



HOW TO BE A HEALTHY VEGETARIAN

There's no question that a mainly plant-based diet is better for us and for the planet. But it presents so many herbivore's dilemmas: Am I getting enough protein? Plenty of nutrients? And what do I make for dinner? Here are the strategies, recipes, and cookbooks that will help you eat right.

TEXT BY JENNY ROSENSTRACH RECIPES BY SARAH CAREY PHOTOGRAPHS BY RAYMOND HOM

THE PRICE OF MEAT

Cows expel methane, a greenhouse gas that is

23

times more potent than CO₂.

77%

OF U.S. SOY-BEANS AND 46 PERCENT OF U.S. CORN FEED FARM ANIMALS. THAT'S A LOT OF LAND.

GOING VEGAN SAVES

1 1/2

tons of CO₂ eq. compared to the average American diet.

About 15 years ago, I was chatting with two women at a cocktail party when one of them noted she was a vegetarian. Other than feeling a flash of pity—*poor thing can't eat a steak*—

I didn't think much about it until she wandered away to get a Pinot refill. At that point, the other woman whispered, "Well, that's a pretty good sign that she's not a lot of fun!" We snickered and shoved a few more pigs in blankets down the hatch.

I've thought about this conversation a lot in the past few years. When I replay it and think of my glib response, it feels like watching a pregnant Betty Draper in *Mad Men* throwing back a martini: *How could she not know?* How could I have dismissed this woman when it was likely that some major soul-searching had gone into her decision to stop eating meat? *How could I not have known?*

Maybe it was because that cocktail party was about eight years before Eric Schlosser's book *Fast Food Nation* described the disturbing conditions of the slaughterhouses and meatpacking plants feeding the country's fast-food system. And before Michael Pollan asked us in *The Omnivore's Dilemma* to question everything on our plates and how it got there. It was way before investment bankers were leaving Wall Street to start organic chicken farms and before new dad and literary darling Jonathan Safran Foer proclaimed in his 2009 vegetarian manifesto, *Eating Animals*, "We are equally responsible for what we don't do. In the case of animal slaughter, to throw your hands in the air is to wrap your fingers around a knife handle."

THE MEAT OF OUR PROBLEM

Today, anyone interested in food or the environment (or anyone who reads the newspaper) knows how hard it is to ignore the evidence mounting against factory-farmed meat, which, according to an analysis of USDA and EPA data by the advocacy group Farm Forward, is 99 percent of the beef, pork, and poultry sold in this country. Raising livestock for food is one of the largest contributors to global warming, accounting for 20 percent of man-made greenhouse gases emitted each year. The Meatless Monday movement, an initiative in association with the Bloomberg Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, states that if all Americans skipped their daily eight ounces of meat one day per week, we could save more emissions over the course of a year than if we gave up traveling by cars, trains, planes, and ships combined. There are

the health benefits, too, of course. People who consume a plant-based diet weigh less, have lower incidence of heart disease, diabetes, and many cancers, and on average live longer than meat eaters.

So why aren't we all vegetarians? Why can't I—enlightened Me, post-Pollan, post-Schlosser, post-I-know-the-provenance-of-the-food-on-my-plate Me—become a vegetarian?

Anthony Bourdain, meat's most vocal cheerleader, will tell you the answer is "bacon," as he did on *Larry King Live* last fall. But our attachment goes beyond sheer pleasure. Tara Austen Weaver (who was raised a vegetarian, developed thyroid issues, and was advised to eat meat by an acupuncturist—a journey she chronicles in her new memoir *The Butcher & the Vegetarian*) claims there's no other food with which Americans are so emotionally connected. "People give up things all the time," she says. "Look at how many people are on gluten-free diets right now—but it's not this personal affront. What is this love affair with meat?"

For me, the love affair was this: Growing up, I sat down at 7 p.m. every single night to a meat-veg-starch dinner. To give up one third of that equation would feel like giving up one third of my family history. But it goes beyond that. I love to cook. As I write, the smell of a roasting chicken permeates my house; in my freezer, I have about eight pounds of organic pork products. For me it came down to: Meat Eating = Fun, therefore Vegetarian = Boring.

But last year I was forced to rethink that formula. Not only was the chorus of pro-vegetarian heavy hitters getting too loud to ignore, but my husband was diagnosed with high cholesterol as well. So I started down the path toward significantly reducing our family's meat consumption—and I found it led to some surprising places.

A TRIP AROUND THE WORLD

On a bleak, leafless day in December, I was in my neighbor's kitchen sampling Sichuan peppercorns that he had briefly pan roasted and then smashed into a paste with his mortar and pestle. He hadn't eaten meat in 15 years; plus his teenage son was a newly converted vegan. He had been enthusiastically exploring the spices and flavors of Asian cuisines, which, he explained, are traditionally

vegetable-based. The peppercorns were a revelation—smoky and rich, spicy but in a beautiful, lingering way. He pulled out Fuchsia Dunlop's Sichuan cookbook *The Land of Plenty* and began pointing out his favorite recipes. Next to that cookbook was David Thompson's 688-page *Thai Food*, which had worked my neighbor into a frenzy of dog-earring. Try this relish. Read this recipe. Go to this town for this sauce.

There was clearly no lack of fun in his kitchen.

He sent me home with a stack of Southeast Asian cookbooks and directions to a nearby Asian superstore. I'd probably driven past it 800 times in the six years I'd been living in the neighborhood but had never once noticed it. Some of my new recipes called for ingredients that sounded like what you'd find at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry—pumpkin tendrils and bird's-eye peppers—but all of them were available right here. I left with tamarind water, a peppery hot sauce called *mala*, and a can of mandarin juice. At home I stared at my bounty, and the ensuing endorphin rush ignited a cooking frenzy.


