



# Going Vegan



The Young Vegan  
Starter Kit



### Important Disclaimer

This starter kit is intended for educational and informational purposes only. It is not medical advice, nutritional advice, or a substitute for professional healthcare guidance. The information provided here is designed to support and empower people who are interested in vegan living, but it may not be suitable for everyone. Individual nutritional needs can vary based on age, health conditions, medications, and other personal circumstances. Always consult a qualified healthcare professional, registered dietitian, or medical practitioner before making significant changes to your diet or lifestyle. The Young Vegan aims to provide thoughtful, evidence-informed guidance — but this guide should be used as a starting point, not a medical authority.

You can find more articles, guides, and support at [theyoungvegan.co.uk](https://theyoungvegan.co.uk)

Going vegan can feel exciting, confusing, overwhelming, or all three at once. This starter kit is here to help you take your first steps with confidence, and kindness - to yourself, to animals, and to the planet.

You don't need to be perfect. You don't need to change everything overnight. You just need a place to start.

## What This Starter Kit Will Help You With

Understanding what veganism really is (and what it isn't)

Knowing what to eat without stress or restriction

Covering key nutrients with confidence

Navigating social situations and common questions

Building habits that actually last



"Being vegan is not about being morally superior -  
it's about aligning your actions with your values."  
- The Young Vegan

## What Does It Mean to Be Vegan?

Veganism is a way of living that seeks to reduce harm to animals as far as is possible and practicable.

In everyday terms, this usually means:

Eating plant-based foods instead of animal products

Avoiding products tested on animals where possible

Making kinder choices when alternatives exist

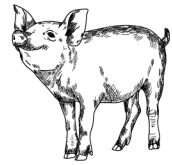
Veganism is not about perfection. It's about intention and progress.







# What Can't You Eat as a Vegan?



The list of what you can't eat when you go vegan seems long, but it's all based on the same few ingredients.

## Non-Vegan Ingredients

- Dairy: this may appear as milk, whey, casein, or lactose
- Collagen and Keratin: from the skin, bones, and connective tissues of animals, often used in cosmetics
- Elastin: found in the neck ligaments and the aorta of cows
- Gelatine: used to make capsules, jelly-like and chewy things, by boiling skin, tendons, ligaments, and/or bones
- Aspic: made from clarified meat, fish and gelatine.
- Lard/tallow: animal fat.
- Shellac: obtained from the bodies of female lac bugs
- Honey, Propolis, Royal Jelly and Bees' Wax: made by bees for their own use
- Vitamin D3: from fish-liver oil or lanolin from sheep. Vitamin D3 can also be made from algae, but always check.
- Albumen/albumin: typically made from eggs
- Isinglass: obtained from dried swim bladders of fish, mainly used in the making of wine and beer
- Cod liver oil: extracted from the livers of cod fish
- Pepsin: from pig stomachs, it is used in vitamins

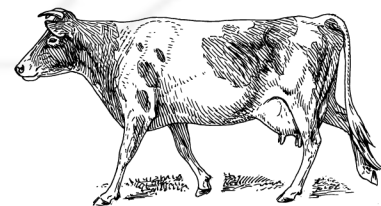
Related reading:

Non-Vegan Ingredients

Sneaky Non-Vegan Ingredients

Debunking Dairy Myths: Why Humans Don't Need Dairy

Find these articles on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)





# What Can You Eat as a Vegan?

A lot more than people think.

## Everyday Vegan Staples

**Carbohydrates:** rice, dried pasta, potatoes, bread, oats, and grains like rice and pearl barley. Store-bought bread will need to be checked as it may contain milk. Fresh pasta is typically made with egg, but always read ingredients.

**Proteins:** lentils, chickpeas, legumes (beans), tofu, tempeh, seitan. Meat substitutes are often made with pea protein, soya or gluten, wheat protein, making them rich sources of this macronutrient.

