for soaking TVP chunks in hot broth instead of water to add flavor. Since I typically cook them in highly seasoned, flavorful sauces, I don’t find it necessary to use broth for soaking.

Did You Know?

Due to its shelf stability, nutritional value, and versatility, TVP has even been considered for use in astronaut meals!

Ideas for Dishes that Include TVP Chunks:

- *Make or buy a curry sauce*, heat it, and mix with rehydrated TVP chunks and steamed, sautéed, or roasted vegetables of your choice.
- *For barbecue TVP chunks*, combine rehydrated TVP chunks with store-bought or homemade barbecue sauce and heat on the stovetop, in the oven, or in the microwave. Serve on a bun or over cornbread.
- *Make a flavorful brown gravy* and add rehydrated TVP chunks and pre-cooked stew vegetables (e.g. carrots, potatoes, turnips, and parsnips). If you are looking for a good gravy recipe, Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD, has lots of ideas. See: vrg.org/journal/vj2023issue1/2023_issue1_cooking_tips.php
- *Rehydrated TVP chunks* are great in a stir-fry! Add them at the same time as longer-cooking vegetables like onions and carrots so they can soak up lots of flavor.
- *TVP chunks can be added to your favorite soup* recipes or canned soups. If adding them to a soup recipe, you can skip the rehydrating, as long as they are in a hot liquid in the soup pot for at least 10 minutes. If you are adding them to canned soup, either heat them in the soup or rehydrate the chunks before adding them to your bowl.
- *Sauté rehydrated TVP chunks* with sliced peppers, onions, and spices and wrap in a whole wheat tortilla or sandwich in whole wheat rolls.
- *When you make fried rice*, add rehydrated TVP chunks along with the vegetables.
- *Try a shepherd’s pie*. Combine rehydrated TVP chunks with leftover cooked vegetables, add some gravy, top with mashed potatoes, and bake until hot.
- *Mix rehydrated TVP chunks* with Mexican mole sauce and serve with rice or tortillas.

Eat Some Broccoli and Call Me in the Morning

Produce Prescriptions Offer Health Benefits

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

Did you ever imagine that your health care provider would give you a prescription for free or discounted produce? “Produce prescriptions” have been provided to people who have or are at risk for diet-related diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Often recipients have low incomes. Financial costs of programs providing produce prescriptions may be covered by grants, donations, some Medicare Advantage plans, Medicaid pilot programs, and private insurance companies. Often these are pilot programs and are limited in both duration and in the number of people who can be served.

A recent study examined the effects of produce prescription programs in 12 U.S. states.¹ Almost 4,000 individuals received produce prescriptions. About half were adults and half were children. They were all from low-income neighborhoods. Participants received paper vouchers or electronic cards providing from \$15 to \$300 per month to buy fruits and vegetables at grocery stores and farmers markets. Additionally, they attended nutrition classes to make those dollars count. The median length of program participation was six months.

Adults receiving a produce prescription ate, on average, more than three-quarters of a cup more fruits and vegetables per day; children averaged a quarter cup more per day. Both adults and children reported that their overall health status improved. Among adults with poor health, improvements were seen in blood pressure, glycated hemoglobin (a measure of diabetes control), and Body Mass Index (BMI). These results suggest that produce prescriptions could have important benefits.

At this point, programs that provide produce prescriptions are small and are unavailable to many Americans who could benefit from them. These programs appear promising and should be considered in any discussion of health care policy.

Reference

¹ Hager K, Du M, Li Z, et al. Impact of produce prescriptions on diet, food security, and cardiometabolic health outcomes: A multisite evaluation of 9 produce prescription programs in the United States. *Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes*. 2023;16(9):e009520.

NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT VEGAN EDUCATION

VRG Nutrition Advisor Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, held a virtual presentation at the UMD Eastern Shore and Morgan State University in Baltimore. VRG Researcher Jeanne Yacoubou, MS, examined confined animal feeding operations and air pollution. See: vrg.org/blog/2024/01/23/cafo-ammonia-a-major-source-of-pm2-5-air-pollution

VRG Interns Carolyn and Danielle from Loyola University Maryland interviewed former intern Heather concerning being an environmental lawyer. See: vrg.org/blog/2024/04/01/words-of-wisdom-from-an-environmental-lawyer

Thank you to everyone who worked with and helped VRG’s summer interns Nadely Requena from Texas and Akua Oppong from Maryland. Thank you to VRG staff and volunteers who staffed booths at the Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Annual Meeting, Santa Cruz California VegFest (Arnie), New England VegFest (Heather), Richmond and Charlottesville Virginia VegFests (Elsa), and the Annual FNCE Meeting of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Cathy).

Mediterranean Mainstays

by Olga Kouloufakos

Renowned for its vibrant flavors, fresh ingredients, and health-conscious traditions, Mediterranean cuisine has captured the hearts and palates of food enthusiasts across the globe. In recent years, the Mediterranean diet has effortlessly adapted to accommodate the surging demand for plant-based options, giving rise to a bold new take on beloved dishes that have withstood the test of time.

Given the emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and herbs and spices, it's not a stretch to adapt these classic entrées to suit vegan needs. In fact, some of the most widely beloved "accidentally" vegan foods hail from this region, including hummus, red lentil soup, tabbouleh, and dolmas or dolmades, to name a few. There's no need for eggs, dairy, or meat when you have such ripe, seasonal produce and aromatic seasonings at your disposal.

Stuffed tomatoes are a classic Greek recipe that captures the essence of summertime. This dish truly shines during the summer months when ripe tomatoes are at their peak. Each tomato is stuffed with a fragrant rice filling and baked alongside Yukon Gold potatoes, tender wedges nestled in between to soak in all the juices.

Vegan meatballs are a dime a dozen, but these are worth their weight in gold. They maintain their perfectly round shape, boast an incredible toothsome texture, and delight the taste buds like no other.

Whether you're adding them to a rich tomato sauce or creating delectable meatball hero sandwiches, these vegan meatballs are destined to become the ultimate crowd-pleaser!

Moussaka may just be the crown jewel of Greek cuisine—beckoning with its irresistible layers of tender eggplant, crisp potatoes, and aromatic tomato sauce, then smothered in a velvety, creamy béchamel sauce, and baked to golden perfection. What follows is my grandmother's recipe that has been passed down through generations, carefully revamped to create a lighter and entirely vegan version.

It's hard to beat a classic basil pesto, but we also enjoy exploring other tasty variations, such as my Pasta with Chickpeas & Mushroom Pesto. This gem is a delightful twist on the original recipe that will elevate your pasta dishes to unparalleled levels of deliciousness.

Any lasagna is a bit of a project, but this one is totally worth it! We're talking layers of roasted veggies, tender noodles, creamy béchamel sauce, and buttery breadcrumbs sprinkled on top for a satisfying crunch.

