

Vegan Journal

Celebrating 40 Years of Health, Ethics & Environment

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Nutrition Hotline

Anemia in Runners

Reed Mangels, PhD, RD



QUESTION: My doctor wants to test my blood to see if I'm anemic. I should add that I'm a 19-year-old female, have been vegan for five years, and eat a really healthy diet. I've been training for a marathon for the past nine months. The doctor mentioned something about runner's anemia. Is that a real condition or is it that my veganism is making her nervous? **E.H., via email**

ANSWER: It's probably smart for all female endurance athletes to get checked for iron deficiency. There are several considerations running through your doctor's mind. First of all, iron deficiency is one of the most common nutritional problems in women. About 10% of U.S. non-pregnant women have iron deficiency; 5% have iron deficiency anemia.¹ Women lose some iron every month through menstruation. If your flow is heavy, you are at a higher risk for iron deficiency.

Secondly, runner's anemia is a condition that can occur in distance runners. Some iron is lost with heavy sweating, and there may be small amounts of blood lost from the intestinal tract.² Distance runners may lose red blood cells (the part of the blood

that contains iron) due to blood cell destruction. In other words, when a runner's feet strike the ground repeatedly, red blood cells in the feet are damaged.²

The magnitude of all of these losses is small, but with time, they can compromise performance if iron deficiency develops. Iron, as a part of hemoglobin in the blood, helps to carry oxygen through the body. If enough oxygen doesn't get to the exercising muscles, performance can suffer. You may feel short of breath on an uphill or feel dizzy or lightheaded or more tired than usual.

If you're a frequent blood donor, you may also be at higher risk for iron deficiency. Your body may not be able to completely compensate for the blood loss, especially with other stressors like menstrual blood loss and blood loss related to exercise.

Eating a really healthy diet is an important way of reducing your risk for iron deficiency. Vegan foods such as dried beans, soy products, dark green vegetables, and whole grains can provide generous amounts of iron. There are substances in plants, called phytates, that interfere with iron absorption. Their influence can be reduced by including vitamin C sources like citrus,

berries, broccoli, and tomatoes with meals to enhance iron absorption. You can read more about iron and vegan diets on our website, vrg.org

REFERENCES:

¹ Gupta PM, Hamner HC, Suchdev PS, Flores-Ayala R, Mei Z. Iron status of toddlers, nonpregnant females, and pregnant females in the United States. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2017;106(Suppl 6):1640S-1646S.

² Larson-Meyer DE, Ruscigno M. *Plant-Based Sports Nutrition.* Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics; 2020.

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 USA, send \$25 to The Vegetarian Resource Group, P.O. Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203, or go to vrg.org/donate. Additional donations support our outreach and research.



vrg.org

Note from the Coordinators



We're Now Vegan Journal

The Vegetarian Resource Group was started about 40 years ago by a vegan medical doctor who was a Holocaust survivor, two vegan activists, a medal-winning vegan Senior Olympics swimmer, and a vegetarian nurse. Thus we always promoted veganism and science. While the word “vegan” wasn’t that well known back then, we created *Simply Vegan* in 1991, which sold over 100,000 copies. At that time, most publishers wouldn’t use the word vegan, and told us people weren’t interested in simple cooking. Of course that has greatly changed.

Debra did one of the first vegan cooking demos on *Good Morning America* (preparing a Romanian sweet pasta dish), our *Vegan in Volume* quantity recipe book was given out to over 10,000 food service staff, we distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of vegan literature, did a vegan ice cream sampling for 4-H students, and much more along the way. Because of our vegan involvement, readers have asked us to change our name.

As the word vegan is more known today than 40 years ago, there is a lot of debate about when to use the word vegan. Many say “plant-based.” That expression works sometimes, but we’re not thrilled with that term since plant-based isn’t always vegetarian or vegan. Also, not all vegan items are plant-based, such as yeast, some foods made in a lab, etc. There is additionally a question of whether vegan candy or other low-nutrient dense items are what people mean by plant-based.

There are many thoughts about using the name vegan or about changing names in general. For example, think of the NAACP’s president in 2008 explaining about their internal wrestling about why they still used a name which included an offensive term. We knew an organization that wouldn’t allow non-vegans to come to their meetings. As many have seen, vegan has been utilized to criticize others. Since vegan is about creating a better world, veganism should never be used that way. We need to have extreme empathy and understanding for those whose livelihoods are impacted by the increasing changes from an animal-based diet. Even if vegan, we need to be helping everyone, wherever they are. We wouldn’t want people to feel that by using the word “vegan” that we are excluding them.

Vegan is about doing the best you can in an imperfect world, and ongoing learning. Not every study will come out in a positive way for vegans from a health or environmental viewpoint. But everyone can be vegan. We see our role as not cherry picking studies to say vegan is best, but explaining information in a vegan context, that can be helpful to vegans, aspiring vegans, and non-vegans. In this spirit, in an evolving world, we are beginning our 40th anniversary year with changing the name of *Vegetarian Journal* to *Vegan Journal*. Thank you to Senior Editor Rissa Miller for her work on this evolution and redesign.

Debra Wasserman Charles Stahler

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 you care about on a special occasion, such as a wedding or birth. We'll send an acknowledgement to you and to the recipient(s) you choose. Your gift will support educational outreach programs and help promote veganism.

Memorials & Honorary Gifts

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

My name and address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

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

Special thanks to Elke Heitmeyer and Scenario Int'l for their donation.

Thanks to Tina Hallberg for her donation.

Thanks to Franchesca Reece for her donation in honor of compassionate veganism.

Special thanks to these volunteers for writing up entries for VRG's online restaurant guide: Simon Brown, Nicolette Joseph, and Nancy Maggs.

Thanks for the Healthy Meal Kit Chart

After reading "Boxed Up" (Issue 4, 2021), we decided to try several vegan meal services. Purple Carrot meals were delicious, but more work to prepare than I was willing to do as a retiree. FoodNerd was easy to make, but a little too earthy-granola for my husband and me. Daily Harvest was just right. We have become regular subscribers and enjoy the smoothies, soups, bowls, and flatbread pizza delivered every week. It saves time and planning, and we feel better with these meals than with carry-out. We're not vegans, but we appreciate healthy plant-based food that's easy to make and tastes great. Thanks for this resource and the magazine.
K.M., via e-mail

Update from 2021 VRG Scholarship Winner

I would like to thank you all again for everything! My parents got the Issue 4, 2021 *Journal* and were very happy when they saw my page, and I am honored to be featured. I am also having a great time at UCSD. I have joined Tritons for Animals, which is an animal welfare club, as well as the UCSD Food Co-op, which provides affordable vegan food for

students. I am very excited to further my advocacy throughout the university and become involved in these groups. I will also be interning with the Factory Farming Awareness Coalition starting Winter 2022 and I look forward to continue working with them! Again, thank you all so much.

Arpi Keshishian, via e-mail

Became a VRG Life Member

I had not received any magazines for a long time. I was really missing them! I always thoroughly enjoy the news and science and recipes. Many thanks for your great work over many years.

Robyn K., via mail

Editors' Note: Life Membership to The Vegetarian Resource Group (\$500) includes receiving the *Journal* throughout your lifetime.

Thanks for Exhibiting at FNCE Meeting

I have been plant-based for 4 years. I tremendously appreciate your presence at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (FNCE) Meeting and I look forward to referencing you all as a resource!

Hailee W., via e-mail

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...

TACO FIESTA!

Plus: *Vegan Air Fryer Recipes, The New Vegan Leathers, VRG's Video Contest Winners, Plus More!*

Hidden Veggie Cooking for Kids (And Yes, Adults Will Enjoy, Too!)

by Brooke Edwards

Some children have no problem devouring their daily serving of vegetables. As a toddler, my daughter would request broccoli for breakfast! Others require some sleight of hand to maintain a balanced diet. And, just when you think you have a handle on their favorites, they change their minds.

Unless you have unlimited time on your hands (lol), no one wants to prepare different meals for everyone in the household. Who can't get behind some added vegetables in their diet—especially when camouflaged in comfort foods? Below are delicious hidden-veggie recipes to suit both tiny palates and adult tastes. As a bonus, some of the recipe steps, like roasting veggies, can be completed earlier in the day, or the day before, to maximize efficiency.

Kids like to help, and getting them involved often makes them more apt to try new foods. Each recipe includes ideas or steps for your little ones to lend a hand in the kitchen, but always remember to consider your child's individual capabilities and make sure everyone is safe.

Cheezy Base

(Makes about 8 cups; ¼ cup serving)

3 cups peeled and chopped sweet potatoes
1½-2 cups peeled and chopped carrots
2 cups chopped cauliflower
1½ cups peeled and chopped white potatoes

Boil all ingredients in enough water to cover, stirring occasionally, until all veggies are soft, about 30-35 minutes. Check the texture by piercing with a fork. Strain, but reserve cooking liquid to use in Nacho Cheeze Sauce and Broccoli-Cheddar Soup (page 8). Add drained ingredients to a high-power blender and process, adding a splash of cooking liquid until smooth.

At the appropriate age, kids can help with: Collecting ingredients, peeling potatoes and carrots, chopping veggies, adding chopped veggies to the pot, stirring while cooking, and checking for doneness.

Cook's Notes: This base can be flavored however you want for recipes outside of Nacho Cheeze Sauce and the Broccoli-Cheddar Soup. Have kids pick their favorite spices to get them more involved. For a richer tasting sauce, add 1½ cups of cashews or cashew pieces to the cooking water and process them with the veggies.

Total calories per ¼ cup: 20
Carbohydrates: 5 grams
Sodium: 13 milligrams

Fat: 0 grams
Protein: <1 gram
Fiber: 1 gram



Broccomole Dip

(Makes 8 servings)

2 cups frozen broccoli florets
3 large avocados, peeled and pitted
1 teaspoon garlic powder or 1-2 cloves fresh garlic, chopped
1½ Tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 Tablespoon red or white onion, diced (optional)
1 small tomato, chopped (prepare based on chunky vs. smoother guacamole preference)
1½ Tablespoons fresh cilantro or parsley, chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste

Thaw broccoli in microwave for about one minute until fork tender and chop finely. In a separate bowl, mash avocado, and stir in all remaining ingredients. Serve chilled with chips, with raw veggies, or on top of entrées like burritos, enchiladas, or tacos.

At the appropriate age, kids can help with: Collecting ingredients, microwaving broccoli, mashing avocado, and stirring.