**Fats:** nuts, seeds, avocado, olive oil. Nut butters, including peanut and almond, are easy-to-use sources of healthy fats. Aim to use pure nut butters that contain no salt, sugar or added fats. Chia and flax seeds can be used as an additional source of healthy fats and omega-3 fatty acids. Always use ground seeds to enable absorption.

**Fruit & Vegetables:** fresh, frozen and canned all count. Frozen fruits and vegetables retain nutrients longer. When using tinned produce, buy those with no added salt, sugar or syrup.

You don't need complicated recipes. Simple meals work best, especially at the beginning.

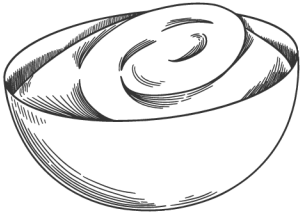
Related reading:

Vegan Substitutes for Common Ingredients

8 Ways to Transition to a Vegan Diet

Find these articles on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)





# Easy Vegan Meal Ideas

## Breakfast

Porridge with fruit, nuts, and seeds  
Toast with peanut butter or avocado  
Smoothies with fruit, oats, and plant milk

## Lunch

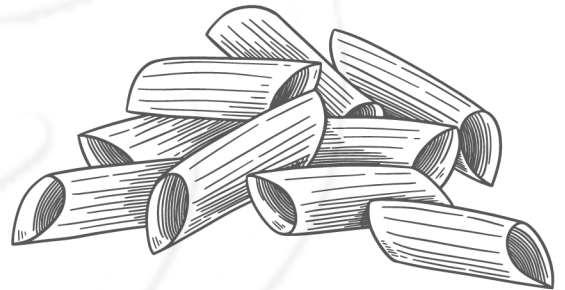
Falafel and salad sandwiches  
Leftover pasta or curry  
Lentil soup with bread

## Dinner

Stir-fry with tofu and vegetables  
Bean chilli with rice  
Vegan pasta with tomato or pesto sauce

## Snacks

Fruit  
Nuts and seeds  
Dairy-free yoghurt  
Hummus with crackers or veg

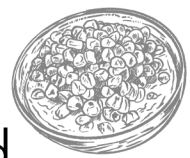


When starting out, it helps to veganise meals you are familiar with before adding new foods. This can mean using meat substitutes or making swaps, like lentils for minced beef.

For recipes, go to [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](https://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)



# Key Nutrients to Know About



You don't need to obsess - just be informed.

## Protein

Found in beans, lentils, tofu, tempeh, nuts, seeds, and wholegrains. Most people get enough protein without trying, as it is present in almost all foods. As long as you eat a full, varied diet, your protein needs will be met. For those needing a high-protein diet, tofu is 12% protein, seitan, made from gluten, is 22% protein, and lentils are 18% protein. If you need supplemental protein, vegan bars, shakes and snacks are available.

## Iron

Found in lentils, chickpeas, beans, tofu, spinach, and pumpkin seeds. Apricots and raisins are also great sources of iron that are easy to snack on. Absorb more iron by eating foods that are rich in vitamin C, such as bell peppers or broccoli. Also, avoid drinking coffee and tea close to meals as tannins prevent iron absorption.

## Calcium

Greens, like kale, spinach and broccoli, are good sources of calcium. Fortified plant milks, yoghurts and other food products can provide a reliable source of calcium. Tofu set with calcium will add calcium to your diet.

**Vitamin B12 (Important):** Take a B12 supplement or eat fortified foods to ensure adequate intake. This is normal and recommended for vegans and non-vegans alike.



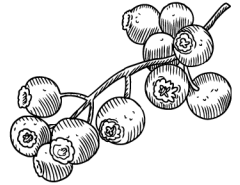
Related reading:

Debunking Dairy Myths: Why Humans Don't Need Dairy  
Find this article on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)





# Vegan Essentials



There are some items that make being vegan healthier and easier

## Fruits

Bell Peppers  
Tomatoes  
Avocadoes  
Bananas  
Citrus Fruits  
Berries

## Vegetables

Broccoli  
Spinach  
Kale  
Carrots  
Sweet Potatoes  
Mushrooms

## Protein

Tofu  
Tempeh  
Seitan  
Legumes  
Nuts

## Grains

Brown Rice  
Bulgar  
Quinoa  
Wholewheat Foods  
Oats

Misc - Nutritional Yeast, Chia Seeds, Flaxseeds, Vegetable Stock, Miso Paste, Herbs and Spices, Plant Milk