Mediterranean cuisine promises a world of culinary treasures that will inspire your next plant-based feast. Whether you're a seasoned vegan, a flexitarian looking to expand your repertoire, or simply an adventurous food lover, this journey through Mediterranean vegan main dishes is sure to ignite your passion for compassionate, sustainable, and utterly delicious dining.

Stuffed Tomatoes (Yemista)

(Serves 8)

8 medium ripe tomatoes

Salt and pepper, to taste, divided

¼ cup olive oil, divided

1 large onion, chopped

4 cloves garlic, minced

¾ cup brown rice

1 cup water, divided

**¼ cup fresh herbs, such as basil, dill, marjoram,
mint, oregano, or thyme, chopped**

½ cup nutritional yeast

4 medium Yukon gold potatoes

2 Tablespoons tomato paste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Slice off and reserve the tops of the tomatoes. Score the interior of the tomato with the tip of a sharp knife. Then, with a small spoon, scoop out the flesh into a small bowl. Be careful not to pierce the skin.

Put the hollowed-out tomatoes in a baking dish and sprinkle with a pinch of salt and pepper.

Place the tomato pulp into a food processor and process until puréed. Set aside.

Heat a large pan over medium heat. Add two Tablespoons olive oil and sauté the onions and garlic until soft and translucent. Add the rice, tomato pulp, and ½ cup water to the pan. Lower the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook for 10-15 minutes until the rice is approximately half way cooked.

Remove the pan from the heat. Add the herbs, nutritional yeast, and pepper to taste.

Stuff each of the tomatoes about three-quarters full with the rice mixture. Place the tops back on each of the tomatoes.

Cut the potatoes into large wedges. Arrange the potatoes around the tomatoes. Next, mix the tomato paste with the remaining ½ cup of water, and pour over the vegetables in the baking dish. Drizzle everything with the remaining olive oil.

Place the baking dish into the oven and bake for about 1½ hours, or until the rice and potatoes are tender. Let the stuffed tomatoes cool for at least half an hour. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Total calories per serving: 290

Carbohydrates: 44 grams

Sodium: 25 milligrams

Fat: 8 grams

Protein: 11 grams

Fiber: 8 grams

Best Vegan Meatballs

(Serves 6)

- 12 ounces cremini mushrooms
- 1 medium onion
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1½ cups rolled oats
- ½ cup walnuts or pumpkin seeds
- 2 Tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon mushroom powder (see note)
- 1 teaspoon Marmite (see note)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ cup whole wheat or buckwheat flour

Add mushrooms, onions, and garlic to the bowl of your food processor, and pulse until finely chopped but not puréed.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat and sauté the chopped mushrooms and onions until the liquid has evaporated. Transfer to a large bowl.

While the vegetables are cooking, place the oats and walnuts in the food processor and process until finely ground. Add to the bowl of mushrooms and onions. Next, add soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, mushroom powder, Marmite, oregano, and flour, mixing well.

Scoop approximately 2 Tablespoons of the mixture and shape into a ball. Repeat until all of the mixture has been used. Cook the meatballs in a lightly oiled skillet over medium heat for approximately 5 minutes, until browned on all sides.

Serve with your favorite marinara sauce, in a hero sandwich, or in any recipe that calls for meatballs.

Cook's note: Mushroom powder is simply dried and ground mushrooms, ideal for adding concentrated savory flavor. Four Sigmatic and Om Mushroom are two popular brands that can be found at Whole Foods and Amazon. Marmite is a yeast extract spread with a distinctive, strong flavor, and it can be purchased in the international aisle of many mainstream grocery stores.

Total calories per serving: 212
Carbohydrates: 26 grams
Sodium: 217 milligrams

Fat: 10 grams
Protein: 7 grams
Fiber: 5 grams

Ultimate Vegan Moussaka

(Serves 6)

Tomato Sauce

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- One 28-ounce can no-salt-added crushed tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- Salt, to taste
- One 3.3-ounce package pea protein crumbles or Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP), rehydrated according to the instructions on the package

Place a large sauce pot over medium heat. Add oil, onions, and garlic and cook for about 5 minutes until soft and translucent. Add the canned tomatoes, oregano, cinnamon, pepper, and optional salt. Turn the heat down and simmer for 45 minutes. Finally, add the pea crumbles or TVP and stir to incorporate.

Vegetables

- 3 medium eggplants, cut into ½-inch thick slices
- 3 large Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into ¼-inch slices
- Olive oil, as needed
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Brush the sliced eggplants and potatoes with olive oil and arrange in a single layer on a couple of baking sheets. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for 20-30 minutes, until the eggplants are soft and the potatoes are crisp.

Béchamel Sauce and Assembly

- 6 Tablespoons vegan butter
- 6 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 cups unsweetened vegan milk
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- ¼ cup grated vegan parmesan, optional

In a large saucepan over medium heat, melt the vegan butter. Sprinkle in the flour and whisk until smooth. While whisking, pour in the vegan milk. Continue to

whisk until the sauce thickens, about 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and add nutmeg, salt, and nutritional yeast.

To assemble the moussaka, layer all the potatoes, overlapping them slightly, so they cover the bottom of your 13- x 9-inch casserole dish. Pour half of the tomato sauce over the potato layer. Arrange the eggplants in a layer to cover the sauce. Pour the remaining tomato sauce over the eggplant layer. Pour the béchamel over the tomato sauce, smoothing out the top. If you want a crunchy top, you can sprinkle the top with vegan parmesan. Bake at 375 degrees for about 45 minutes until the top is golden brown.

Total calories per serving: 575
Carbohydrates: 75 grams
Sodium: 502 milligrams

Fat: 19 grams
Protein: 27 grams
Fiber: 19 grams



Pasta with Chickpea & Mushroom Pesto

(Serves 5)

4 Tablespoons pine nuts, walnuts, or cashews
3 cups sliced mushrooms
¼ cup olive oil, divided
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 cup cooked chickpeas
1 cup basil leaves
1 teaspoon lemon zest
Pinch of red pepper flakes
2 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 pound pasta, cooked al dente

In a dry pan, toast the nuts until golden, 1-2 minutes. Don't walk away from the pan, as the nuts can burn very quickly. Reserve 1 Tablespoon for sprinkling on top of the pasta, and add the remaining nuts to the bowl of your food processor. Set aside.

Sauté the mushrooms in a Tablespoon of oil over medium-high heat, until all the liquid evaporates. Add garlic and sauté for another minute.

Reserve about a quarter of the mixture for topping the pasta and add the remaining cooked mushrooms and garlic, along with the chickpeas, basil, and lemon zest into the food processor. While the processor is running, drizzle in the remaining 3 Tablespoons of olive oil. Add the red pepper flakes and nutritional yeast, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Toss with your favorite pasta and top with the reserved mushrooms and toasted nuts.