Total calories per serving: 134 Fat: 11 grams
Carbohydrates: 11 grams Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 16 milligrams Fiber: 6 grams

Nacho Cheeze Sauce

(Makes about 9 ½-cup servings)

Half recipe Cheezy Base, about 4 cups
½ cup jarred roasted red peppers, drained
4 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
1 Tablespoon miso paste
1 Tablespoon tomato paste
2 teaspoons smoked paprika
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon white vinegar (or apple cider vinegar for additional flavor)

Dash cumin

Dash liquid smoke

Salt and pepper, to taste

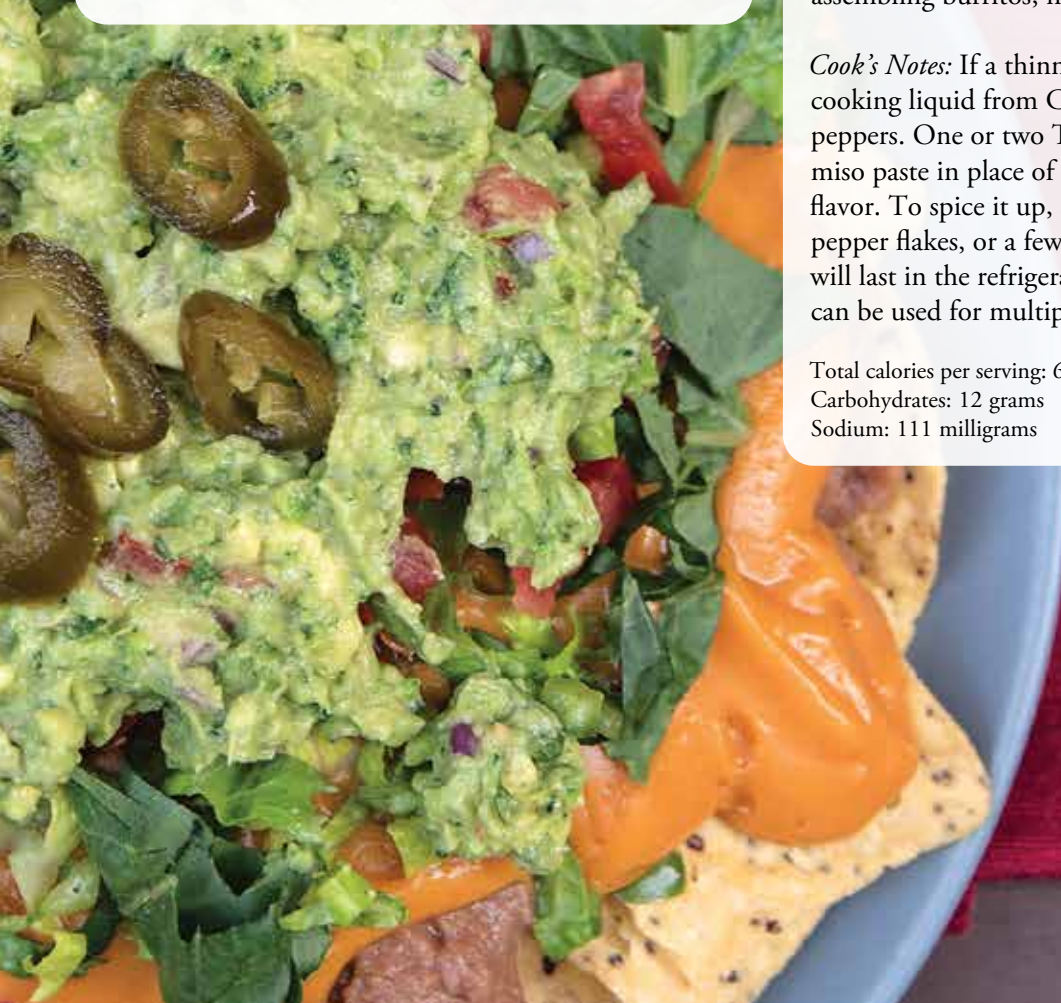
Cooking liquid from Cheezy Base, as needed

Add all ingredients to a high-power blender or food processor. Process until smooth and silky. Serve warm over nachos with fixins, in bean burritos, on veggie tacos, or on top of Mexican-flavored bowls and dishes.

At the appropriate age, kids can help with: Identifying spices, measuring ingredients, adding food to blender/processor, scraping sides of the blender bowl, and assembling burritos, nachos, or tacos.

Cook's Notes: If a thinner sauce is desired, add more cooking liquid from Cheezy Base or roasted red peppers. One or two Tablespoons of white or yellow miso paste in place of salt provides a richer umami flavor. To spice it up, add chipotle peppers, red pepper flakes, or a few dashes of hot sauce. The sauce will last in the refrigerator for 5-7 days, so one batch can be used for multiple recipes throughout the week.

Total calories per serving: 66 Fat: <1 gram
Carbohydrates: 12 grams Protein: 4 grams
Sodium: 111 milligrams Fiber: 3 grams



Broccoli-Cheddar Soup

(Serves 8)

- Half recipe Cheezy Base, about 4 cups
- 4 cups cooking liquid from Cheezy Base, or water, or low-sodium vegetable stock
- 1 Tablespoon vegan bouillon paste, or vegan bouillon cube if not using vegetable stock
- 4 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dill
- ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper, or to taste
- Salt, to taste
- 3 cups broccoli, chopped into bite-size pieces
- 1 peeled, grated carrot

Add all ingredients, except grated carrot and chopped broccoli, to a large pot on the stove. Once incorporated, add broccoli and carrots, simmering until broccoli is tender, about 20 minutes. Serve warm.

At the appropriate age, kids can help with: Collecting and measuring ingredients, identifying spices, chopping broccoli, grating carrot, and stirring soup on the stove.

Total calories per serving: 82
Carbohydrates: 15 grams
Sodium: 283 milligrams

Fat: 1 gram
Protein: 5 grams
Fiber: 4 grams



Kale Doughnuts

(Makes 15 baked 4-inch doughnuts)

Wet Ingredients:

Non-stick spray

1 Tablespoon flaxseed meal, plus 3 Tablespoons warm water

4 cups kale, washed, stemmed, and massaged to soften

2 cups grated and drained zucchini

1 cup pitted dates

½ cup pecan halves

¼ cup melted coconut oil

1 Tablespoon vanilla extract

2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar

Zest of two lemons

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prepare a dozen-doughnut molds (or muffin cups) with non-stick spray.

In a small bowl, stir together flaxseed meal and water; set aside to congeal.

In a high-power blender or food processor, blend all remaining wet ingredients. Process thoroughly, scraping sides several times to make sure everything is well incorporated. If the mixture is too thick to blend, add

water until the mixture loosens. Add flax mixture and process again. Allow to rest for 10 minutes for flax to create a binder.

Dry Ingredients:

4 cups all-purpose or gluten-free flour blend

1 Tablespoon baking powder

2 teaspoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking soda

Pinch ground cloves

Pinch ground allspice

Pinch salt (optional)

Add mixture to a large bowl with all dry ingredients and stir to combine.

Spoon batter into prepared doughnut molds or muffin tins. Bake 10-12 minutes, until set up and a toothpick comes out clean. Allow to cool completely before icing.

Icing (Optional):

1 cup vegan powdered sugar

1-2 Tablespoons lemon juice

1 Tablespoon water

In a small bowl, whisk together ingredients until smooth. Drizzle over finished, cooled doughnuts and serve. For thinner icing, as shown in photo on this page, add more liquid.

At the appropriate age, kids can help with: Preparing doughnut pans, stemming and massaging kale, grating and draining zucchini, measuring ingredients, adding food to blender/processor, scraping sides of blender bowl, mixing dry ingredients, filling doughnut molds, and making and pouring icing.

Cook's Note: Gluten-free flour blends may require additional liquid or water added to the wet mixture.

Photo on the cover.

Total calories per doughnut: 239

Carbohydrates: 41 grams

Sodium: 162 milligrams

Fat: 7 grams

Protein: 4 grams

Fiber: 2 grams

Pasta with Alfredo Sauce

(Serves 12)

- 1 large head cauliflower, chopped
- 1 small to medium yellow onion, peeled and chopped
- Olive oil or non-stick spray
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- One 10.5-ounce block firm silken tofu
- ¾ cup plain, unsweetened vegan milk of choice (soy or almond generally works best)
- 1-2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1-2 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1 pound pasta of choice
- Fresh basil or chives, to garnish

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a sheet pan with aluminum foil or parchment, spread cauliflower and onion in a single layer, and spray or drizzle with olive oil. Roast for 40-45 minutes until veggies are browned, fork tender, and fragrant. Remove from oven and cool on sheet pan, about 10 minutes.

Add veggies, spices, tofu, vegan milk, lemon juice, and nutritional yeast to a high-power blender or food processor. Process until smooth and silky, adding another splash of vegan milk or water to achieve desired sauce thickness.

Prepare pasta according to package directions and drain. Toss pasta with Alfredo sauce and top with fresh basil, chives, or additional veggies, based on preference.

At the appropriate age, kids can help with: Collecting and measuring ingredients, spreading veggies on the pan, adding food to blender/processor, scraping sides of blender bowl, tossing pasta and sauce, and garnishing with fresh herbs.

Cook's Note: The sauce will thicken if heated on the stove or if placed in the refrigerator to cool.

Total calories per serving: 196	Fat: 3 grams
Carbohydrates: 34 grams	Protein: 10 grams
Sodium: 43 milligrams	Fiber: 3 grams



Carrot-Apple Waffles

(Makes 8-10 large waffles)

- 1 cup chopped yellow squash
- 2 peeled and chopped carrots
- Olive oil or non-stick spray
- 3 Tablespoons flaxseed meal plus 6 Tablespoons warm water
- 2 peeled, cored, and chopped apples
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 1 cup oat flour
- 2 Tablespoons melted coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch ground allspice
- Pinch ground cloves
- Pinch salt (optional)
- Up to ½ cup additional plain, unsweetened, vegan milk
- ½ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- ½ cup golden raisins

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Spread squash and carrots in an even layer over the baking sheet and spray or drizzle with olive oil. Bake for 20-30 minutes until veggies are tender and lightly browned.

In a small bowl, stir together flaxseed meal and water; set aside to congeal.

Add roasted squash and carrots, apples, maple syrup, oat flour, coconut oil, vanilla, cinnamon, baking powder and soda, allspice, cloves, and salt to a high-power blender or food processor and pulse until combined. Add flax mixture and process again. Allow to rest for 10 minutes for flax to create a binder.

Waffle batter should be pourable but not totally liquid. If the resulting batter is too thick to pour, add plant milk, 1 or 2 Tablespoons at a time, until batter is pourable. Batter will vary based on the juiciness of your squash and apples.

Preheat waffle iron. Pour batter into a bowl and stir in rolled oats, walnuts, and raisins by hand. Check a final time for texture, adding a little more plant milk only if necessary.

Cook waffles according to waffle makers's directions (they vary). When done, waffles will be fragrant and edges will look browned. Waffles will continue to firm up once removed from the heat.

To serve, top with shredded carrots, vegan whipped cream, maple syrup, or more raisins.

At the appropriate age, kids can help with: Gathering and measuring ingredients, cutting squash, peeling carrots, adding food to blender/processor, scraping sides of blender bowl, and stirring in waffle add-ins.

Cook's Notes: For thicker/sturdier waffles, substitute half of the oat flour with all-purpose flour. You can make your own oat flour by adding dry oats to a high-power blender or food processor. Be sure to use a clean, completely dry appliance to make the flour.

Once cooked, these waffles can be frozen and reheated in the toaster or air fryer for a quick breakfast or anytime snack. Try dried cranberries instead of raisins in this recipe for a tasty variation.

Total calories per waffle: 303
Carbohydrates: 37 grams
Sodium: 151 milligrams

Fat: 15 grams
Protein: 5 grams
Fiber: 5 grams

Brooke Edwards, with her husband Keith Jackson and daughter Amee are a Maryland family with a passion for delicious vegan food! They enjoy spending time in the kitchen recreating traditional recipes from every continent (often with some hidden veggies mixed in). Their dogs even get in on the act, as both canines love kale stems and apples!