None of these are 100% essential. You can swap items according to availability and your preferences

Related reading:

Going Vegan the Easy Way: Start With Simple Swaps

Find this article on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)



# Printable Shopping List

You can print this page (10) to take with you when you are starting out



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bell Peppers           | <input type="checkbox"/> Seitan                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes               | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant Milk                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avocadoes              | <input type="checkbox"/> Rice                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onions                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garlic                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgar/Quinoa             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bananas                | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable Stock           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citrus Fruits          | <input type="checkbox"/> Herbs and Spices          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Berries                | <input type="checkbox"/> Miso Paste                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli               | <input type="checkbox"/> Bread (check ingredients) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green Leafy Vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Oats                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrots                | <input type="checkbox"/> Legumes                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mushrooms              | <input type="checkbox"/> Nuts                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet Potatoes         | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeds                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutritional Yeast      | <input type="checkbox"/> Dried Fruit               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meat Substitutes       | <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen Fruits             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tofu                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen Vegetables         |



Other items:

# Supplements: What You Actually Need

Most vegans only need Vitamin B12. This is essential for everyone, but is not found in most plant foods. Fortified foods, including cereals and plant milks, can contain vitamin B12, but to ensure you meet the daily recommended amounts, it is best to take a supplement.

Supplements can be found in tablet, capsule and spray forms. Follow the manufacturer's directions to make sure to get an adequate amount of this vitamin.

Some people may also consider:



Vitamin D (especially in winter): We normally make this vitamin ourselves in our skin after sun exposure. It is also commonly added to fortified vegan foods, including plant milks and meat substitutes.

Iodine (depending on diet): We can get iodine from supplements, seaweed or fortified foods.

Omega-3 Oils: We can get these healthy oils by eating ground chia and flax seeds. We can also use algae-based supplements.

If in doubt, speak to a healthcare professional.

Related reading:

B12: What is it?

Vitamin D is Vegan, Right?

Getting Iodine When Vegan: How to Avoid Iodine Deficiency

Find these articles on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)



"Most people don't struggle because veganism is hard - they struggle because they're given bad information."

- The Young Vegan

stay  
strong

## Common Worries (And Reassuring Truths)

Don't  
QUIT

"What if I don't get enough nutrients?"

A well-planned vegan diet can meet nutritional needs at all stages of life according to The National Health Service (NHS) and the British Dietetic Association. If you have worries, speak with a health professional.

VEGAN FOR  
the  
animals

"What if I mess up?"

You will. Everyone does. What matters is continuing. We all have times when we eat something that we thought was vegan but wasn't. It's not our fault. On some occasions, you may feel pressured into eating animal products, whether by those around you or the situation. When these circumstances occur, go easy on yourself. Veganism isn't about perfection; it is about doing your best.

"What about social situations?"

Again, do your best. Plan ahead if you can. This may mean taking food with you, or, if going to a restaurant, calling them beforehand to check the menu. You can also ask them to prepare a meal specially for you. Always remember that your choices are valid.

Related reading:

Dealing With Social Situations as a Vegan

How Did I Become Vegan? This is Henry's Story

Find these articles on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)

you can  
do this!



# Being Vegan in a Non-Vegan World

Going about your day as a vegan can be very different to how you did it when you ate animal products. You become very conscious of the food you eat. You will check the ingredients on everything, even those marked vegan. You will also become aware of how ingredients derived from animals are used in most food products. This will span everything from milk in tomato sauces to bees' wax on fruit.

You may not be able to buy food from many of the shops and restaurants that you previously used, as they don't sell vegan food. This can make things like buying lunch and eating out with friends difficult.

You will adapt to these situations, becoming used to creating your own solutions.