Total calories per serving: 573
Carbohydrates: 84 grams
Sodium: 15 milligrams

Fat: 18 grams
Protein: 19 grams
Fiber: 8 grams



Four Seasons Lasagna

(Serves 8)

- 5-6 Tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 6 large plum tomatoes (about 2½ pounds), cut into ¼-inch slices
- Salt and pepper, to taste (divided)
- 1 large eggplant, cut in ¼-inch thick rounds
- 3 cups bite-sized chunks cauliflower
- 1 large yellow onion, sliced
- 2 cups sliced cremini mushrooms
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Toss tomatoes in 2 Tablespoons oil, salt, and pepper. Arrange in a single layer on a couple of baking sheets. Roast for about 20 minutes until caramelized.

Transfer the roasted tomatoes to a food processor and purée until smooth. Set aside.

Toss eggplant slices and cauliflower chunks in 2 Tablespoons of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Arrange in a single layer on a couple of baking trays. Roast for about 20 minutes. Set aside.

Over medium-high heat, sauté onions, mushrooms, and garlic in the remaining Tablespoon of oil until soft; 5-8 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and oregano.

Béchamel Sauce and Assembly

- 6 Tablespoons vegan butter
- 6 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 cups unsweetened vegan milk
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 pound spinach, fresh or frozen, thawed, and drained
- 9 lasagna noodles, uncooked

In a large saucepan over medium heat, melt the vegan butter. Sprinkle in flour and whisk until smooth. Slowly pour in the vegan milk while whisking. Continue to whisk until the sauce thickens, about 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and add the nutritional yeast and thyme. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Spread about half of the tomato purée in the bottom of an 8- x 11-inch baking dish. Arrange 3 lasagna noodles on top. Next, layer with half the eggplant slices, half the cauliflower, half the onion and mushroom mixture, and half the spinach.

Spread 1 cup of the béchamel over the vegetables. Place three more lasagna noodles on top of the béchamel. Spread the remaining tomato purée over the noodles.

Layer the remaining eggplant, cauliflower, onions, mushrooms, and spinach over the tomatoes. Pour 1 cup of the béchamel sauce over the vegetables. Layer the final three lasagna noodles on top. Pour the remaining 1 cup of the béchamel over the top and smooth out.

Breadcrumb Topping (optional but recommended)

- ½ cup vegan breadcrumbs
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil or melted vegan butter

Toss the breadcrumbs with oil (or butter), and sprinkle over the lasagna. Bake for about one hour, until the top of the lasagna is golden. Allow the lasagna to cool for 15 minutes before serving.

Total calories per serving: 346
Carbohydrates: 49 grams
Sodium: 158 milligrams

Fat: 9 grams
Protein: 15 grams
Fiber: 9 grams

After teaching for several years, Olga Kouloufakos decided to follow her passion by enrolling at the Culinary Institute of America and becoming a freelance wedding and custom cake designer in New York City. She eventually opened a bakery and started The Vegan Feast blog. Visit theveganfeast.com and [instagram.com/theveganfeastphotography](https://www.instagram.com/theveganfeastphotography) for more info.

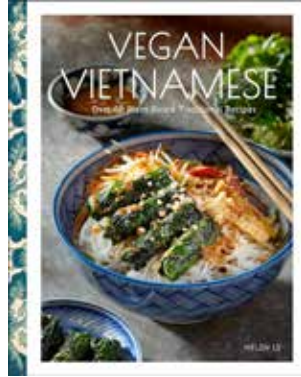


Book Reviews

Vegan Vietnamese

by Helen Le

Helen Le is well-known for her cooking videos and cookbooks. She has a huge worldwide following. Her latest cookbook, *Vegan Vietnamese*, serves up a variety of dishes, including Vegan Fish Sauce, Pickled Carrots and Daikon, Green Fresh Spring Rolls, Sweet-and-Sour Seitan, Lemongrass Chili Tofu, Grilled Eggplant, Pho, Bánh Mi, Sticky Rice Dumplings with Coconut Filling, Spicy Cassava Fritters, and Grilled Banana Wrapped in Sticky Rice. The photography throughout the book is positively mouthwatering.



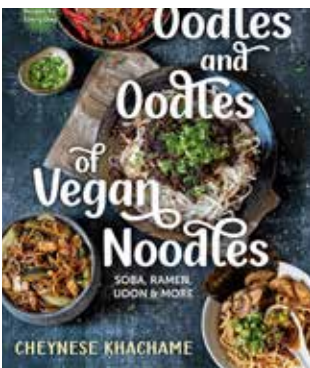
Although some of the ingredients found in her recipes may be unfamiliar, the author provides clear descriptions, along with where to purchase them. Another helpful feature is that each recipe is rated by ease of preparation. More complex dishes are labeled advanced, and others are listed as basic and are easy to prepare.

Vegan Vietnamese (ISBN 978-1-6310-6930-7) is a 184-page hardcover book. It is published by Rock Point and retails for \$24.99.

Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator

Oodles and Oodles of Vegan Noodles

by Cheynese Khaachame



Who doesn't love noodles, the perfect comfort food? In this cookbook, Cheynese Khaachame (a vegan influencer living in France) shares a wide variety of creative vegan noodle-based dishes, including cold noodle soups and salads, sautéed noodle dishes, hot noodle soups, and more. She also offers a section called basics offering recipes for Vegetable Dashi, Chinese Cabbage

Kimchi, "Oyster" Sauce, "Fish" Sauce, and Homemade Udon Noodles. Finally, the book's last chapter consists of miscellaneous noodle dishes, such as Dandan Noodles, Japanese-Style Udon Carbonara, and Noodles in Black Bean Sauce.

The introduction to pantry staples is extremely helpful and the beautiful photos throughout will entice you to start cooking right away!

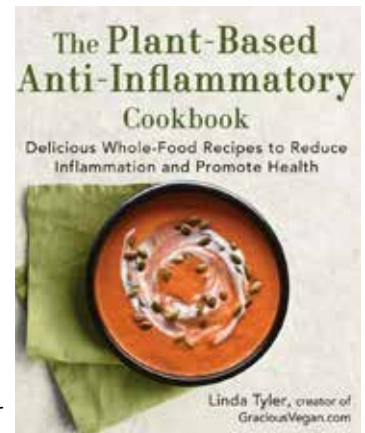
Oodles and Oodles of Vegan Noodles (ISBN 978-1-89101-126-9) is a 128-page book. It is published by The Experiment and retails for \$22.95.

Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator

The Plant-Based Anti-Inflammatory Cookbook

by Linda Tyler

Linda Tyler is the creator of GraciousVegan.com and a regular contributor to *Vegan Journal*. Her cookbook offers a wealth of information on the best plant-based foods she says fight inflammation, common inflammation-related conditions, the role diet plays in chronic inflammation, and a discussion of foods to minimize the chances of inflammation.