Photos by Rissa Miller

SCIENTIFIC UPDATE

By Reed Mangels,
PhD, RD, FADA

A REVIEW OF RECENT SCIENTIFIC PAPERS RELATED TO VEGETARIANISM

Veganic Farming in the United States: A Snapshot

Veganic agriculture, or veganic farming, is described as farming without animal-based or synthetic inputs. Examples of substances that would be avoided could include blood meal, manure, feather meal, and fish emulsion. Although some communities who did not keep domesticated animals practiced this type of farming historically, it is only recently that the word “veganic,” which combines vegan and organic, has been introduced. Researchers surveyed 25 veganic farmers from 19 farms in the United States to collect baseline information about practices, beliefs, and experiences. All farms were small (<10 acres); most were under two acres. All farms produced vegetables; many grew herbs, tree fruits, berries, and/or flowers.

Nine farms were established or run by farmers who started out as veganic farmers or who had switched to veganic farming within one year of starting farming. Seven farms were owned or managed by farmers who had started out as organic farmers and transitioned to veganic farming. Two farms transitioned from growing flowers or native plants to veganic agriculture, and one farm’s owners had transitioned from conventional to veganic farming.

All surveyed farmers said that exclusion of animal products was the basis of veganic farming. About 1/3 of farmers indicated that veganic farming requires that byproducts and wastes from farmed animals or livestock not be used.

The researchers found that there was not a consensus among farmers about which products would/would not be acceptable to use. For example, although all farmers did not directly use animal products, they questioned the use of worm castings and of manure from animals living in sanctuaries, and the use of compost that might contain eggshells or meat scraps. Some farmers specified that they did not harm wild-life, birds, or insects even though these might threaten their crops.

Sources of information for farmers included resources specific to veganic farming, connections with other veganic farmers, non-veganic resources, and their own self-reliance and willingness to experiment. Motivations for veganic farming included a commitment to veganism, avoiding food safety issues, improved plant and soil health, environmental benefits, unwillingness to support the meat industry by purchasing its byproducts, less use of resources, sustainability, and potential marketing advantages. Challenges included sourcing animal-free products and access to veganic-specific information. Survey participants commented on hidden or missing ingredients on labels of products such as peat moss. They noted that most extension agents and other agriculture resources don’t know about veganic agriculture.

Although most people are familiar with organic farming, that was not the case 30 to 50 years ago. Perhaps, in the future, veganic farming will become a household phrase. Until standards for veganic farming are developed, we recommend that products labeled as “veganic” or “veganically produced” include an explanation of what this means.

Seymour M, Utter A. Veganic farming in the United States: farmer perceptions, motivations, and experiences. *Agric Human Values*. 2021;1-21.

Why Do Some College Students Choose Plant-Based Meats?

Recent years have seen huge increases in sales of plant-based meats, and consumer demand for these products is expected to continue to grow. Young adults, living on their own for the first time, are a potential market for these products. Even if their families did not use plant meats, young adults may be interested in trying them.

A survey of students at Iowa State University provides some insights about which students choose plant-based meats and why. Of the approximately 1,400 students who completed the survey, 55% had

tried a “plant alternative to animal meat.” This term was not defined but an explanation was provided—“one made to resemble meat like the Impossible Burger.” Students who had tried a plant-based meat were more likely to be vegetarian or vegan, to eat more fruits and vegetables, and to be an out-of-state student. Main reasons for trying plant-based meat were liking to try new foods and curiosity. Other motivations commonly cited included taste, encouragement of friends or family members, and environmental concerns.

Those who had tried plant-based meats were more influenced by sustainability, healthfulness, and nutrition when making overall food choices than were nonconsumers of plant-based meats. Nonconsumers were more influenced by convenience and familiarity when making food choices. This information could be used to encourage more college students to choose plant-based meats.

Davitt ED, Winham DM, Heer MM, Shelley MC, Knoblauch ST. Predictors of plant-based alternatives to meat consumption in midwest university students. *J Nutr Educ Behav.* 2021;53(7):564-572.

Plant-Based Diet And Colorectal Cancer Survival

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in men and women, excluding some skin cancers. It is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. About 65% of people in the United States who are diagnosed with colorectal cancer will survive for five or more years.

Diets that are low in fruits, vegetables, and fiber or high in processed meats or fat are associated with an increased risk of developing colorectal cancer. Is diet also important for survival? Researchers set out to answer this question by looking at about 1,400 nonvegetarian adults who had been diagnosed with colorectal cancer at least six years earlier. These survivors were asked about their diet and were studied for the next seven years or so. Those subjects whose diets were assessed as being the most plant-based had the lowest risk of death.

Higher consumption of nuts, legumes, whole grains, and vegetable oils was associated with a lower risk of death, while higher consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and animal fat were associated

with a higher risk of death. Many factors in plant-based diets, including fiber and phytochemicals, could be helpful in terms of survival. In addition, if the diet is higher in plant foods, it is also likely to be lower in saturated fat, cholesterol, antibiotics from animals, and other potentially harmful substances. Of course, it is possible that those survivors who are eating a more plant-based diet are also practicing other behaviors that could affect their survival.

Ratjen I, Enderle J, Burmeister G, et al. Post-diagnostic reliance on plant- compared with animal-based foods and all-cause mortality in omnivorous long-term colorectal cancer survivors. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2021;114:441-449.

What Do Eating Disorder Specialists in the UK Say About Vegan Diets?

Veganism does not cause eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. It's possible that some individuals with eating disorders may choose to be vegan as one socially acceptable way to limit their food intake. Health professionals who treat people with eating disorders may have negative attitudes towards veganism if they've seen it used harmfully to restrict their patients' food intake.

In the United Kingdom, veganism is protected by law as a nonreligious, philosophical belief. In part, because of this ruling, when eating disorder specialists are exploring patients' veganism, they must act with professionalism, respect, and a lack of personal bias. Researchers from the United Kingdom surveyed eating disorder specialists, general mental health professionals, and other health professionals about their attitudes towards veganism. All 392 study subjects were in the United Kingdom; none were vegan. All three professional groups had positive attitudes toward veganism with no significant differences based on age or gender. These results suggest that, in the group studied, while they may question a patient's motivations, they are not against vegan diets. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study in another country, like the United States, where veganism is not a belief that is explicitly protected by law.

Fuller SJ, Hill KM. Attitudes toward veganism in eating disorder professionals. *BJPsych Bull.* 2021;1-5.

2021 Essay Winner

Go Vegan!

You're in the same dark and crowded room you've been in since you were born, six years ago. You're being pushed into a truck. You see sunlight for the first time, through the windows of the truck. Are you being freed? You find out the ugly truth when you are forced out of the truck and into... the slaughterhouse. You are beaten into a small cage. Watching your friends be beaten, thrown, or stabbed to death. You choke on toxic air as you kick and scream until death. Sadly, this is what happens every time you have bacon, ham, pork, or ribs. Each time you are causing the suffering of an innocent animal. And that's only what happens to pigs. Going vegan is easy and worth it for the suffering you don't cause.

I learned the truth three years ago when I went vegan. I was a big meat eater but also considered myself an animal lover. My older sister and mom went vegan and tried to force me to watch documentaries of animal slaughter. I refused. One night, after a dinner through them talking about suffering, I had a dream. I had to face each animal I had eaten. I heard the screams of "Why? Why would you put us through that?" They wanted to kill me. They wanted to show me how much suffering I had caused.

That morning I went from your regular chicken nugget lover, to fully vegan. The transition can be weird but pretty soon I no longer looked at the animal products as food I was missing out on but instead an animal who has to suffer for that bite. I was picky, too. I didn't even like French fries! And for pizza I had to get it with no sauce. But when I went vegan, I ended up not limiting the foods I liked to eat but I expanded. I tried new things and really liked them.

If 10-year-old me can go vegan so can you! Some may say that a vegan diet is expensive but it doesn't have to be. A can of chickpeas can cost a dollar while a dead chicken can cost \$4-\$20! Even restaurants are moving towards cheaper vegan meals. At Chipotle the sofritas cost the same as chicken and are cheaper than steak. Also tofu and beans last longer than meat so you can worry less about it going bad. So why are you still eating expensive animal corpses when you can be eating cheaper, healthier food that comes from



Liv Byham, Age 13

plants? Now is the best time, too! With the pandemic you don't have to worry as much about people judging you, and there's a vegan version of everything so you don't even have to give up many of your favorite foods.

Being vegan has tons of benefits other than cost. Animal agriculture produces more greenhouse gas than all travel put together. The decision to go vegan could be the decision of the next generation having a future or not. And as for the animals their decision is already made. They don't get a say if they want to be food or not. If Covid-19 has taught us anything it's how it feels to be locked up or have loved ones taken away. The animals live this way their whole lives only to be brutally killed. Cows have best friends too that are stressed when apart. Pigs are just as smart as dogs and respond to their name being called. Cows are forced into pregnancy and then have their child ripped away from them right after birth. Only so we can drink the milk that was meant for the baby. Male chicks are ground alive because they are useless to the industry.

The animals suffer and the planet is dying all so you can have that one bite.

So why are you paying money to kill our planet and make animals suffer? Does it really taste that different from the alternatives? Is all the cruelty that you cause that worth it? That's your decision. You can keep eating that overpriced animal corpse cause it's only going to cost us the future of the planet,

a life of suffering, and a brutal murder. Or you could just go vegan.

The deadline for the next Vegetarian Resource Group Annual Essay Contest for kids is May 20, 2022. For details and information about the contest and previous winners, see: vrg.org/essay

BEQUESTS

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

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

NOTES FROM THE VRG SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT IN THE NEWS

Vegan Journal Senior Editor Rissa Miller was interviewed by Gray Television's *Local News Live* anchor Amber Sipe for her *Feed the Press* segment, which airs on more than 90 stations nationwide. Miller also did VRG YouTube videos featuring 50 vegan lunch ideas, vegan Halloween treats, and recipes such as Vegan Tacos al Pastor, Tofu con Rajas Poblanos, and a Hash Brown Sheet Pan meal. Subscribe to the VRG YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/VegResourceGrp

A new HBO miniseries called *We Own This City*, produced by David Simon who created *The Wire*, asked for back issue copies of *Vegetarian Journal* to use as a prop in a bookstore scene.

VEGAN EDUCATION

The Vegetarian Resource Group had a virtual booth at the annual meeting of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (FNCE). Thank you to Chef Nancy Berkoff EdD, RD, Catherine Conway, MS, RD, Julie Covington, EdD, RD, Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, and Elsa Spencer, PhD for staffing the booth.

See VRG Researcher Jeanne Yacoubou's kosher gelatin update at vrg.org/blog/2021/07/02/kosher-gelatin-update-for-vegetarians-and-vegans-2021/ And also see Jeanne's Genetically Modified Microbial Rennet: How Vegetarian Is It? at vrg.org/blog/2021/09/03/genetically-modified-microbial-rennet-how-vegetarian-is-it/

Vegan Journal Senior Editor Rissa Miller presented virtual talks to vegan pledge groups for Animal Advocates of South Central PA, Peace Advocacy Network, and Pittsburgh Vegan Society, covering living as a vegan in a non-vegan world after the course is over. Attendees were gifted subscriptions to the magazine.

