

# How to Start a Plant-based Diet 🌱





Hi, I'm **Stephanie**, vegan content creator and the founder of Vegan, What? I'm a proud vegan foodie and I love entertaining and inspiring others to incorporate more plants into their diet.

My goal is to show you that as a vegan you'll not only get everything you need to stay alive, but you can also thrive off eating delicious plants.

If you're still not sure about how or where to start, then please look at my [Going Vegan: How to Start a Plant-based Diet](#) guide below.



# Going Vegan: How to Start a Plant-based Diet

*Is going vegan difficult? What can you eat on a plant-based diet? What ingredients do vegans avoid?*

Yep, I asked these questions before going vegan too! Adopting a plant-based diet isn't as difficult or restrictive as it may seem at first, but I recognize that getting started can feel challenging. That's why I've put together these seven top tips to make going vegan as simple as possible.

Let's go!







# Veganism – More Than Just a Diet!

Before I dive into my seven top tips for going plant-based, let's clarify something important – veganism is much more than just a diet!

According to *The Vegan Society*:

“

*Veganism is a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.*

”

Ultimately, vegans try to avoid any products or behaviors that rely on the exploitation of animals. These include:

- ▶ **Clothing:** Materials to avoid include leather, suede, wool, fur, down and silk.
- ▶ **Toiletries and cosmetics:** Ingredients to avoid include beeswax, lanolin, glycerin, collagen, and shellac. You should also double-check that your favorite brands are free from animal testing.
- ▶ **Household products:** Products that often use animal ingredients include glue, candles, and razors.
- ▶ **Entertainment:** Forms of entertainment to avoid include hunting, animal racing, animal circuses and animal riding.



There may be some non-vegan products that you won't be able to give up (i.e., some essential medicines are produced with animal-derived ingredients), but the key is to try your best. The perfect vegan does not exist, but we can all give it a shot!

Of course, many people dip their toes into veganism by first changing their diet and embracing the many benefits of plant-based nutrition. This is one of the greatest steps you can take for animal welfare, the planet, and your health – so let's get started!





## Learn the Basics of Vegan Eating

Learning the basics of plant-based eating can make going vegan a whole lot simpler! Before you switch your diet completely, you'll need to know exactly what the vegan diet entails, which ingredients to avoid and how to make healthy plant-based choices.

### What to Avoid On a Plant-based Diet

Meat, fish, shellfish, eggs and dairy (i.e. milk, butter, cheese and chocolate) are perhaps the most obvious ingredients to stay away from, but vegans also steer clear of insect derivatives such as honey, carmine and shellac.

It's worth noting that some animal ingredients appear on food labels under different names (e.g. milk often appears as "whey"). You'll become more confident at spotting these, but don't beat yourself up if you make a few mistakes at first. This is bound to happen.

A great way to practice label checking is to sort through your pantry and spend time figuring out which items aren't vegan. You can then donate these to friends or food banks before replacing them with plant-based goodies!

## Staying Healthy on a Plant-based Diet

A balanced vegan diet should offer many of the nutrients and vitamins you need to stay healthy, but I recommend taking the time to educate yourself on plant-based nutrition. This will help you get the most from your diet and prevent nutritional deficiencies, with some of the most common being [vitamin B12](#), [calcium](#) and [zinc](#).

Our [Vegan eBook Starter Pack](#) is packed full of useful information about getting the nutrients you need on a plant-based diet (alongside a vegan restaurant guide, meal plans and more), so we suggest kickstarting your vegan journey by downloading it today!

## Evaluate Your Lifestyle and Figure Out Key Challenges

As with any lifestyle change, figuring out where you might face a few challenges along the way will help you prevent and overcome them without slip-ups.

In this case, ask yourself: what about my lifestyle will make sticking to a plant-based diet difficult? Maybe it's that you travel frequently for work, or that you live and cook with a group of non-vegan friends.

Next, ask yourself: how can I overcome these challenges while staying true to myself and my goals? It might be that you find a couple of easy-prep meals to enjoy on the go, or that you learn how to adapt non-vegan recipes with a few simple food swaps.