The cooking guide lets you see how long to cook various whole grains on your stovetop or in a pressure cooker, as well as how much liquid to use. Linda also provides a list of dishes and foods that can be frozen and prepared at a later date.

Helpful tips are sprinkled throughout as you prepare anti-inflammatory dishes. This includes cooking with water or broth instead of oil, roasting vegetables without oil, air-frying foods, baking burgers, and steaming vegetables in a pressure cooker.

Among the delicious recipes with gorgeous photos are Orange-Spice Granola, Lemony Farro and Bean Salad, Yellow Curry Soup with Black Rice, Savory Quinoa Cakes, Baked Spring Rolls, Kung Pao Soy Curls, and Walnut and Date Caramel Tart.

The Plant-Based Anti-Inflammatory Cookbook (ISBN 978-1-5107-7735-4) is a 288-page book. It is published by Skyhorse Publishing and retails for \$24.95.

Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator

Thinking About Magnesium

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

I was at a conference for dietitians when a speaker, extolling cow's milk, said that three cups of cow's milk provided 25% of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for magnesium. Actually, the speaker just said "milk," but it was understood that "milk" meant cow's milk. Three cups of cow's milk contain about 90 milligrams of magnesium. In addition to the fact that few adults will drink three cups of cow's milk, the speaker neglected to mention the many plant sources of magnesium. Some of these vegan sources have more magnesium in a serving than is found in cow's milk, too.

Magnesium is an essential mineral. We need to get it from food and/or supplements to stay healthy. It is important in many parts of our body, including bones, muscles, nerves, and DNA, and also helps to control blood sugar levels and blood pressure.

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for magnesium is:

Age	Male	Female	Pregnancy	Lactation
Birth-6 months	30 mg*	30 mg*		
7-12 months	75 mg*	75 mg*		
1-3 years	80 mg	80 mg		
4-8 years	130 mg	130 mg		
9-13 years	240 mg	240 mg		
14-18 years	410 mg	360 mg	400 mg	360 mg
19-30 years	400 mg	310 mg	350 mg	310 mg
31-50 years	420 mg	320 mg	360 mg	320 mg
51+ years	420 mg	320 mg		

*This is the Adequate Intake rather than RDA.

Many whole plant foods supply us with magnesium.

Here are 10 Good Sources of Magnesium for vegans:

1. **Spinach**, 156 milligrams of magnesium in 1 cup cooked
2. **Swiss chard**, 124 milligrams of magnesium in 1 cup cooked
3. **Quinoa**, 108 milligrams of magnesium in 1 cup cooked
4. **Pumpkin seeds**, 99 milligrams of magnesium in 2 Tablespoons
5. **Almond butter**, 89 milligrams of magnesium in 2 Tablespoons
6. **Soybeans**, 78 milligrams of magnesium in ½ cup
7. **Brown rice**, 76 milligrams of magnesium in 1 cup cooked
8. **Tempeh**, 67 milligrams of magnesium in ½ cup
9. **Shredded Wheat cereal**, 66 milligrams of magnesium in 1 cup
10. **Dark chocolate**, 65 milligrams of magnesium in 1 ounce

Note: Dietary fiber and substances found in plant food called phytates are known to decrease the amount of magnesium absorbed. Generally, however, vegan diets based on whole plant foods are high enough in magnesium to compensate for the possibility of a reduction in absorption.

Veggie Bits

Nat's Rawline Raw Cakes

“Raw food” conjures up visions of austere leafy greens and murky vegetable juices, but Nat’s Rawline couldn’t be farther from that kind of sensory deprivation. These wholesome treats are designed as pure decadence, made from simple, unprocessed ingredients. The raw cakes especially are works of edible art, immaculately layered from crust to mousse with rich chocolate, caramel, nuts, and fruits. Chocolate and Hazelnut cakes deliver on the intensity that the classic combo demands, while Raspberry and Passion Fruit cakes are a vibrant, tangy tribute to the tropics, both light and rich all at once. Each bite seems to melt in your mouth, although they could also be enjoyed frozen like ice cream cakes, too. Certified vegan, gluten-free, soy-free, and organic. Sold in select Costco, Sprouts Farmers Markets, Whole Foods Markets, and more. The full line of raw mousses, cheesecakes, energy balls, bars, and squares is available at natsrawline.com
Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor



P-nuff Crunch

Crisp and airy with a resounding crunch, P-nuff Crunch are puffed snacks that live up to their name. A base of peanuts and navy beans sets them apart from the competition, which typically starts with corn or rice. This gives them the edge nutritionally, with a good serving of fiber and protein to back up both sweet and savory seasonings. Vegan Cheddar Jalapeño is most like the nostalgic hot Cheetos that most people will recognize, while Roasted Peanut is a dead-ringer for Israeli Bamba. From there, Barbeque, Cinnamon, and Cocoa add unique options for the discerning snacker who wants more creativity at hand. Available in multi-serve bags or individual packets, they’re ideal for traveling, packing into lunch boxes, or enjoying at home with friends. Certified kosher, non-GMO, vegan, and gluten-free. Sold at Central Market, Fairway Market, ShopRite, and Sprouts Farmers Market. Find more information at pnuff.com
Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor



Ocean's Balance Truffle Furikake

If you love the taste of sushi but hate rolling it at home or paying astronomical prices at restaurants, furikake is the answer to effortlessly satisfy those cravings. This traditional Japanese condiment is a savory blend of seaweed flakes, sesame seeds, and many other umami ingredients. Ocean’s Balance Truffle Furikake stands out on the shelf as a rare sugar-free, oil-free, and fish-free option. Rich black truffle shavings along with nutritional yeast elevate the mixture to new levels of aromatic ecstasy, instantly transforming any dish into a gourmet creation. Beyond sprinkling over rice, as is most frequently recommended, it’s a fantastic finishing seasoning for avocado toast, popcorn, salads, stir-fries, or even encrusting tofu. Certified vegan and gluten-free. Available for purchase online at oceansbalance.com
Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor



Mr. Dewie's Cashew Based Ice Cream Mix

While it’s not hard to make homemade dairy-free frozen treats from scratch, the results rarely taste quite as rich and creamy as a scoop from your nearest ice cream shop. Mr. Dewie’s has stepped in to bridge that gap, translating their secret formula into a dry mix that only needs water to revive. Give it a spin in your ice cream maker, and you’ll have a perfectly smooth, luscious treat that’s even better than a store-bought pint. If you don’t have fancy equipment, I’ve found great success tossing the mix into a blender with water and ice to make instant milkshakes. Flavors include Chocolate Orange Chip, Cold Brew Coffee, Cool Mint Chip, Golden Spice, Heavenly Chocolate, and Lemon Creme, and so you’ll never get bored of the same old sundae. Certified vegan, soy-free, gluten-free, organic, and non-GMO. Available for purchase on Amazon and on mrdewies.com
Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor



Veggie Bits

Wildfare Beetroot Fettucine

Basic pasta with marinara sauce is an easy weeknight meal that always satisfies, but for special occasions, it's worth splurging on a more gourmet noodle. Wildfare creates vibrant, crimson-hued pasta using only organic wheat flour, organic beet powder, and water, matching the luxurious taste and texture of artisan options typically enriched with eggs. Its earthy, subtly sweet undertones provide an excellent base for a variety of flavorful pairings, from creamy vegan alfredo to a light lemon and herb drizzle. This innovative twist on traditional fettuccine is not only visually striking but also a delicious and memorable addition to any pasta lover's repertoire. If you're not a fan of beets, other fettuccine flavors include spinach, olive, tomato, black carrot, broccoli, and red bell pepper, for a full rainbow of vegetable pastas. Certified organic, non-GMO, vegan, and no added sugar. Sold at Central Market, Gelson's, Meijers, ShopRite, or at wildfare.com

Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor



Maine Crisp Savory Fig & Thyme Crackers

While most crackers are unremarkable dip-delivery tools, Maine Crisp Buckwheat Crackers stand alone as robust, flavorful gourmet snacks. "Savory Fig & Thyme" is an understated description of the flavor, which balances an earthy sweetness with woody, subtle herbaceous notes. Chunks of toasted walnuts and hemp hearts add a rich, nutty undercurrent that creates a crunchy contrast to the chewy dried fruits. The buckwheat base is grassy with just a touch of bitterness, adding incredibly complexity into every little crisp. Sturdy enough to top generously, you'll never have to grapple with a messy mid-party breakup ever again. Certified gluten-free, dairy-free, kosher, and non-GMO. Available for purchase in select specialty grocers in the Northeast and at mainecrisp.com

Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor



Hot Drops Hot Sauce

For those who like it hot, and even those who don't, Hot Drops makes the hot sauce for you. Made in small batches using a variety of chilies grown in Sonoma County, California, there's a range of flavors and intensity to suit any palate. Lacto-fermentation gives these concentrated condiments a distinctive tangy kick in addition to beneficial probiotics. JalaPastilla, my personal favorite, blends lightly charred poblano peppers with fresh jalapeños for a smoky yet bright kick. Fres-Yes ups the ante with a combination of fresno and ghost peppers, creating a bold, balanced heat that grows with every subsequent bite. On the other end of the spectrum, Not Sauce ranks zero on the Scoville scale, focusing on roasted carrots and sweet gypsy peppers instead, perfect for anyone sensitive to spicy food. Certified organic and vegan. Buy online at hotdropsauce.com

Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor



Smallhold Mushrooms

Fungi are the future, flourishing as natural meat alternatives and standalone produce superstars alike. Gone are the days of bland button mushrooms as the only option; increasing demand has brought greater diversity into the spotlight. Smallhold grows gourmet mushroom varieties like king trumpet, lion's mane, maitake, shiitake, and yellow and blue oyster, all within repurposed shipping container farms stationed within densely populated U.S. cities. Shrinking the distance from farm to table slashes carbon emissions and yields fresher fungi at the same time. Smallhold grows fancy mushrooms that were once only seen in high-end fine dining restaurants which are now accessible and more affordable for home cooks as a result. Organic, sustainable, and sold in compostable packaging. Found in select Albertsons stores, Central Market, Sprouts Farmers Markets, Whole Foods, and more. Find additional information at smallhold.com

Hannah Kaminsky/Senior Editor



Vegan Brazilian Meal Plan

by Priscila C. Reis

Maybe I'm biased, but in my opinion, Brazilian food is the best in the world. While it's true that Brazil has a traditionally meat-centric cuisine, fruits and other natural plant-based foods are abundant. Fresh produce is commonly sold as street food, and fruit trees line the streets. Additionally, animal meat is easy to replace when cooking Brazilian dishes at home. Several kinds of soy products, mushrooms, jackfruit, eggplant, and more can be used without any compromise in flavor. Dairy can be replaced by plant-based products made from cashews, almonds, Brazil nuts, other nuts, or soybeans. The most common commercial plant milk in Brazil is made from soy, and the second most is made from almonds.

Brazilians are incredibly creative and resourceful. In terms of cooking, they are great (or terrible, if you're fiercely nationalistic) at reinventing new versions of typical dishes from all over the world. For example, there's sweet sushi with cream cheese; pizza with stroganoff, ketchup, or chocolate; or hot dogs filled with mashed potatoes, sausage, potato sticks, peas, tomatoes, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and sauce.

Each culture has its own eating habits, which includes a general schedule for meal times. In Brazil, breakfast is usually a light meal eaten at 6:30 or 7 am. Around 9 or 10 am, there is a small snack. Lunch is the main meal at roughly 12 or 1 pm. At 3 or 4 pm, it's common to have another little snack. In the evening, some people just like to have a sandwich or something minimal, while others eat a full dinner around 7 pm.

Since Brazil is a very large country, and has many cultures, each region has unique meals. For example, São Paulo and Northeast both claim to make the best couscous. Minas Gerais is known for having fabulous meals, although they're very dairy-heavy. If there is one thing universally beloved by all Brazilians, it's indisputably rice and beans.

In the meal plans I've created, I tried to put a sample of traditional foods from each region. Hopefully, one day, you'll have an opportunity to try a bit of each piece of the country on your plate.

Glossary

Açaí = a Brazilian fruit cultivated predominantly in the Amazon region. There, they eat it as a purée with fish and *farinha de mandioca* (a flour made from manioc). However, in other regions, it's more common to eat açaí with sweet foods. You can eat the cold purée with granola and other fruits like bananas or strawberries.

Ata = also called *pinha*, *fruta-do-conde*, or *atemoia*.

It's a sweet fruit that's green, round, and bumpy on the outside. It's soft to the touch when ripe so you can open it easily with your hands to eat the juicy white pulp that surrounds the seeds.



Bananinha = a candy made of bananas and sugar. It's easy to find in every grocery store, snack bar, supermarket, or bakery, and even in some drug stores. It's inexpensive and comes in a rectangular shape.

Baru Nuts = a nut from the state of Goiás in Cerrado Bioma. It's sold toasted and can be peeled before eating.



Bean Stew = a classic dish from Brazilian cuisine. It is a thick soup made of cooked beans (usually pinto or black beans), oil, and spices. It's puréed before serving.

Bolinho de chuva = a sweet dish of Portuguese heritage. It reminds us of grandma's food for grandchildren. It's a little fluffy cake in the shape of a raindrop that is fried and then rolled in a mixture of sugar and cinnamon. The cakes are made of flour, sugar, baking powder, and conventionally, eggs and cow's milk. It's easy to make a vegan version using water to make the dough instead.