Chili & Chill

by Linda Tyler

Is there room in this world for more vegan chili recipes? Chili offers many possibilities for variations and combinations, so I say, *Vive la différence!*

I offer fusion recipes that celebrate chili's bent toward adaptation. For example, chili's spices go well with the vegetables of ratatouille—eggplant, bell peppers, zucchini, tomatoes, onions, and garlic (page 19). Same for my chili crackers; take an age-old approach to crisp crackers and add cornmeal and chili spices. The result is a cracker with attitude that tastes great (below). Baking chili with spaghetti squash and cashew cream in a casserole is another hack to usher a new member into the comfort-food pantheon (page 18).

My recipes call for fewer tomatoes than most. I am not a fan of vegan chilis that are less like chili and more like a spiced tomato-vegetable soup. I want a thick, robust stew dominated by beans and lentils. Decreasing the tomatoes lets the flavor of the legumes blend better with the spices. Combining regular and smoked chili flavors—including smoked paprika and chipotle chiles—offers greater complexity than chili powder alone. By all means if you love very spicy food, add more cayenne pepper and spicier chiles.

There are almost as many chili recipes as there are cooks. Many of us take pride in a special ingredient or a unique combination of spices. I offer these recipes in that spirit and hope they will inspire your own chili adventures.

Chili Crackers

(Makes 30-35 crackers)

- 1 Tablespoon tomato paste**
- 1/3 cup water**
- 1 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1/3 cup yellow cornmeal**
- 2 teaspoons organic sugar**
- 2 teaspoons chili powder**
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika**
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional, to taste)**
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda**
- 3 Tablespoons vegan butter, chilled and cubed**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line two sheet pans with parchment paper or silicone mats. In a small bowl, mix together the tomato paste and water. Set aside.

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, sugar, spices, and baking soda. Cut the butter into the dry mixture with a pastry cutter or your fingers until

the butter pieces are very small (about the size of lentils or smaller).

Add in the tomato-water mixture and stir it into the dough lightly with a fork. Knead the dough gently into a ball and get all the flour and cornmeal incorporated, then divide the dough into two pieces.

Working with one piece at a time, roll the dough very thin on a lightly floured surface or piece of wax paper. Use a pizza wheel to cut the dough into squares or rectangles, or use a cookie cutter to make crackers of different shapes. Place the crackers onto the sheet pans and bake them for 11 minutes. Turn the pans back-to-front and switch their positions in the oven. Bake for another 10-12 minutes until the crackers are light brown. Let them cool on the pan. The crackers are ready to enjoy. After they have cooled, you can store them at room temperature in an air-tight container or bag for up to a week.

Total calories per 5 crackers: 163 Fat: 4 grams
Carbohydrates: 25 grams Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 360 milligrams Fiber: 1 gram

Creamy Chili Dip

(Makes about 4½ cups; serving is ¼ cup)

- ¾ cup raw cashews
- 2 cups water, to soak cashews
- 1 medium onion, diced (around 1½ cups of dice)
- 2 Tablespoons plus ¾ cup additional water
- ½ cup silken tofu (or vegan mayonnaise)
- 3 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1¼ teaspoons chili powder
- 1¼ teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt (optional, to taste)
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- One 15.5-ounce can chili beans with liquid
- One 4-ounce can chopped mild green chilies
- ½ cup your favorite salsa

Start by soaking the cashews to soften, fully covered by 1-2 inches of water (about 2 cups water), for 20 minutes in hot water or 2 hours in cold water. Drain.

In a large saucepan or small Dutch oven, add

the onion and two Tablespoons water. Water-sauté the onion for 8-10 minutes, adding water if needed, until the onions are transparent and starting to brown.

While the onions cook, blend the soaked and drained cashews, ¾ cup water, tofu, nutritional yeast, chili powder, paprika, garlic powder, salt, and cumin together in a blender until very smooth.

When the onions are tender, add the blended cashew mixture, beans, green chilies, and salsa to the saucepan and stir. Bring the mixture to a boil and then quickly reduce to a simmer. Simmer for about 5 minutes, stirring often to prevent burning on the bottom, until the mixture is thickened.

Blend briefly with an immersion blender or use a potato masher, but leave some of the beans and salsa intact for chunkiness. Taste and adjust for spices.

The dip is ready to serve or can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week. You can warm it up in the microwave, in a saucepan, or in the oven.

Total calories per serving: 55
Carbohydrates: 7 grams
Sodium: 227 milligrams

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



Creamy Chili and Spaghetti Squash Casserole

(Serves 6)

One spaghetti squash (around 2 pounds), cut in half lengthwise and deseeded

2 Tablespoons water

1 cup raw cashews

2 cups water, to soak cashews

1 Tablespoon nutritional yeast

1 Tablespoon apple cider vinegar

½ teaspoon salt (optional, to taste)

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

⅛ teaspoon onion powder

⅓ cup water plus 2 Tablespoons water

1 medium onion, diced (around 1½ cups of dice)

1 bell pepper (any color), deseeded and diced

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

3 cups cooked beans (mix and match any kind: kidney, black, pinto, navy, etc.; use home-cooked or two 15.5-ounce cans, drained and rinsed)

One 14.5-ounce can no-salt or fire-roasted diced tomatoes

1 Tablespoon chili powder

1 teaspoon Mexican (or regular) oregano

1 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

Optional garnishes: sliced or cubed avocado, chopped cilantro or parsley leaves, chopped red onions, sliced green onions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place the two halves of the squash cut-side down in a microwave-safe dish. Add 2 Tablespoons water. Microwave them, uncovered, for 11-16 minutes, until tender, depending on your microwave's strength.

To make the cream, soak the cashews to soften, fully covered by 1-2 inches of water (about 2 cups), for 20 minutes in hot water or 2 hours in cold water.

Drain cashews and place them into a blender with ⅓ cup water, nutritional yeast, vinegar, salt, garlic powder, and onion powder, and process until smooth. Taste and adjust for flavor, and set aside.

To make the chili, put the onions, bell pepper, and garlic together in a Dutch oven or other large pot. Add two Tablespoons water and water-sauté for 8-10 minutes, adding more water if needed, until the onions

are transparent and starting to brown.

Add the beans, tomatoes, and spices to the pot. Turn the heat up, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes, uncovered.

Use a fork or spoon to scrape the softened spaghetti squash from the shells. Put the spaghetti squash strands and the cashew cream into the chili and gently stir.

Spoon the mixture into a medium baking dish. Bake for 25-30 minutes, until the casserole is noticeably darker and drier on top. Serve with optional garnishes.

Cook's Note: You can cook the spaghetti squash in an Instant Pot or other pressure cooker, using "Manual" or "Pressure Cook" for 6 minutes, followed by an instant steam release.

Total calories per serving: 335

Fat: 11 grams

Carbohydrates: 41 grams

Protein: 13 grams

Sodium: 365 milligrams

Fiber: 9 grams



Chili-Spiced Roasted Ratatouille

(Makes 6 1-cup servings)

- 5 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 bell peppers (any color), peeled as much as possible with a serrated vegetable peeler, cored, and cut into thin strips or diced
- 2 medium zucchini, trimmed and sliced (about 1/2-inch)
- 1 large onion, cut into thin rings or diced
- 1 large eggplant (about 1 pound), peeled if desired, sliced into 1/2-inch circles and cut into quarters or sixths
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional, to taste)
- 2-4 ripe tomatoes (about 1 1/2 pounds), peeled with a serrated vegetable peeler, cored, and cut into chunks (or use 3 cups of halved grape or cherry tomatoes, or one 28- or 30-ounce can of plum tomatoes, drained and cut into chunks)
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon Mexican (or regular) oregano
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4-1/2 teaspoon chipotle chili powder (or diced chipotle chile with a little canned adobo sauce, optional for spiciness)
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line two large rimmed sheet pans with parchment paper or silicone mats.

In a large bowl, toss together the garlic, bell peppers, zucchini, onion, eggplant, olive oil, and salt. Spread the mixture evenly over both sheet pans.

Roast the vegetables about 35-40 minutes, stirring and swapping the pan positions in the oven after 20 minutes. The vegetables should be slightly collapsed or shriveled, light brown, and very tender. Then pull out the pans and gently fold the tomatoes, chili powder, oregano, cumin, paprika, and chipotle chili powder into the vegetables (about half on each pan).

Continue to roast for another 30-40 minutes until the tomatoes soften and shrink and the other vegetables are well-browned.

Scrape the vegetables into a serving bowl and stir in the cilantro. Serve as an entrée with rice, polenta (shown below), millet, or other grain, or serve with flour tortillas, like fajitas. Also makes a great side dish.

Total calories per serving: 148	Fat: 10 grams
Carbohydrates: 14 grams	Protein: 3 grams
Sodium: 233 milligrams	Fiber: 5 grams



Go-To Vegan Chili

(Serves 6)

1 large onion, diced (1½-2 cups of dice)
1 bell pepper (any color), deseeded and diced
3-5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
4½ cups water, separated
3 cups cooked beans (mix and match any kind: kidney, black, pinto, navy, etc. and use home-cooked or two 15.5-ounce cans, drained and rinsed)
One 14.5-ounce can no-salt or fire-roasted diced tomatoes
1¼ cup dried red lentils
1½-2 Tablespoons chili powder
2 teaspoons Mexican or regular oregano
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
½-1 teaspoon chipotle chili powder (or diced chipotle chile with a little canned adobo sauce, optional for spiciness)
Cayenne pepper, optional
Freshly ground black pepper
Juice of one lime (1½-2 Tablespoons)

1 Tablespoon maple syrup

¼ teaspoon salt (optional, to taste)

Optional toppings: sliced or cubed avocado, chopped cilantro leaves, chopped red onions, sliced green onions, and vegan sour cream

Put the onions, bell peppers, and garlic together in a Dutch oven or other large soup pot. Add 2 Tablespoons water and water-sauté for 8-10 minutes, adding more water if needed, until the onions are transparent and starting to brown.

Add the remaining water, beans, tomatoes, lentils, chili powder, oregano, cumin, paprika, chipotle, cayenne, and black pepper to the pot, cover, and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer, with the pot partially covered, for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the lentils are soft. Add more water if needed.

After the 30 minutes, add the lime juice, maple syrup, and salt. Taste for spice adjustments according to your preference. The chili is ready to serve with optional toppings.

