

# The Vegetarian Life

A way for you to help save humanity...

Owen Jones



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by

**Owen Jones**

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## *Being a Vegetarian - Pros And Cons*

If you are considering becoming a vegetarian, then you must be asking yourself about the pros and cons of doing so. There are different ways of looking at this. On the macro or global scale, you as an individual, by giving up eating meat, will personally save the lives and suffering of all the animals that you would have consumed, if you had not given up.

On the other hand, a few hundred animals over quite a few years will not make much difference to the animal population. What is more, with the Chinese and Indian populations becoming richer, it is almost certain that they will be eating more and more meat in the near future. You will be doing your piece though.

However, on the micro, or personal level, becoming a vegetarian will alter your life. Those who have faith in detox diets say that lots of the toxins that they say mount up in our bodies come from the hormones, pesticides and antibiotics that are in meat but ought not to be.

Meat, eggs and dairy products are a Westerner's foremost sources of cholesterol and fat but cholesterol and fat are blamed for being the main contributor to the west's biggest killer - heart disease.

It is a fact that there are other reasons for heart disease, yet it has been estimated that vegetarians have about a quarter of their meat-eating compatriots' chances of having a heart attack. This seems noteworthy, but the difference between vegans and meat-eaters is even more stark at one tenth the likelihood.

So, it seems to matter what form of vegetarian you become, because lots of vegetarians still eat fish, eggs and cheese and drink milk. However, by giving up meat alone, you will miss out on lots of the chemicals that farmers force into their meat and poultry.

For instance, preservatives are reckoned to be connected to some cancers; growth hormones given to animals have an effect on our own hormones and many people just cannot digest milk, which causes the production of mucus and can give rise to digestive problems

On the negative side, you will need to learn a whole new system of supplying your body with the nutrients and vitamins that it requires. Meat is a concentrated kind of food so only eating a standard western meat and two vegetables type meal without the meat will soon become boring and land you in very hot water.

Malnutrition is the biggest risk that novice vegetarians have to be cautious of. Naturally, it is not so difficult to get hold of knowledge to help you make your vegetarian diet right as it used to be and there is a vast choice of foodstuffs on hand for the contemporary vegetarian, but they are not all cheap, so cutting out meat will probably not save you much money.

At the end of the day, becoming a vegetarian is a highly personal affair. It is between you and your conscience, but doing the correct thing will make your life more difficult, as does making any lifestyle change, but you will find it easier as you get into the swing of things.

## *Adding Variety and Vitality to Your Vegetarian Meals*

People who are not vegetarians probably ask themselves how a vegetarian cook can make vegetarian meals stimulating with just vegetables at his disposal. This same consideration might be preventing or at least deterring some meat-eaters from giving up meat and attempting to follow vegetarianism.

The fact is, that vegetarian meals are not just 'meat and two veg' without the meat, although forty years ago there were numerous vegetarians who started like that.

However, a lifestyle of 'meat and two veg' without the meat is not sustainable. A person who eats meals such as these will soon fall sick, particularly if there is no fish, dairy or eggs in the diets either. Numerous vegetarians opt to eat a small amount to dairy, fish or eggs to help provide much needed protein, which can be difficult to replace in a met-free diet.

Vegetarians have to plan their meals far more than meat-eaters in order to get everything that a body needs to grow, repair itself and defend itself from disease. It will naturally take some time for the newcomer to vegetarianism to learn new recipes and how to cook them so in the beginning, many vegetarians do indeed cook meals which are of the 'meat and two veg' without the meat sort.

This is all right if you know what to substitute for the meat. There are several items in the shops, but one of the most useful is soya in all its numerous types. Tempeh is a soya bean meat substitute and so is tofu. Both these can be used to supplant meat for a dose of protein.

The good thing about these substances is that they can be made to taste of anything you like - they take on flavours fairly readily. They can also be made to be similar to the texture of meat.

Seitan (wheat gluten) is a similarly adaptable and useful product, but you have to be sure that you are not allergic to gluten first, because this allergy appears to be spreading. Soya bean products and seitan can be easily bought at health food shops and Oriental stores.

As you get more proficient at cooking vegetarian meals, you will almost certainly rely less heavily on these things. Beans and nuts are also useful substitutes, but you will almost certainly have to learn how to make use of them first. Take a look at chickpeas, lentils and kidney beans.

Soya by-products like soya milk and soya yoghurt and even soya margarine can be used to take the place of standard dairy products. You can also make a sort of healthy milk from rice water or /and liquidized nuts. Besides making milk and casseroles from nuts, some nuts are excellent in salads. Have a go with walnuts, cashews or almonds and try seeds too like sesame and poppy. Sunflower seeds and others are tasty for snacks.

Bread and sandwiches are good vegetarian fast foods. Experiment with different kinds of flour. Buy yourself a bread-making machine and make your own bread. Preparation time is minutes but you can set the timer to cook the bread for whenever you like. Seven in the morning is better than any alarm clock.

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