Carreteiro rice = a typical rice dish from the Brazilian South Region made with rice and different kinds of meats, tomato, cilantro, parsley, onions, garlic, and spices. The meat can be replaced by soy-based meat and vegan bacon.

Corn stew = a thick soup made of blended corn and spices.

Coxinha of jackfruit meat = *coxinha* is the most loved national salty snack. Originally from São Paulo, it's made of a cooked flour or potato dough, filled with shredded chicken, and then fried. The most delicious vegan version is made by replacing the chicken with jaca (jackfruit). When jaca is shredded and cooked, the taste and texture are similar to chicken. You definitely can't leave Brazil without trying it.

Farofa de mandioca = roasted cassava/manioc flour.



Feijoada = one of the national dishes of Brazil, a typical meal for a Friday or Saturday lunch, prepared while listening to samba or pagode music. Its origin is Portuguese and African. It's a thick soup that consists of cooked black beans with bay leaves and many different parts of a pig. A vegan version uses carrots, potatoes, and small chunks of coconut, and possibly tofu instead of pork. Feijoada is

served with these side dishes: *farofa de mandioca*, white rice, braised collard greens, and sliced oranges.

Fried mandioca = *mandioca*, known as manioc or cassava in English, is a long root, grown originally by indigenous people. There are many ways to eat it; this is the fried option.

Goiabada = a confection made of guava, formed into a rectangle shape like a soft little brick. You slice it into smaller rectangles to eat it. In English, you may know it as guava paste.



Moqueca de Banana da Terra = a typical dish from Pará, Bahia, and Espírito Santo, but is also common in the coastal states in the Northeast. It has African influence and it's a kind of soup with a very particular taste due to coconut milk, spices, herbs, and *dendê* oil. The conventional dish is made with seafood. A vegan version is made with a kind of banana called *banana da terra* (earth banana), which is more firm and doesn't fall apart in the soup.



Northeastern Corn Couscous = a dish made from corn flour which is steamed. It can be sliced and used in place of bread.

Paçoquinha = a very common candy made of ground peanuts, sugar, and salt. Originally it was from the countryside, but now it's sold all over the country.

Pamonha = a food loved by people from Goiás, Minas Gerais, and Piracicaba. In Goiás in particular, where I come from, it is very popular. There are community events to prepare it together. It is made of a corn dough wrapped with corn husks and stuffed with various fillings, much like tamales. *Pamonha* can be salty or sweet and may contain meat and cheese. If you want to try a vegan *pamonha*, you can special order it the day before, since it takes a long time to prepare. *Note*: Check to make sure it was prepared only with vegetable oil, not animal fat, as is most common.



Pão de Queijo = also called Brazilian cheese bread. Another food from Minas Gerais, it's a salty baked cheese ball made of sour cassava starch, egg, cheese, oil, and milk. Vegan versions can be made of sweet and bitter cassava starches, more oil than the conventional version, and water. Alternately, it can also be made of potatoes or other tubers instead of cassava, but cassava has a better texture. Some recipes add in vegan cheese, too. If you're fortunate, you may find frozen ones in



some supermarkets that can be baked at home. Brazilian vegans also like to call them “bread without cheese” or “kiss bread,” because kiss in Portuguese is *beijo*, a similar word to *queijo*, meaning cheese.

Pastel de Palmito = *pastel* is a fried pastry that can have many different fillings. A good vegan option is the one with hearts of palm.

Pequi = a fruit from Cerrado, found in Goiás (especially) and Minas Gerais, that appears during the spring. It can be eaten only when cooked. The pit inside the fruit has spines on it; be careful to avoid the spines when eating it. The taste and the smell are strong. The world is divided between those who love pequi and those who hate it.

Polenta = of Italian origin, and more common in South Brazil, it’s a savory dish made of cornmeal. You can eat it like porridge or fried in rectangles.

Potato Bread = despite the potato being from South America, potato bread was created in Europe. Brazilian potato bread is unique, being round and fluffy, and sometimes can be filled or be used to make sandwiches. In Brazil, potatoes can be replaced by other roots, like cassava or yam, for instance. Vegan recipes are usually gluten-free and can be filled with vegan cream cheese, vegan cheese, broccoli, or plant-based meat.

Pumpkin Quibebe = a traditional dish of Brazilian cuisine with strong African influence. It is a rustic purée made of mashed pumpkin with spices. To be more authentically Brazilian, you can use “neck pumpkin,” which is originally from Brazil. It has a soft, moist consistency and goes well with textured vegetable protein (TVP) and white rice as side dishes.

Tamarind Juice = tamarind is a fruit native to Africa but grown in Brazil for centuries. It has a bittersweet taste.

Tapioca = made of *manioca* powder, it’s indigenous to Brazil, hailing from the North and Northeast regions. It is easily found throughout Brazil in many forms.

Tomato Vinaigrette = different from salad dressing made in the U.K. and the U.S., Brazilian vinaigrette is not a liquid, but a “sauce” dish made of cubed



tomatoes, spring onions, cubed onions, olive oil, vinegar, and salt.

Tutu = a dish made of cooked beans that are mashed, sautéed, and thickened with cassava flour. It’s usually sautéed with fried bacon, onion, and garlic. For a vegan version, you can make *tutu* without bacon or with vegan bacon. This is more common in Minas Gerais.

Vegan Couscous from São Paulo = *cuscuז Paulista*, as it is called in Brazil. It is a cooked meal made of cornmeal and many other ingredients, like tomatoes, tomato sauce, peas, eggs, and olives. For a vegan version, eggs are omitted.

Vegan Tropeiro Beans = regional dish from Minas Gerais, Goiás, and São Paulo. It is made of beans, cassava flour, collard greens, and traditionally with beef and pork. For the vegan version, you can leave out the meat, or you can add carrots, plant-based meat, mushrooms, and eggplants.

Yerba-Mate Tea = a tea made of a plant whose scientific name is *Ilex paraguariensis*. It’s enjoyed nationwide, but especially appreciated in the Southern region.

***Pizza** = of course, this is not a traditional Brazilian food, but it’s very popular to order pizzas Friday or Saturday night in Brazil, or when you go out to eat. Vegan pizzas can be made with vegan cheese, vegan meat, mushrooms, broccoli, hearts of palm, zucchini, and many other options.