Total calories per serving: 323

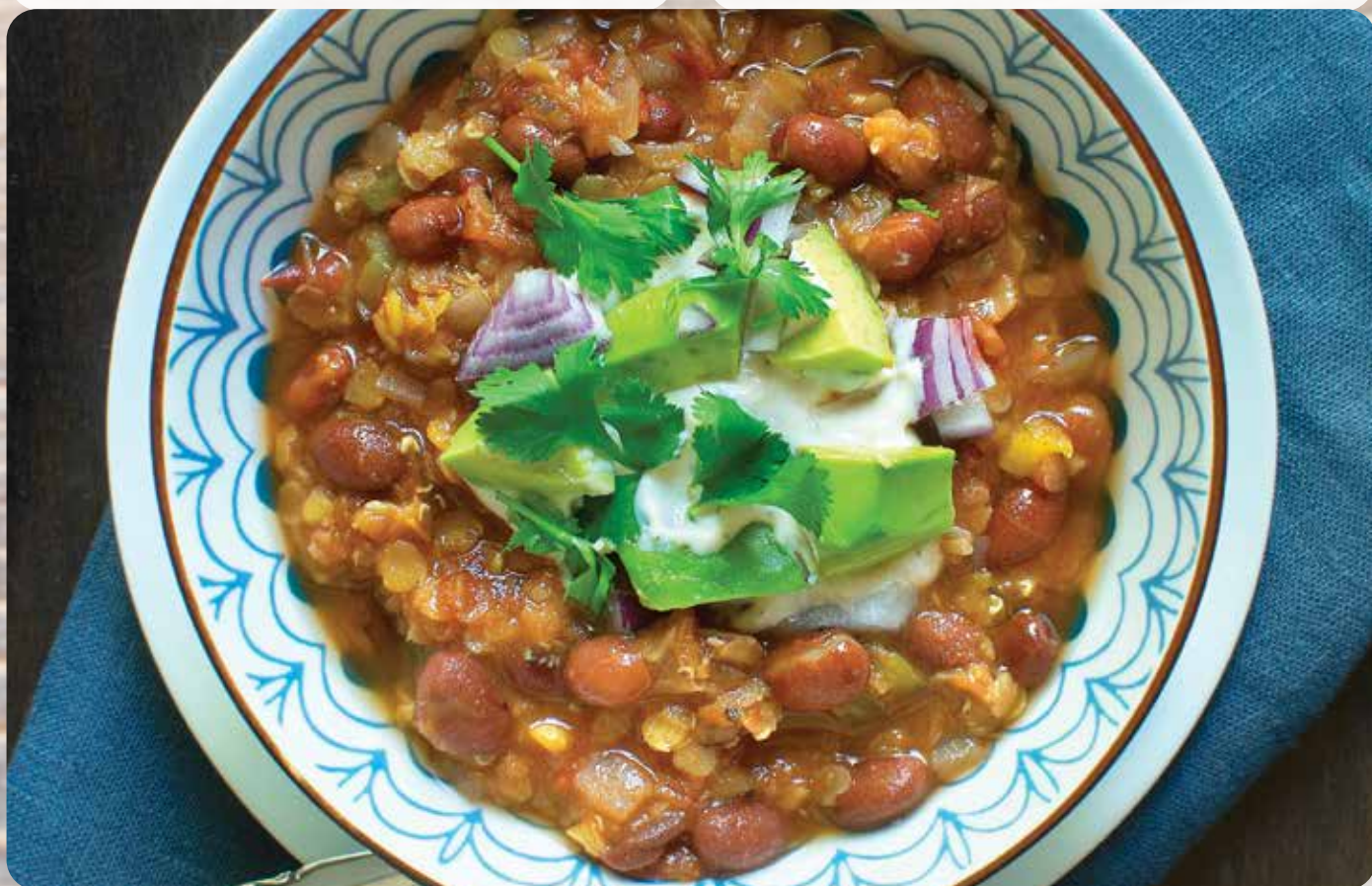
Fat: 2 grams

Carbohydrates: 52 grams

Protein: 17 grams

Sodium: 261 milligrams

Fiber: 10 grams



Chili Cornbread Pie

(Serves 6)

- 1 large onion, diced (1½-2 cups of dice)
- 1 bell pepper (any color), deseeded, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 Tablespoons water plus ¼ cup water
- 3 cups cooked beans (any kind; use home-cooked or two 15.5-ounce cans, drained and rinsed)
- One 14.5-ounce can fire-roasted or no-salt diced tomatoes
- 1½ Tablespoons chili powder
- 1½ teaspoons Mexican (or regular) oregano
- 1½ teaspoons cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon salt (optional, to taste)
- Cayenne pepper for even more heat, optional
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn
- 1 Tablespoon tahini
- 1 teaspoon white or apple cider vinegar

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In a cast iron skillet (or other large pan), add the onions, bell peppers, garlic, and 2 Tablespoons water. Water-sauté the vegetables for 8-10 minutes, adding more water if needed, until the onions are transparent and starting to brown.

Add the beans, tomatoes, ¼ cup water, chili powder, oregano, cumin, paprika, salt, cayenne, and black pepper to the skillet, and turn the heat up to bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 7-8 minutes, stirring every few minutes.

Stir the corn, tahini, and vinegar into the chili and remove it from the heat. If you are not using a cast iron skillet, scoop the mixture into a pie plate or casserole dish. Smooth the surface of the mixture with a spatula.

Cornbread Topping:

- ¾ cup cornmeal
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- 1½ Tablespoons granulated organic sugar
- 1 Tablespoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- One 4-ounce can diced mild green chiles, drained
- 3 Tablespoons vegan margarine, melted
- ¾ cup unsweetened, unflavored vegan milk
- 1 Tablespoon white or apple cider vinegar

Meanwhile, make the cornbread topping. In a large bowl, stir together the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Make a well in the center and add the chiles, margarine, milk, and vinegar. Stir gently until the liquids are incorporated and there are no large lumps.

Dollop the cornbread batter over the top of the chili and spread it out as evenly as possible with a spatula. Bake until the top is puffed and brown on the edges, 40-45 minutes. Serve warm.

Total calories per serving: 404 Fat: 7 grams
Carbohydrates: 62 grams Protein: 12 grams
Sodium: 620 milligrams Fiber: 8 grams



Linda is a cooking instructor for Portland and Mt. Hood Community Colleges in Oregon as well as a volunteer writer/reviewer for Nutritionfacts.org. Through her website graciousvegan.com, she shares plant-based recipes and answers questions about plant-based cooking.



Photos by Linda Tyler

Book Reviews

The Vegan Imperative

By David Blatte

Blatte is the former executive director of Vegan Action, an animal law attorney, cofounder of Dharma Voices for Animals, and director of the film *Animals and the Buddha*. The author states that there's a moral, environmental, and health imperative to becoming a vegan.

The moral imperative comes down to the following: "When you eat meat, animals suffer. Are you okay with that?" Once the author accepted the fact that violence is involved in the production of meat, he could no longer consume animal flesh. To him, "compassion is the key to the vegan moral imperative, the foundation on which it stands." From my own experience, once you visit a slaughterhouse, there's no denying that meat production is violent in so many ways.

The author states, "One statistic encapsulates the vegan environmental imperative: animal agriculture accounts for between 14.5 and 18 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the world—more than the transportation sector." Veganism certainly can be promoted when talking about issues such as hunger, water scarcity, deforestation, and pollution.

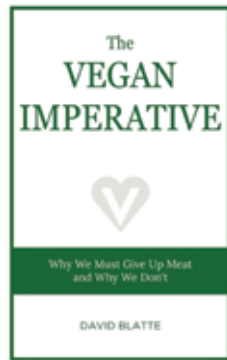
As for the health imperative, the author states, "Whether or not veganism is a health imperative is a much more personal determination." Nevertheless, the author believes a vegan diet is healthful.

Other subjects covered in this book include speciesism and animal law, as well as discussing the reasons people give for not becoming vegan. Learning about additional topics such as cognitive dissonance, tension reduction, social animals, and how to make the transition will encourage nonvegans to take a second look at why they continue to eat animal products.

This book is useful to both nonvegans and vegans. Nonvegans will learn about all the reasons to go vegan and perhaps want to explore more by reading other books referred to in an extensive bibliography. Vegans will be able to gather additional knowledge that will allow them to better encourage others to go vegan using compassion.

The Vegan Imperative (ISBN 978-1-7365-7320-4) is a 250-page book from Pythagorean Publishing and retails for \$12.95. Order this book online.

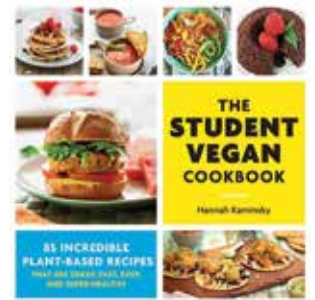
Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator



The Student Vegan Cookbook

By Hannah Kaminsky

As someone who has been an avid baker since early childhood, the transition to living in a college dorm without the comfort of my own kitchen, is one I have been dreading. However, after reading *The Student Vegan Cookbook*, some of my worries have been



eased. Hannah Kaminsky understands the struggles that many vegan college students face, and throughout this cookbook she generously gives out advice from her time as a student for preparing nutritious, delicious, and simple meals in a communal college kitchen.

This book delivers mouth-watering breakfast recipes such as Granola Pancakes and Spring Pea Toast that are whipped up using shelf-stable items and products that can easily be stored in one's dorm. If you are craving cake for breakfast, you must try the Carrot Cake Oatmeal. A spoonful of these hearty oats tastes as if you are eating a bite of cake while offering a dose of healthy fiber and an extra serving of vegetables to your morning. As someone with a sweet tooth, this carrot cake oatmeal recipe has become one of my new morning favorites.

If you're in the mood for snacking, flip through the Incredible Dips, Spreads, and Sprinkles and Snack Attack sections for some tasty inspiration. The Chickpea Flour Hummus is an easy way to indulge in your favorite dip while using dried ingredients that can be stored anywhere in your dorm.

For dorm dinners, choose from recipes like the Elote Pasta Salad, Cauliflower Sloppy Joes, or a favorite of mine, the Cilantro Kale Salad.

Whether you are a college student, a beginner baker, or a cooking enthusiast, *The Student Vegan Cookbook* is sure to inspire you with its simple yet scrumptious recipes!

The Student Vegan Cookbook (ISBN 978-0-7603-7307-1) is a 176-page book. It is published by Quarto Publishing Group and retails for \$19.99. You can purchase this book online or from your local bookstore.

Julia Comino/VRG Intern

Book Reviews

Our Animal Neighbors

By Matthew Ricard and Jason Gruhl and illustrated by Becca Hall



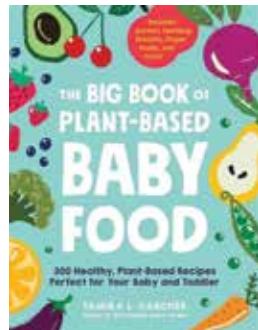
This book introduces children ages 4-8 to connections between human and non-human animals. Youngsters will learn that we have more in common with non-human animals than one might think. It also encourages everyone to treat all creatures with empathy and kindness.

In addition to this important message, the artwork in this book is gorgeous! It will capture your child's attention and imagination quickly. You might even want to donate a copy to your local library!

Our Animal Neighbors (ISBN 978-1-61180-723-3) is a 32-page hardcover book. It is published by Bala Kids and retails for \$17.95. *Debra Wasserman/VRG Co-Coordinator*

The Big Book of Plant-Based Baby Food

By Tamika L. Gardner



The Big Book of Plant-Based Baby Food includes 300 plant-based recipes for babies and toddlers. Starting with smooth purées for beginners and moving through semi-smooth purées, chunky purées, and toddler foods, this book is filled with creative ideas that use a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, and tofu. Clear instructions and colorful pictures add to the book's appeal. The youngest eaters may enjoy Peachy Pumpkin Oatmeal and the Green Beans and Quinoa Combo. Southern Lima Bean Purée and Oatmeal with Sautéed Plantains are examples of recipes using less common ingredients. Older eaters can choose from Lemony Zoodles (with spiralized zucchini) and Crispy Tofu Nuggets. Most recipes are vegan; those with honey can be easily modified.