## Helpful tips:

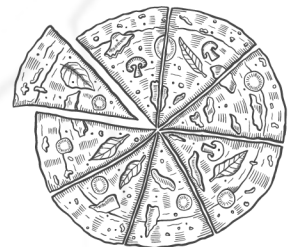
Eat beforehand if you're unsure about food options

Suggest vegan-friendly places

Bring a dish to share

Carry snacks that you can eat in case you are still hungry

Set boundaries - you don't owe anyone a debate



Remember that you don't have to justify being vegan to anyone, and don't let anyone pressure you into going against your morals.

## Related reading:

How To Find Vegan Food In The Supermarket

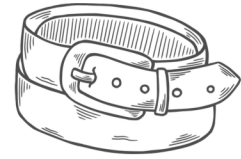
The Pain of Being Vegan

Find these articles on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)





## Non-Food Vegan Items



Some people consider themselves plant-based and not vegan. The difference is often that those who are plant-based will eat a diet with little to no animal products, but will continue to use animal-based products in other areas of their lives. Vegans, who choose to live in a way that eliminates as much harm as possible, do not do this.

### Clothing

Non-vegan clothing items include leather and other animal skins, feathers, and silk, which comes from silk worms. Wool, whether from sheep, goats, alpacas or other animals, is also not vegan.

### Makeup and beauty products

Animal-based ingredients are used in many cosmetic and beauty products. These can include honey in moisturisers and hair care products, or animal fat used as an emulsifier. Products with red colouring can be coloured by carmine, a dye made from crushed cochineal insects. Vegan products are almost always marked.

It is also important to note that items that are cruelty-free are not necessarily vegan. Cruelty-free denotes the product was not tested on animals, however it may still include animal-based ingredients.



Related reading:

Sneaky Non-Vegan Ingredients to be Mindful Of

Vegan Makeup - It's More Than Cruelty Free

Find these articles on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)

# Progress Over Perfection



Veganism isn't about being flawless. It's about reducing harm where you can. We all do our best, and that is good enough.



If you do slip up:

Learn from it  
Be kind to yourself  
Keep going

If you do make a mistake, it helps to reflect on what happened to lead to the problem. Was it that you thought that the food was vegan? Maybe you were told that it was vegan, but it actually wasn't. Perhaps you missed something in the ingredients. Journaling about your vegan journey can help you to process what you are going through, what you have learnt and any changes that you want to make.

Small steps taken consistently matter more than dramatic changes that don't last, so be kind to yourself.

Related reading:

Myths That People Still Believe About Veganism

Should I Go Vegan? 13 Questions to Ask Yourself

Find these articles on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)



## Your Next Steps

Try one new vegan meal this week

Read articles that answer your questions

Focus on foods you can eat, not what you're giving up

You don't need to do everything today.

If you are finding vegan cooking tricky, try using a vegan meal subscription service. These allow you to pick from a whole vegan menu and have all of the ingredients delivered to you.

For extra support, check out the articles in our blog and join Vegan Profile to connect with other vegans.

[www.TheYoungVegan.co.uk/Blog](http://www.TheYoungVegan.co.uk/Blog)

[www.VeganProfile.com](http://www.VeganProfile.com)



Related reading:

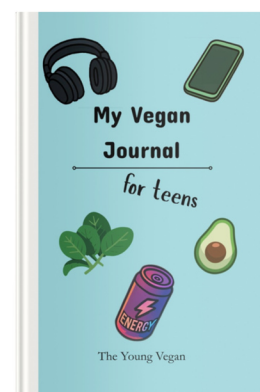
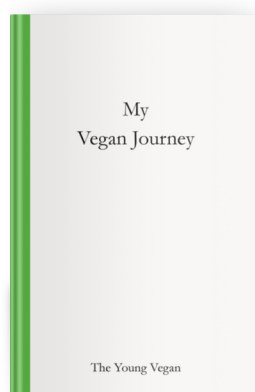
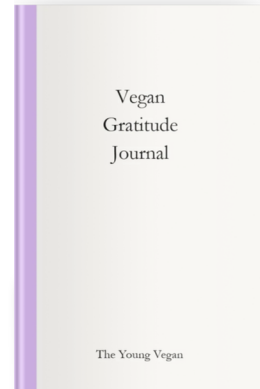
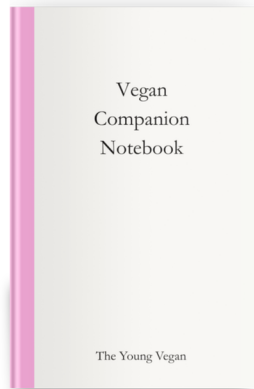
Fuelled By Compassion - Going Vegan