Five Day Meal Plan

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Breakfast	Roll with vegan butter Sliced vegan cheese Papaya cubes Fresh orange juice	Northeastern corn couscous Coffee or yerba-mate tea	Tapioca with guacamole Plant milk	Toasted sliced bread with vegan cream cheese Vegan cheese with <i>goiabada</i> Banana smoothie	Breakfast cereal with bananas, plant milk, and Brazil nuts
Snack	<i>Pastel de palmito</i> Coffee	Mix of peanuts, <i>baru nuts</i> , and cashew nuts	Mango with vegan yogurt	Vegan <i>bolinho de chuva</i> Fennel tea	Potato bread Pineapple juice
Lunch	<i>Moqueca de banana da terra</i> White rice <i>Farofa de mandioca</i> <i>Paçoquinha</i>	Rice with <i>pequi</i> Cooked pumpkin Sautéed okra <i>Tutu</i> Fried <i>mandioca</i> Salad with broccoli, sautéed kale, grated carrots, and tomato vinaigrette Ata	Vegan <i>carreteiro rice</i> Polenta Pinto beans Sweet potato Salad (tomato, lettuce, and grated carrots) <i>Bananinha</i> Tamarind juice	Vegan couscous from São Paulo Vegan tropeiro beans Brown rice French fries Green salad	Vegan <i>feijoada</i>
Snack	Vegan <i>pamonha</i>	Açaí with granola	Vegan <i>pão de queijo</i> Coffee	<i>Coxinha</i> of jackfruit meat Fresh passionfruit juice	Guava
Dinner	Corn stew	Bean stew	Pasta with vegan meatballs and tomato sauce	Pumpkin <i>quibebe</i>	*Vegan pizza

This general meal plan was created to showcase Brazilian foods that are, or could be modified to be, vegan. Not all aspects of the meal were included. Nutritional adequacy was not assessed, and the meal plan will not meet the nutritional needs of every reader. This meal plan is not intended to provide personal medical advice. Medical advice should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

Photos by Canva.com

Priscila is a Brazilian who has been vegetarian since 1999. She holds a BSc in Biology and an MA in Environmental Education. Currently she is a dietetics student and working on projects with VRG.



Carbon Footprint of Meat Pizza

Seven Times Greater than Vegan Pizza



MEAT PIZZA CARBON FOOTPRINT
39.77 kg CO₂eq (greenhouse gas emissions)

Contains whole wheat flour, olive oil, tomatoes, onions, mozzarella cheese, Parmesan cheese, ground beef, bacon, and mushrooms

VEGAN PIZZA CARBON FOOTPRINT
5.53 kg CO₂eq (greenhouse gas emissions)

Contains whole wheat flour, olive oil, tomatoes, onions, dairy-free cheese, meat-free crumbles, broccoli, and mushrooms

The Vegetarian Resource Group used carbon emission data compiled by Our World in Data and based on research by Poore & Nemecek (2018) and Clark et al. (2022) to estimate the carbon footprints of the same size vegan pizza vs. meat pizza. We determined that meat pizza has a carbon footprint roughly seven times greater than vegan pizza. The difference in our vegan pizza is greater than that determined by other researchers, who used dairy cheese for the vegetarian pizza (where the meat pizza carbon footprint was four times higher than vegetarian pizza).

EAT SEVEN TIMES AS MUCH VEGAN PIZZA AS MEAT PIZZA FOR THE SAME CARBON FOOTPRINT!

For complete article and references, see: vrg.org/blog/2023/08/12/carbon-footprint-of-vegan-vs-meat-pizza

Note: Mathematically, CO₂eq is calculated by multiplying the mass of the emissions of one type of greenhouse gas (usually expressed in kilograms or tons) by its GWP (global warming potential). For this report, calculated CO₂eq values are based on a 100-year timescale (GWP₁₀₀).

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Adapted from content by Jeanne Yacoubou, MS
Photo and design by Hannah Kaminsky
With advice from Whitney McVerry



Am I Getting Enough Iodine?

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

A reader contacted us and asked, “Since many people are cutting down on their use of added salt (eliminating added salt in some cases), how can vegans be sure they are getting enough iodine in their diet?”

This is a reasonable concern since the iodine content of plant foods is often low, and their iodine content depends on factors such as the concentration of iodine in the soil where the plants were grown.¹ Iodine is an essential mineral that is needed for the thyroid gland to work properly. Not getting adequate iodine can have negative effects on the thyroid gland. Iodine deficiency in infants and children can result in poor growth and development.

Prior to the 1920s, in the United States, an iodine-deficiency disease called endemic goiter was relatively common. The incidence of endemic goiter fell sharply after iodized salt was introduced in the United States. Salt iodization is not mandatory in the United States, but there are requirements for the amount of iodine that is added to iodized salt. Iodized salt provides about 76 micrograms of iodine in a quarter teaspoon. About half of the U.S. population uses iodized salt.² If you avoid added salt, your diet may be low in iodine, much like the diet of Americans prior to 1924.

“Well,” you may be thinking, “I eat some salty processed foods. I must get iodine from that.” Actually, most processed foods, as well as products from fast food establishments, are not made with iodized salt. If a food manufacturer does use iodized salt, the iodized salt must be listed as an ingredient.³

Sea vegetables can be a source of iodine, although the amount is inconsistent. Sometimes, sea vegetables are very high in iodine and that can cause health issues. The bioavailability of iodine from sea vegetables is also quite variable.⁴

If you are vegan and don't use iodized salt regularly, I recommend that you use a supplement containing iodine. Many multivitamin/multimineral supplements contain iodine, and iodine is also available as a separate supplement. The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for iodine for adults is 150 micrograms per day. If you choose to use an iodine supplement, you should look for one providing approximately this amount.

References

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- ⁴ Dominguez-Gonzalez MR, Chiocchetti GM, Herbello-Hermelo P, et al. Evaluation of iodine bioavailability in seaweed using in vitro methods. *J Agric Food Chem*. 2017;65:8435-8442.

To read more about iodine see:

- vrg.org/nutrition/iodine_diet.php
- vrg.org/blog/2019/08/08/freeda-vitamins-adds-iodine-to-prenatal-one-daily
- vrg.org/blog/2022/05/11/food-sources-of-iodine

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Anna Markulis

Loyola University of Maryland Student VRG Internship

Creating a Vegan World



As a senior at Loyola University Maryland majoring in Communications and minoring in Environmental Studies, I was tasked with finding an internship combining these two fields in the Baltimore area. The Vegetarian Resource Group did just that. Not only did I get to experience the kind of writing and communication work I'd expect in a professional job setting, I had the opportunity to connect with some amazing people from around the world, and feel as though I made some sort of positive impact on nature, animals, and the environment by helping such a great organization.

The first project I was tasked with was reviewing a local vegan restaurant of my choice. My little sister and I made a fun trip out of it, and visited the restaurant at MOM's Organic Market. We tried the vegan veggie sandwich, which ended up being one of the best sandwiches my sister and I had ever eaten! In addition to assisting with VRG's online restaurant guide, I was also sent vegan snacks in the mail to review for "Veggie Bits" in *Vegan Journal*.

One of my short term goals was to finally try out a recipe from Linda McCartney's vegan cookbook, and I ended up being able to cook and review a vegan gingerbread recipe for a project. I even learned a bit about copyright rules while writing my review.