A few statements, including one implying that children should be weaned from breast milk by their first birthday, seemed misleading. Health experts recommend that breastfeeding should continue as long

as mutually desired by the mother and infant but at least through the first year. I was concerned that a few recipes for age one year and older included potential choking hazards like pretzels and crisp tortilla chips. Overall, however, this book offers many ideas for introducing babies and toddlers to a variety of plant foods.

The Big Book of Plant-Based Baby Food (ISBN 978-1-5072-1449-7) is published by Adams Media. It has 256 pages and retails for \$18.99. Look for this book in your local bookstore. *Reed Mangels, PhD, RD/VRG Nutrition Advisor*

Vegan Boards

By Kate Kasbee



Creating a social media-worthy food board may feel daunting, but Kate Kasbee's book *Vegan Boards* is here to help by providing a simple, comprehensive guide to making your own for a variety of meals. The book includes basic instructions for board-building followed by guides for creating themed boards in five sections: breakfast and brunch, grazing at home, meal, seasonal and celebration, and fruit and dessert.

The 50 beautifully-arranged boards are pictured next to instructions for building them. Recipes for making components are included on pages 128-151, but the author acknowledges the convenience of packaged foods, suggesting their use as desired. Kasbee's recipes can stand on their own. I enjoyed trying the chocolate-dipped pretzel sparklers, which make an easy dessert; the Cincinnati-style vegan chili, which is a delicious quick main dish; and the smoky roasted carrots, a tasty side.

Food boards are made for sharing, allowing each diner to customize to their preference, and entertaining is at the heart of the book. Now vegan cooks can easily get in on a trend that's traditionally meat-and-cheese focused, and family members or guests are sure to be wowed by the results.

Vegan Boards (ISBN 978-0-760-37051-3) is a 160-page book. It is published by Harvard Common Press and retails for \$24.99. Find this book online or at your local bookstore. *Amy Burger/VRG Intern*

Veggie Bits

Mushroom Bacony Strips

Fresh mushroom-based vegan bacon with only five ingredients? Yup, it's a reality and called Shroomacon by Meat the Mushroom. This vegan bacon crisps up to a delightful snap with smoky, complex flavor. It's perfect beside your stack of vegan pancakes or tofu scramble, but also holds up in a vegan BLT, atop a spinach salad, or as a crunchy topping on a casserole or baked potato. It cooks in a pan in 2-3 minutes per side, leaving a familiar hickory-smoke aroma in the kitchen, then it's ready to crunch. To be honest, testers all wanted another helping of this mushroom-based vegan bacon, and more good news: it can be stored in the freezer if you decide to stock up. Gluten- and soy-free. For Mid-Atlantic locations or online shopping nationwide, visit meatthemushroom.com *Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



Vegan Parm Gets Flavor

For cheese lovers hesitant to enter the world of veganism, Parma has got your back. This nutty, tangy parmesan alternative is the perfect accent to almost any savory dish. In addition to the classic Original, Parma now offers Better Than Bacon, Chipotle Cayenne, and Garlicky Green flavors. Each bottle is packed with rich umami flavor and a sharp, rich, and savory tang. I personally enjoyed it in a homemade sun-dried tomato pesto as well as on an Italian bruschetta, but the possibilities are endless! Parma flavors are all gluten-free, kosher, non-GMO, and soy-free. Available at Safeway and Wegmans, or online, eatparma.com *Ksheelisha Bhat/VRG Volunteer*



Drink This Vinegar

Both old-fashioned and modern, shrubs are a drink mixer with sweet and tart elements made by combining fruit, vinegar and sugar into a syrup. This unique beverage dates back to the 1600s as a mixer for cocktails and mocktails as well as a way to preserve fruit, and is also known as "drinking vinegar." Pour one part Inna Shrub over ice with five parts sparkling water for a simple and refreshing fruit soda treat. Inna Shrub flavors include Apricot, Bay Laurel, Fig, Ginger, Grapefruit, Lemon, Lime, Peach, Plum, Quince, and Strawberry. For an adult drink, try it with rum or vodka, or follow suggested recipes on the company website. Available at innajam.com/collections/shrub *Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



Quiche brings to mind elegant brunches with that silky bite of filling and flaky crust—and

now, it's both vegan and conveniently in the freezer case. Raised Gluten Free offers vegan spinach quiche, vegan pot pie, and 10 varieties of sweet pies and tarts. The quiche was a tester favorite, with a good balance of eggless filling and spinach. The pot pie was hearty and filling, brimming with a savory herb gravy, carrots, green beans, onions, peas, and potatoes. Testers enjoyed both savory options, as well as the Berry Peach Pie, Chocolate Silk Pie, and Dutch Apple Pie. The crusts were impressive and flaky with a buttery taste that satisfied. Some pies require only thawing, others need a few minutes in the oven to warm completely. All pies are gluten-free, kosher, and nut-free. These are not lowfat products. Available at Kroger and other stores nationwide. Find a location near you at raisedglutenfree.com *Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



Veggie Bits

Bagels in a Box

Long the domain of professional bakers, you can now make your own vegan bagels at home by just adding water to this delicious, organic boxed mix. A great activity for families or culinary-minded groups of friends on a winter afternoon, Cali Bagels offers mixes in Everything and Vegan Bacon flavors. As is traditional in bread-making, you wait for the dough to rise, then shape the bagels. This is the trickiest step and Cali provides a video online to help. Next, the bagels are boiled, sprinkled with toppings, and baked in the oven for only 15 minutes. These bagels are sweetened with malt barley flour and date syrup. The results are incredible right from the oven—soft on the inside and chewy on the outside—slathered with vegan margarine. Leftovers made great bagelwiches. Each box makes 6-8 full-size bagels. Available online at calibagels.com *Rissa Miller/Senior Editor*



Spicy Green Chile Salsas

King's Chef Salsas have been perfected over 65 years, and they work well both as dips and as condiments to add flavor to a burger or Mexican food. All three varieties use custom fire-roasted Colorado green chile peppers. As a result, each packs a noticeable capsaicin punch, with the red having habanero and extra tomato, giving it distinctive sweet, almost smoky, notes. But it's not all about heat: in addition, these salsas have a well-rounded, fresh flavor, with a delightful blend of vegetables, garlic, and peppers, tasting like they have just been prepared in a home kitchen. These high-quality salsas are sure to be a hit at any party or for complementing a host of other foods. Shop for salsa online at cogr.com *Simon Brown/VRG Volunteer*



Refried Beans in a Pouch

A Dozen Cousins offers easy-to-make Refried Black Beans and Classic Refried Pinto Beans in pouches. Squeeze the bag, tear an inch off the corner, and pop the pouch into the microwave for just one minute. These refried beans can be prepared quickly, without the need for a can opener. The consistency is comparable to mashed potato—thick and smooth, with bits of beans mixed throughout. The taste is flavorful with a slight pepper kick, and the avocado oil heightens the beans' satisfying flavor. A Dozen Cousins refried beans are cooked with recognizable ingredients, and make a simple and filling lunch, dinner, or snack. They can be wrapped into a burrito, spread on a quesadilla, served on the side of your favorite vegan entrée, or used as a dip. This is not a low-sodium product. Available nationwide at Target, Walmart, or online at adozencousins.com *Clarissa Hauber/VRG Intern*



Bean and Veggie Pastas

Add more protein onto your plate with Ancient Harvest's Protein Pasta. With 12-14 grams of protein per 2 ounces of dry pasta, sourced from legumes, you can transform any pasta dish into a nutrient-dense vegan meal. Choose from Ancient Harvest's array of pasta like red lentil rotini, chickpea elbows, or green lentil spaghetti to pair with any flavor combination you/your family enjoys. I smothered green lentil spaghetti with sautéed peppers, spinach, and cherry tomatoes before covering it in hearty marinara sauce. Also try their Veggie Pasta to amp up on veggie-heavy whole food noodles; they have ingredients like kale, cauliflower, and spinach with green lentils. This pasta makes eating gluten-free, organic, and vegan easier than ever. Available nationwide at Harris Teeter, Safeway, Walmart, Weis, and Whole Foods or check online: ancientharvest.com/store-locator *Julia Comino/VRG Intern*



Vegan Processed Foods

Embrace Them? Shun Them?

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

From nondairy milks and cheeses to unchicken to burgers that taste like meat, the food industry is capitalizing on the public's interest in vegan and plant-based foods. There's a huge market for processed vegan foods. In December 2020, the U.S. total plant-based market value was estimated to be \$7 billion.¹ The same study found that retail sales of plant-based foods grew 27 percent in the past year.¹ "Plant-based" is often a vague term. In this study it referred to finished vegan products that provide direct intentional replacement for an animal product (i.e. meat, seafood, dairy, eggs).

Vegan or plant-based foods are often promoted as healthy, as "cleaner" than animal-based foods, and as a way of eating a purer diet. Others, however, are calling for avoiding vegan processed foods, saying that they are "Frankenfoods" and that they violate Mother Nature. Is there a middle ground? Are processed foods the miracle foods that some claim or a sure path to nutritional ruin? Stay with us as we explore these and other issues.

For starters, there is the question of just what is a processed food? The UK's National Health Service provides this definition²: "A processed food is any food that has been altered in some way during preparation. Food processing can be as basic as freezing, canning, baking, or drying." The Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics³ echoes and amplifies this definition, saying that processed food "includes food that has been cooked, canned, frozen, packaged, or changed in nutritional composition with fortifying, preserving, or preparing in different ways." So, anything from cooked dried beans to a veggie burger containing heme produced with genetic engineering to a vegan dessert with two dozen ingredients (most unpronounceable) is considered a processed food.

The Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics proposes a classification system ranging from minimally processed foods to heavily processed foods.³ Minimally processed foods could include a bag of chopped vegetables or roasted nuts. It's clear what the ingredients in these foods are. Heavily processed (also called highly processed or ultra-processed) foods undergo several processing steps, contain multiple ingredients, and

may contain artificial colors and flavors and preservatives. Examples of heavily processed foods include some crackers, some breakfast cereals, frozen dinners, and meat analogs. We'll focus on heavily processed foods.

Concerns with Heavily Processed Foods

If you read the nutrition facts label on many heavily processed vegan foods, you'll notice that not uncommonly they contain a lot of fat, sodium, sugar, calories, and sometimes saturated fat. Often, they are as high or higher in these substances than similar non-vegan heavily processed foods. Take frozen pizza, for example. A serving (5-ounces) of a popular vegan "pepperoni" pizza has 410 calories, 17 grams of fat, 7 grams of saturated fat, and 830 milligrams of sodium. The same serving size of non-vegan frozen pepperoni pizza has 375 calories, 19 grams of fat, 9 grams of saturated fat, and 912 milligrams of sodium. Neither of these could be classified as a food to eat every day. Or consider a vegan frozen dessert. A 2/3-cup serving has 340 calories, 29 grams of added sugar, and 13 grams of saturated fat. Surprise—a similar dairy-based product has the same amount of calories and saturated fat and slightly less added sugar. Vegan does not necessarily mean healthy.