Debunking Myths About the Vegan Lifestyle

Find these articles on the blog at [theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog](http://theyoungvegan.co.uk/blog)

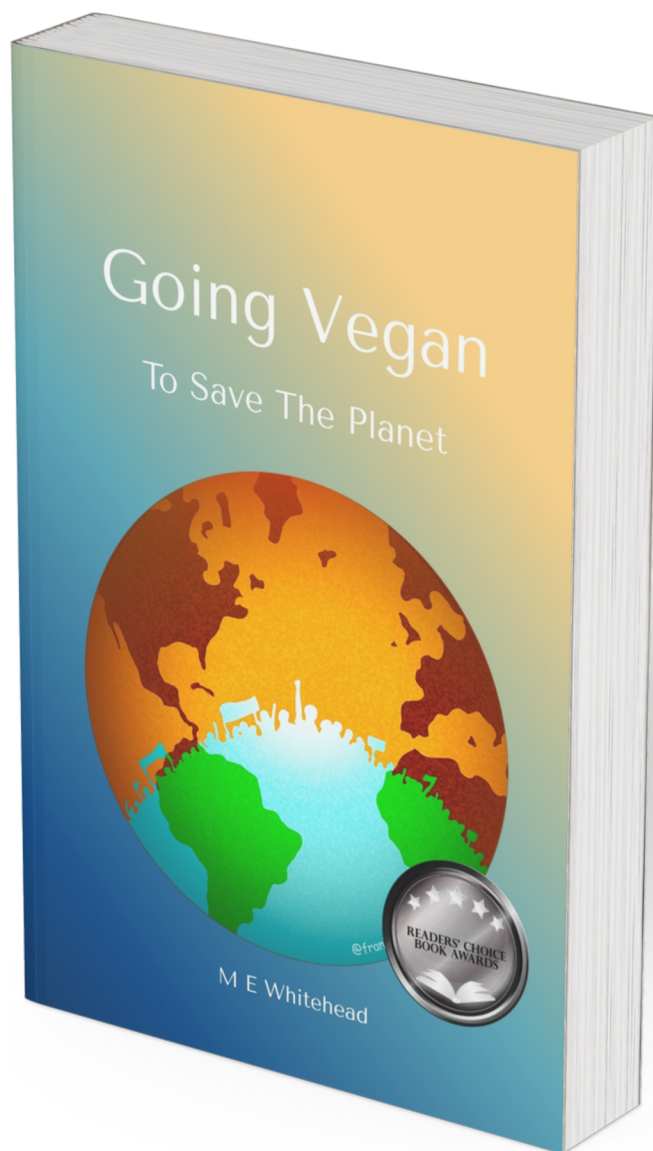


For support, guidance and mindfulness, try  
one of our journals



Our journals are available at  
[www.theyoungvegan.co.uk/category/all-products](http://www.theyoungvegan.co.uk/category/all-products)

For an indepth examination of how veganism can slow  
or even stop climate change get our book, Going  
Vegan to Save the Planet



Available in hardback, paperback and eBook at  
[www.TheYoungVegan.co.uk/Books](http://www.TheYoungVegan.co.uk/Books)

## Final Words



"You don't need to have everything figured out to start - you just need to care."

- The Young Vegan

You're not alone on this journey. Millions of people are learning, changing, and doing their best - just like you.

Welcome to a kinder way of living.

- The Young Vegan