I was also given the chance to read and respond to high school seniors' VRG scholarship entries, which gave me a deeper look into why young people today are deciding to eat a plant-based diet. It was so interesting to get that insight into the amazing activism everyone is capable of. A surprising trend I noticed among the essays was that most students are going veggie for the environment! Charles Stahler, one of VRG's founders, let me read scholarship essays from 20 years ago to compare students' motives and write a blog post about it. I also was able to showcase my love for graphic design and created a poster to promote the VRG's scholarship contest.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to interview Dr. Simon Brown, a former philosophy professor at Johns Hopkins University, to discuss animal consciousness, and how our misconceptions have altered the way we view ourselves, animals, and nature. Charles also gave me the opportunity to speak with a German exchange student, and we compared the attitudes towards the environment of young people in Germany and America.

One of my favorite experiences of the internship was being able to participate in Loyola's Earth Day event. I gave away *Vegan Journal* magazines, flyers, and buttons, and it was such a great way to celebrate Earth Day and promote veganism.

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

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Vegan Cooking Tips

Quick and Easy Ideas for

Cooking with Juice

by Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD

Coulis (pronounced “coo-lee”) are a chef’s secret for creating savory and sweet, colorful, lowfat sauces with fresh, frozen, or canned fruit and vegetables. A coulis is a purée of fruit or vegetable, served hot or cold. It could be as simple as frozen strawberries that are thawed and puréed. Nectars and concentrates, instead of conventional refined sugars, can be used as natural sweeteners. Infinite combinations can be made by varying these basic elements, such as kiwis and bananas, or lemonade concentrate with strawberries.

Fruit coulis can turn a plain piece of cake into an exciting new dessert. Pour a small amount of coulis onto a plate; add cake, zucchini bread, or muffins on top; and garnish with crushed pineapple or berries. Alternately, use coulis to dress up canned, frozen, or fresh peach or apricot slices. Create coulis combinations of peach or mango nectar; canned pears with bananas or cranberry juice; or ripe bananas and canned peaches, pears, or pineapple. Fruit coulis can be made ahead of time and kept refrigerated.

Make a shortcut fruit coulis by simmering fruit juice or nectar with cornstarch, whisk until smooth, and cook on the stove until thickened.

Vegetable coulis can be made with raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juices. Overripe tomatoes can be puréed and served as a hot or cold sauce. Add a small amount of tomato juice, mango nectar, carrot juice, or vegetable cocktail to serve as a refreshing dressing for leafy green salads, pasta salads, or potato salads. Combine tomato and carrot coulis with a small amount of vegan yogurt for a creamy change of pace. Leftovers of either can be added to vegetable or bean soups, or stews, or used as part of the cooking liquid for vegetables to add flavor and color.

Orange juice or juice concentrate can be added to pudding mixes, such as tapioca, vanilla, or lemon. Add a splash to pancake batter or French toast for a citrus twist. Bake sweet potatoes for breakfast, adding a small amount of orange juice for a vitamin C-infused glaze.

Beyond sweet dishes, you can use orange or grapefruit juice to marinate mushrooms, seitan, tofu, or plain vegan meats. Marinate for at least two hours before baking, roasting, grilling, or broiling. Popular seasonings include dried or fresh rosemary, basil and parsley, ground cumin or curry powder, garlic or onion, and white or black pepper.

Orange or grapefruit juice, apricot or mango nectar, or carrot juice can be used as cooking liquid to make plain vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, or Brussel sprouts, more enticing. Vegetables that are served raw or chilled, such as broccoli florets, carrots, asparagus spears, and green salads, can benefit from vinaigrettes that incorporate a touch of orange or grapefruit juice concentrate or mango or peach nectar.

Fruit and vegetable juices can enhance prepared soups and sauces. Use tomato juice or carrot juice when reconstituting canned soups, stews, or vegetable chowders. Even tomato soup can benefit from a dash of additional tomato juice.

Tomato juice and vegetable juice cocktail can kickstart a fast homemade soup. Purée canned beans, canned corn, or frozen (and thawed) spinach with juice and simmer. Leftovers can be used as a lowfat sauce for baked potatoes, cooked vegetables, and pasta.

During hot months, try chilled juice- or nectar-based soups. Watermelon gazpacho comes together quickly with tomato juice, ripe tomatoes, watermelon, cilantro, onions, and mango nectar. Florida citrus soup is composed of segmented grapefruits, oranges, and lemons. Combined with mint and their own juices, this is a favorite dessert or breakfast “soup.”

Whitney McVerry Super Volunteer for The Vegetarian Resource Group

by Amy Burger



If you enjoy the content on The Vegetarian Resource Group's Instagram page ([instagram.com/vegetarianresourcegroup](https://www.instagram.com/vegetarianresourcegroup)), you can thank Whitney McVerry. McVerry also serves as the volunteer coordinator for the organization's annual student scholarship contest, which saw 200 applications in 2024. Unlike other scholarship contests, from which applicants may receive a form letter or no response at all, McVerry ensures that each VRG scholarship applicant gets a personal response from a volunteer who has read their essay submission.

McVerry's involvement with VRG started with her 2012 college internship, during which she worked on a variety of projects, such as gathering every published copy of *Vegetarian Journal* (now *Vegan Journal*) for the Tom Regan Animal Rights Archive at North Carolina State University. She says that the internship "has been so impactful in my life," and adds, "I will always continue to help out in any way I can."

In addition to her VRG volunteer work, McVerry stays busy as the mother of vegan five-year-old twins Della and Millie, who she describes as "healthy, energetic, and compassionate." McVerry, who has been vegan for 12 years, and her husband Justin "just assumed" their daughters would be vegan as well. They both "did a lot of research during [her] pregnancy" to ensure that she was meeting her and her babies' dietary needs. She says that VRG's Nutrition Advisor, Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, helped out by providing guidance on nutrient intake, prenatal vitamins, and vegan baby formula brands.

The McVerry family, originally from Maryland, recently relocated to Wilmington, North Carolina, to be closer to family and to the beach. McVerry says of the move: "An added perk has been discovering great vegan food!" Vegans visiting Wilmington can check out the VRG's Restaurant Guide for recommendations: [vrg.org/restaurant/North_Carolina.php#c20](https://www.vrg.org/restaurant/North_Carolina.php#c20)

Raising her daughters keeps her busy. McVerry says, "I love spending days with my family at the beach" and "going for nature scavenger hunts with my daughters." Della and Millie "LOVE helping us table at Vegfests where we represent The VRG!"

Ultimately, McVerry's journey with the VRG that began with a college internship has evolved into her current role as an indispensable volunteer. She serves as a passionate advocate for VRG, a dedicated vegan parent, and a great example of veganism in action.

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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