One issue to consider is that heavily processed vegan foods used to be occasional treats. They were expensive, harder to find, and honestly, some just didn't taste that good. Thanks to demand, there are so many more vegan processed foods available, and many of them skillfully use salt, sugar, and fat to make them highly palatable. Walk into almost any supermarket, and you'll find a selection of heavily processed vegan foods.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. It's great to have options when you're looking for a quick meal that tastes like a well-remembered, nonvegan convenience food. The problem comes when these foods consistently replace the legumes, whole grains, vegetables, and fruits that are the mainstays of a healthy vegan diet.

While prices have gone down over the past 20 years, heavily processed vegan foods frequently cost more than it would cost to make a similar food at home. Some may feel that the time savings is worth the cost. Others may opt to use less processed foods like canned beans,

pre-cut vegetables, and quick-cooking pasta that cost less but still save time.

Food manufacturers have products to sell. They may promote heavily processed foods labeled as “plant-based” or “vegan” as healthy choices. For instance, the ads may say, “Eat freely,” implying that you don’t need to consider the sodium, sugar, calories, or fat in this vegan product. They may make it seem that these foods are what you need to be a healthy vegan. Watch for label phrases like “high protein,” “hearty,” or “for meat lovers.” There are plenty of hearty sources of protein and calories for vegans that are minimally processed.

Some heavily processed vegan foods may use new techniques or ingredients. These processes or modifications don’t have a track record of being consumed by humans. Is this a problem? It’s too soon to know for sure. While many new ingredients enter the food stream without incident, others are recognized as being problematic at some point. You may remember Olestra, which was marketed as a fat substitute in the 1990s. Once side effects like diarrhea and malabsorption of some vitamins were reported, Olestra’s popularity declined⁴, and today, it is banned by some countries.

Benefits of Heavily Processed Foods

Heavily processed vegan foods have some attractive features. If you don’t know how to cook, have a disability, or don’t have a lot of time or energy, these products often require very little effort—reheat in the microwave, oven, or on the stovetop. That’s a big advantage for those who don’t have cooking skills or

who have limited mobility. Results are predictable—a frozen pizza will taste like a frozen pizza. It’s not like following a recipe where you don’t have the ingredients it calls for or don’t really understand the directions.

For those with limited cooking facilities, perhaps only having access to a microwave, heavily processed foods make it possible to eat a meal that could be better nutritionally than fast food or snack foods that require no cooking.

When you’re traveling, heavily processed foods can make it easy to have a decent meal, especially if you look for products based on whole grains, vegetables, and legumes. You might even find a lower-sodium product. Frozen vegan burritos and canned soups have been comforting foods when I’m in a motel room with no easy access to other options.

Some of the ingredients on the long ingredient lists that accompany heavily processed foods may be vitamins and minerals that are added to the foods. Nutrients like vitamin D, vitamin B12, and possibly calcium and iron can be low in some vegan diets.

Choosing foods fortified with these nutrients is an

alternative that some vegans select in place of using a vitamin-mineral supplement.

For new vegans, processed foods often replace familiar nonvegan foods. Want something cold and sweet? Vegan frozen desserts, while not necessarily healthier than their dairy-based counterparts, can help to ease the transition to a vegan diet. Plus, if you’re trying not to stand out as a vegan, eating a veggie burger or a sandwich of vegan deli slices can help.

Based on our limited observations, heavily processed vegan foods seem more likely to use organic ingredients than similar animal-based products.



Photo by Rissa Miller

Practical Approaches

There are several approaches that you might choose when considering whether to use heavily processed vegan foods. Each of these has positives and negatives.

You might opt to never use these foods.

Positives: You'll avoid foods known to be full of sodium, fat, saturated fat, and sugar. It's likely your food costs will be lower. Potentially you'll have less packaging to dispose of. Avoiding these foods could be the incentive you need to expand your cooking skills.

Negatives: You may spend more time on food preparation, depending on which foods you choose to replace heavily processed foods.

You could choose to use these foods occasionally, being aware of which ones are better choices.

Positives: You can opt to use heavily processed foods selectively—when you're in a time crunch or in a situation where there aren't other options. You'll become more aware of what you're eating when you check labels for healthier options.

Negatives: You may often be spending more time on food preparation, similar to the person who never uses heavily processed foods. You'll need to do some research to identify better choices.

You might decide to use these foods fairly often but combine them with healthier foods. For example, instead of eating two vegan burgers, eat one burger with a salad and a sweet potato.

Positives: You're likely to spend less time on food preparation while still eating some easy-to-prepare, less processed foods. You don't have to know how or be able to cook.

Negatives: Food costs are likely to be higher than for those using fewer heavily processed foods. Although you're reducing the amount of sodium, fat, and other nutritional concerns that you're eating, you can't control this as much as you can if you eat fewer heavily processed foods.

Depending on your situation, you might move among all these options, and that doesn't mean that you're doing something wrong. Food choices are driven by many factors, and there are many ways to have a healthy vegan diet.

Alternatives to Heavily Processed Food

Since our earliest days, The Vegetarian Resource Group has promoted quick-and-easy meals. Many of our books feature simple recipes, relying on basic techniques and

unprocessed foods. Our website has a wealth of ideas for simple meals.

Fresh fruits and vegetables can be extremely easy to prepare. Just wash them and take a bite. If you prefer to cook vegetables, you can easily sauté them in a little oil or water or steam them in the microwave.

Canned beans (rinsed to remove some of the sodium they're processed with) can be seasoned and rolled in a tortilla or mashed with a fork for an easy bean dip. Potatoes and sweet potatoes can be baked or microwaved and topped with canned beans or nut butter.

Look for processed foods with only a few ingredients, for example a veggie burger made with grains, mushrooms, and nuts, or a frozen entrée featuring brown rice, vegetables, and beans.

The Food Industry

There are many companies and restaurants producing healthy whole vegan foods. We hope that people will buy these products and support these establishments. As a consumer, you can let companies and restaurants know when you like their products. Write reviews, send in comments, and share your compliments with them. If you're concerned about the nutritional quality of a processed vegan food, contact the company and let them know that you would be more likely to purchase the product if it had less sugar, fat, saturated fat, or sodium or had more whole food ingredients.

Conclusions

Ultimately the choice to use, limit, or avoid heavily processed foods is up to you. We have many options available to us. Consider your health, your budget, and other factors, as you decide which foods to purchase.

References

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² National Health Service. Eating processed foods. 2020. nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/what-are-processed-foods

³ Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Processed foods: what's OK and what to avoid. 2019. eatright.org/food/nutrition/nutrition-facts-and-food-labels/processed-foods-whats-ok-and-what-to-avoid

⁴ Center for Science in the Public Interest. Olestra. cspinet.org/topics/olestra

Updates to USDA's Thrifty Food Plan Better Reflect the Cost of a Healthy Diet

by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

For the past 45 years, the USDA's Thrifty Food Plan has been the basis for calculating the amount of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits that households receive. SNAP is a federal program that provides nutrition benefits to low-income individuals and families. These benefits are used at stores to purchase food.

The Thrifty Food Plan provides an indication of the U.S. government's expectation of food costs for a household. The plan represents the cost to purchase groceries for a family of four—an adult male and female, ages 20-50, and two children, ages 6-8 and 9-11. According to the USDA, this plan is supposed to reflect the cost of meeting “the nutritional needs of an average person consuming a healthy, cost-conscious diet at home.” Although the Thrifty Food Plan cost is adjusted monthly for inflation, there has been no change in the foods used in the plan for the past 15 years. During that time, there have been changes in nutrition recommendations and in people's food habits. As a result, it was exceedingly difficult to buy an adequate amount of healthy foods using the cost calculations from the old Thrifty Food Plan.

The USDA recently updated the foods and food groups included in the plan. The updates are based on the cost of food, nutrients in food, nutrition guidance, and what Americans eat. Cultural factors and convenience were also considered. For example, the old plan's costs for legumes were calculated using dried beans. The revised plan uses canned beans, acknowledging that many households will not spend hours cooking dried beans. This change does not mean that households should not use dried beans; rather, it calculates food costs using canned beans. Other vegan convenience foods that were used to calculate the cost of a thrifty meal plan were baby carrots, packaged salad greens, and salsa. The “dairy” group costs included the cost of unsweetened soymilk. The new plan estimates that 24% of a household's food budget will be spent on vegetables, 16% on grains, 14% on fruit, 14% on dairy, 25% on “protein foods,” and the remainder on miscellaneous food items.

For a family of four receiving the maximum SNAP benefit, the new plan would result in an additional \$34 per week for a total of \$193 per week. The amount of SNAP funds that households receive varies based on household composition and income. The hope is that this additional money will help families receiving SNAP benefits purchase healthier foods.

To learn more about the Thrifty Food Plan, see:

- fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/TFP2021.pdf
- usda.gov/media/blog/2021/08/12/thrifty-food-plan-what-it-and-why-it-matters

For low-cost vegan menus based on USDA's SNAP budget see: vrg.org/journal/vj2020issue2/2020_issue2_vegan_menus.php (These are based on the cost for the old Thrifty Food Plan. Nonetheless, they provide specific ideas for eating a nutritious vegan diet on a limited budget).



Photo by Rissa Miller

Best Latin American Websites with Information on Calcium in the Vegan Diet

by *Odette Olivares*

I remember the day I decided to try veganism, 13 years ago, when I was a teenager growing up in Mexico. After watching the documentary *Earthlings*, I started immediately searching on the internet for ways to replace animal food products in my diet. I bumped into many websites that encouraged me and offered me comprehensive information. Most of these websites assured me that it was completely possible to obtain everything I needed from a vegan diet (except for vitamin B12, which I could get from fortified foods or supplements).

I read in many brochures and on websites that calcium was not a nutrient to be concerned about since it was present in green leafy vegetables such as spinach and chard. I used to consume these foods regularly (or at least more regularly than kale, mustard greens, collards, or cabbage, which were almost completely absent from my diet). I had no idea that only 5% of the calcium in spinach and chard was absorbed—much less than is absorbed from other greens!

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has questions about calcium sources! For this reason, this article offers a compilation of the best Latin American websites with reliable calcium information for vegans—so nothing can stop you from unfolding your vegan power!

While there are very good websites with accurate and complete calcium information, others might still have some myths that were once backed up by scientific studies but are no longer correct. A good source of information about calcium for vegans will explain that absorption of calcium from plant sources is not always the same and that there are vegan foods with higher calcium absorption than dairy products. Other relevant points that are sometimes overlooked are the importance of obtaining calcium from plant sources instead of simply taking supplements, that there are many factors that can affect bone health other than calcium intake, and that it is not necessary to avoid those plant sources of calcium that are not easily absorbed, because they can provide other nutrients.

The websites included in this article were rated

using a rubric that evaluated four general categories: reliability, accessibility, completeness and correctness of calcium information, and inclusion of Latin American recipes. Maximum possible score was 42 points.

Reliability was evaluated by determining if the information was written by a health professional, if updated scientific references were included, and if consultation with a dietitian or nutritionist was recommended.

To evaluate how easy it was for users to find and understand the information, the category of accessibility evaluated whether the information comprised the three most used languages by Latin Americans (Spanish, Portuguese, and English), whether the information could be found easily using the menu or the search tool, and if the information was explained in simple language and contained clear examples.