Whatever it is, tackling challenges proactively will make starting a plant-based diet much less stressful.









# Create a Simple Plant-based Diet Menu

Experimenting with the many incredible tastes and textures of vegan cooking is one of the best parts of adopting a plant-based diet, but you don't need to overhaul your recipe repertoire all at once!

Why not start by learning two or three simple recipes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? These will keep you going when you can't be bothered to pour over a recipe book and will make it easier to stick to your new diet.

A typical plant-based diet menu might look something like this:

- ▶ **Breakfast:** oatmeal with dairy-free milk, a handful of berries and a drizzle of maple syrup.
- ▶ **Lunch:** a vegetable and tofu stir-fry with wheat noodles.
- ▶ **Dinner:** a chickpea, sweet potato, and coconut milk curry with brown rice.
- ▶ **Snacks:** chopped apples with nut butter or a fruity smoothie.

These are just a couple of vegan meal ideas to pique your interest, but I've got more where they came from! Check out our plant-based [food](#) recipes for vegan versions of all your favorite dishes.





## Put Together a Plant-based Diet Food List

Ah, grocery shopping. This is one of the biggest challenges for any new vegan! Not knowing what foods to buy or brands to choose can make throwing in the towel seem pretty tempting, but going armed with a plant-based diet food list will make shopping much less overwhelming.

So, what can you eat on a plant-based diet? Some of my favorite vegan staples include:

- ▶ **Vegetables** e.g., tomatoes, eggplants, zucchini, spinach, and kale.
- ▶ **Fruits** e.g., blueberries, bananas, oranges, and figs.
- ▶ **Pulses** e.g., garbanzo beans, lentils, and kidney beans.
- ▶ **Seeds** e.g., pumpkin seeds, chia seeds and flaxseed.
- ▶ **Nuts** e.g., cashews, almonds, and peanuts.
- ▶ **Whole grains** e.g., brown rice, quinoa, and oats.

Don't forget to grab some plant-based milk, B12-enriched nutritional yeast and calcium-set tofu!



# OUR PANTRY'S RUNNING OUT OF:

Fruits and veggies:

Bread and baked items:

Canned goods:

Snacks and sweets:



## Find a Like-minded Community

Finding a like-minded community of plant-based eaters can make a world of difference – especially if no one in your inner circle has the same mindset. Whether you need to reaffirm your decision or ask for plant-based restaurant recommendations in your local area, having a group to turn to can be awesome.

Many vegan communities have Facebook groups, which are easy to join (just follow the community guidelines). You can find our [Free Vegans In Progress Community Group](#) through the link. Some vegan groups even meet regularly, which can be a fun and chilled out way to meet people on your wavelength.

More than [25% of the US population is now eating less meat](#), so if you're moving towards a plant-based diet, you're in good company!



## Be Gentle with Yourself!

Be. Gentle. With. Yourself.

Trust me, this is one of the most important steps to going vegan.

You're going to have setbacks, and you're pretty much guaranteed to make mistakes – but plant-based living is a journey. The perfect vegan doesn't exist, so treat yourself with compassion if you have hiccups along the way.

Simply remind yourself why you've started a plant-based diet, commit yourself to doing your best, and move on.

So, are you ready to go vegan? I'm here to help you, every step of the way.

*To get started, check out my [nutrient-packed recipes](#), experiment with our [Vegan eBook Starter Pack](#), or simply refresh your closet with [Vegan, What? apparel](#).*

*Whatever you need to make adopting a plant-based diet a piece of cake, we've got it!*



# GET MY VEGAN EBOOK STARTER PACK

## THE VEGAN EBOOK STARTER PACK

20+ VEGAN EBOOKS TO GET YOU STARTED ON YOUR JOURNEY INCLUDING:



**This bundle is packed with delicious vegan recipe options: healthy, gluten-free, anti-inflammatory, refined sugar-free, you name it. This means you will literally never run out of ideas again and will always have new recipes only one click away!**

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