The category of completeness and correctness had the highest weight in the total score, and it mainly evaluated if the following points were present and accurate: calcium requirements for vegans, importance of calcium absorption, plant sources with calcium that is easily absorbed, warning about high oxalate (a substance that impedes calcium absorption) calcium sources, factors other than intake that could interfere with bone health, and additional nutrients needed for strong bones.

Lastly, the rubric evaluated if the site mentioned vegan Latin American calcium sources and recipes high in calcium. We included this category because it is easier for Latin Americans to include more calcium in our diets through tasty recipes, than by including foods alone.

From a total of 102 sites evaluated (which included internet pages, Facebook groups, and YouTube videos with information on calcium or dedicated to the vegan population), 21 sites were selected as the best sources to learn about calcium in the vegan diet.

To see a more extensive list and a list of websites with Latin American vegan recipes high in calcium, go to vrg.org/nutrition/Best-Websites-in-English-with-Information-on-Calcium-in-the-Vegan-Diet-for-Latin-Americans.pdf

Best Latin American Entities with Calcium Information for Vegans

Homovegetus: Score, 35

literaturavegana.wordpress.com/2019/06/15/nutricion
Language: Spanish, with small section in English



Website whose aim is to inspire people to transform their consciousness towards every sentient being. Written by Alejandro Ayala Polanco, considered the father of literature about anti-speciesism in Chile. On this site you can find artistic videos and songs that inspire people to eat vegan. The calcium information on this site is brief, but it contains links to reliable websites such as “Brenda Davis, RD,” “NutriSpeak,” and “The Vegan RD.” Additionally, the site contains plenty of vegan recipes high in calcium.

Fitness Vegano: Score, 31

fitnessveganooficial.com/calcio
Language: Spanish



Website and YouTube channel. Nicolás Zúñiga is a personal fitness trainer specializing in vegetarian clinical nutrition. On his website you can find updated scientific articles on the vegan diet, YouTube videos about how to design your vegan diet, and online consultations to tailor your diet and training.

Veganos Nicaragua: Score, 30

facebook.com/groups/253505578906704/permalink/632299664360625
Language: Spanish



Facebook group with many recipes and a link to the complete podcast about calcium from Infovegana.com

In this podcast the most updated information is explained easily, and old myths are debunked. You can also find other publications about oxalates and good vegan calcium sources, which is very rare in vegan Latin American Facebook groups.

Cuerpo Mente: Score, 30

cuerpomente.com/alimentacion/nutricion/huesos-fuertes-sin-necesidad-lacteos_2738
Language: Spanish

Website with wellness, food, and health articles, written by the nutritionist Lucia Martínez, among other authors.

Information is very complete, and it includes a section to clarify old myths about calcium in the vegan diet. You can also find Latin American recipes high in calcium.



Odette is from Mexico and recently completed her master's in nutrition and health at Wageningen University, The Netherlands. She wrote this article under the supervision of Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, while interning with The VRG.



Support VRG Outreach

Clarissa Hauber

VRG Virtual Internship

Creating a Vegan World



My high school internship with The VRG was a fantastic experience. Having been vegetarian for three years and vegan for about a year, I knew I wanted to get more involved with the veggie community

but was unsure how. Interning for VRG was the perfect opportunity. It allowed me to get involved, discover interests within the food studies field, and develop critical workplace skills.

I helped with writing up entries for The VRG online restaurant guide—researching a different restaurant each week and filling out a template with the restaurant type, address, menu, etc. Working on the restaurant guide was simple, but with each entry, I felt productive. Not to mention how great it was to see all the unique vegan dishes that so many restaurants had to offer.

Not long after, I began writing my first article. The topic was a teen FAQ, and I wrote about being vegan while living in an omnivorous household. It proved to be a valuable experience in developing my writing voice. In the article, I talked about my own

experience and provided the reader with steps to do the same. I even had two of my vegan friends provide some of their own insights! Check it out at vrg.org/blog/2020/10/26/teen-faq-how-does-one-go-vegan-in-a-meat-eating-household

One aspect of the internship that I enjoyed was how centralized it was around cooking. I got to write for the Veggie Bits column of *Vegan Journal*. The first review I did was on four different variations of a veggie-based pasta (page 25). I was able to cook each pasta and write a review at the end. I also tested *Journal* recipes and provided feedback. Some of my favorite dishes that I tried were a BLT made from rice paper, tofu benedict with hollandaise sauce, and maple oat milk popsicles!

While the internship was virtual, I still had great opportunities to collaborate with others and develop strong online communication skills. In one instance, another intern reached out to me, asking for my opinion on some vegan food advertisements. On another occasion, I compared the experiences of three vegan teens in different regions of the United States and compiled their and my own answers into an article. It was a unique experience, as I got to talk to fellow vegan teens and gain insight into what it's like to be vegan in different parts of the country.

Whether I was writing cookbook reviews, restaurant reviews, essay commentary, and articles or was testing new recipes—my internship at VRG was an exciting step into the world of vegan advocacy and food studies. I look forward to applying what I've learned at VRG in my future studies as a Global Public Health and Food Studies student at NYU.

For information about The Vegetarian Resource Group internships, see vrg.org/student/index.php

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Vegan Cooking Tips

Quick and Easy Ideas for

Kohlrabi



by Chef Nancy Berkoff, EdD, RD

The cabbage family includes just about every veggie color, shape, and size. Kohlrabi, also known as turnip cabbage, has a Star Trek-like appearance. Imagine a solid, smooth green apple topped with a slender stem and collard-like leaves that look like arms. Kohlrabi can be green or purple on the outside but is always creamy white on the inside. It's not a root vegetable; it grows just above the ground. The large, round part of kohlrabi is actually the stem.

Kohlrabi may have originated in Europe and is seen in the cuisines of Germany, Hungary, Russia, and the United Kingdom. In China kohlrabi is known as *gai laarn tau* and is steamed whole, stir-fried, and roasted. Kohlrabi is also popular in sections of Bhutan, India, Pakistan, and Tibet.

Kohlrabi's bulb may look like a green turnip but its flavor is a cross between a mild bell pepper and broccoli stalk with a hint of summer squash. It can be served shredded or raw, and used like cabbage or broccoli in slaws and salads. Kohlrabi can stand the heat of braising, roasting, sautéing, or steaming. The

leaves are not plentiful; however, if you acquire a sufficient amount, you can steam them, obtaining the texture and taste of mild collard greens.

When shopping for kohlrabi, choose smaller stems (the round part), no more than 2 inches in diameter, as larger ones can be very tough. Do not buy kohlrabi with shriveled, dried, or damp leaves.

To prep kohlrabi, trim and thinly peel the stem, and cut off the leaves. To steam, place in steamer and steam the stem whole or cut in quarters, for 30-40 minutes. You can also braise it in vegetable broth.

Once cooked, you can slice kohlrabi and sauté in a small amount of vegetable oil. Cooked kohlrabi can be served with a sprinkle of freshly chopped parsley and a squeeze of lemon. The leaves may be cooked with your favorite greens recipe, or chopped and added to salads.

Grated raw kohlrabi adds sweetness and crunch to grain, green, or pasta salads. Try a shredded kohlrabi and carrot slaw (shown below) with a paprika-horseradish dressing (vegan mayonnaise or silken tofu with paprika, prepared horseradish, and lemon juice).



Nil Zacharias

Plantega

by Lucia Rivera

Photo by Meredith Kish



Nil Zacharias' project, Plantega, is the union of plant-based foods and bodegas, small stores in Spanish-speaking areas that Zacharias describes as an essential part of New York City's fabric. Plantega is currently active at 10 NYC bodegas, aiming to provide "delicious, high-quality, plant-based food in formats that feel familiar and accessible to everyone."

"We believe by selling retail products, and especially offering plant-based foods made fresh off the grill in formats that are similar to sandwiches one would typically grab at a bodega (offering them at competitive prices), we are making it easier for everyone to make their default food choice the more sustainable one," Zacharias said.

Plantega is not Zacharias' first step into the food sustainability space, where he expressed having seen a "growth and evolution of plant-based brands and products." However, Zacharias and the Plantega team recognized a lack of accessibility of those brands and products in some places in NYC.

"We thought to ourselves, 'What if we could jumpstart an effort to democratize access to sustainable plant-based food in a way that empowers local businesses to earn revenue, while offering consumers good food at competitive prices?' And Plantega was born."

The creation of Plantega was also in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, following a meeting of "entrepreneurs and professionals" brought together by Effect Partners in 2020. Effect Partners works with musicians and brands for climate and social justice causes.

"Plantega was conceptualized via that effort and designed from the ground up to be launched initially as a three-month prototype focusing on underserved communities in New York City where the economy and its residents were severely affected by the pandemic," Zacharias said.

Since then, Plantega has partnered with various vegan brands to supply more bodegas with vegan grill and fridge options, including breakfast burritos, "cheese-burgers", and "tuna" melt sandwiches. These items are targeted to "anyone who is unfamiliar with plant-based foods because it is unavailable where they live or work, or the plant-based options that are available are overpriced or not offered in culturally relevant ways," according to Zacharias.

"We are very intentional about every ingredient featured on our menu and our retail installations because we want to ensure we are meeting the needs and tastes of the communities we serve. We only partner with brands that believe in and support our social impact mission and we choose products that are not only category leaders, but also fulfill a specific need and taste profile on our menu," he said.

Plantega hopes to continue working with bodegas around NYC and spreading plant-based products. Learn more about their work at eatplantega.com

Lucía Rivera is a college student and long-distance VRG volunteer from southern California. She has been vegetarian for 11 years, vegan for one year, and spends her spare time volunteering, reading, and baking.





THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP
Publishers of **vegan journal**
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BALTIMORE, MD 21203
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Florida Student Marlie Adams Wins \$500 VRG College Scholarship

“I was born vegan, so I really had no option. However, many of my friends who were also vegan since birth are no longer vegan, which deeply saddens me,” Marlie said. “I chose to stay vegan because my grandma is a Holocaust survivor and the images she described parallel with what happens to animals for food. I see the sadness in my grandmother’s eyes when she tells the stories.”

While growing up Marlie attended dozens of

protests. At 6 years old, she brought vegan snacks to school events for kids to try. Marlie was The Ravens Corps’ first Lead Raven in Florida. Following the onset of the pandemic, when activities were forced online, Marlie stepped up to be a guiding force for their virtual community, launching *The Animal Protection Corner*, a space for youth to convene, collaborate, and organize over a shared interest in animal rights and activism.

Marlie used her video skills to produce videos for Jonathan Balcombe (author of *What a Fish Knows*), Crustacean Liberation, and a promotion for vegan restaurant Umami Gorilla. As a mentor for Vegan Outreach, she takes students to stores, shows them vegan options, and gives them ideas for meals. She has written a book about fish for young children, and is now working on the illustrations.

In the future Marlie hopes to use a film degree to make people more aware of the horrors that billions of animals go through for people to eat. Her perfect life in five years would be to start working on an exposé film of the animal agriculture industry. She hopes for a world where everyone is kind, compassionate, and vegan (of course).

For information on other winners and applying for the next Vegetarian Resource Group college scholarship contest with \$20,000 in awards, see: vrg.org/student/scholar.htm The deadline for this year’s contest is February 20, 2022.

To support VRG scholarships and internships, donate at vrg.org/donate or call (410) 366-8343.

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