Later that week I had a bag of gram flour procured from the local Indian market (3.2 miles away) for a recipe from Madhur Jaffrey's *World Vegetarian*: chickpea flour "French fries" served with a fresh tomato sauce. The next week I was introducing my kids to Korean *pa jun* (scallion pancakes). How fun was this?

REIMAGINING DINNER (AND LUNCH, AND BREAKFAST ...)

The more I talked to chefs, cookbook authors, lifelong vegetarians, "flexitarians," and hard-core vegans, the more I learned how, for almost all of them, refusing meat was never a limiting proposition. If you approach it the right way, everyone kept saying, it's the opposite; it can be a world-expanding adventure. Kim O'Donnel, the former "A Mighty Appetite" online columnist for *The Washington Post*, who took a Meatless Monday pledge with her readers, says this attitude can be a smarter way in than the save-the-planet angle. "You don't have to label yourself something different," she says. "This is not a sacrifice—it's a celebration. My incremental approach is more about diversifying diet than it is pushing anyone toward an ism."

While I'm not yet a wholesale vegetarian, this revelation has thrown my dinner strategizing into a tailspin. My process used to go something like this: I have some pork chops. What farmer's-market bounty might I surround them with? Did I have it all backward? Does every one of us majorly carnivorous Americans have it backward? Shouldn't it instead be: I have kabocha squash. What meat should I have as a side dish? Or: I have this huge bag of masoor dal. Maybe tonight's the night I debut a curried red lentil soup with yogurt.

I have also taken the Meatless Monday pledge, which I've noticed has rather insidiously begun to morph into Meatless Morning and Meatless Afternoon pledges. How far will I take it? I can't say for sure, but at this point, I'd be crazy not to keep my options open. +

 **B+S ONLINE** To swap recipes and ideas with other veggie-minded folks, visit wholeliving.com/veggie-lovers

VEGAN TILL DINNER

Food journalist and *New York Times* columnist Mark Bittman is a "less-meatatarian": Before 6 p.m., he eats only fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes; after six, he has whatever he pleases.

B+S: What prompted you to change your diet?

MB: I noticed that the quality of the food most people were eating was getting worse, animals were being treated worse, the environment was suffering, and people—myself included—were getting fatter and less healthy. My goal was to encourage people to eat more consciously overall.

B+S: When did you notice results?

MB: After a few months, my cholesterol went down, and I lost about 35 pounds.

B+S: What do you eat?

MB: Today I had cooked multi-grain cereal with maple syrup for breakfast, and I'm going to a vegetarian restaurant for lunch. If I were home, I'd probably eat rice and beans or a stir-fry over some grain.

B+S: Has eating less meat changed the way you cook?

MB: I like tofu more. But I still don't like tempeh (and I'm not sure anyone else does either).

B+S: The diet must be cheaper.

MB: It's absolutely cheaper. Forty dollars' worth of grains and vegetables is a ton of food. Forty dollars for fish and meat and cheese won't go nearly as far.

—SARAH KARNASIEWICZ

16

TIMES

more fossil fuels are needed to create one steak than to produce a plate of broccoli, eggplant, cauliflower, and rice.

28%

OF THE WORLD'S

assessed fishery stocks are "overexploited or depleted," according to a 2008 estimate from the Food and Agriculture Organization.

**ABOUT
98
POUNDS
OF BEEF,
67
POUNDS
OF PORK,
AND
102
POUNDS
OF CHICKEN
ARE
PRODUCED
FOR EACH
AMERICAN
ANNUALLY.**

REPORTED
BY KATHARINE
MIESZKOWSKI

Vegging Out: A Strategy Guide

Recalibrate psychologically. It's not about denial—it's about bounty and adventure. Seek out ethnic grocery stores: Their aisles are filled with inspiration. (Can you say Chinese Forbidden Rice?) Pick up vegetables you've never tried before: ivory eggplants, Tuscan kale, Jerusalem artichokes.

Don't do anything radical. "You can't just say, 'I'm not going to eat meat anymore,'" says author Kim O'Donnel, who embraced the Meatless Monday pledge. "Institute change in baby steps." Her book *Licking Your Chops*, coming out later this year, will offer 52 meat-free menus.

Build your meals around a vegetable or flavorful ingredient like ginger or coconut milk instead of a piece of meat. In most cuisines, meat is served as a side dish. The vegetables and grains get equal real estate.

Eat out at ethnic restaurants (Mexican, Thai, Chinese, Indian) where vegetarian dishes are standard. At American restaurants, vegetarian dishes can often feel more like something "done special," says Tal Ronnen, author of *The Conscious Cook*, "like a bunch of side dishes thrown together, which means you leave feeling unsatisfied."

Consider transitioning with meat substitutes. Look for products made without additives, like Gardein. Ronnen, who worked on the development of Gardein products, says, "You're more likely to succeed with your family if you replicate their favorite chicken pot pie instead of just springing a quinoa pilaf on them out of the blue."

Don't call yourself a vegetarian. Cornell nutritionist T. Colin Campbell says, "That term is so loaded," and it can sometimes set you back. (He prefers calling it "a plant-based, whole foods" diet.) Ideologically, you take some of the pressure off by ignoring the politics and just concentrating on the extraordinary health benefits.

Make sure your meals have a stick-to-your-ribs quality. As author Tara Weaver says, "Make hearty food using beans and grains and other ingredients that will stay with you, especially in winter. Don't subsist on lettuce and carrot sticks."

Use strong flavors. Says Weaver: "You never want to feel your dinner is a paler version of what it once was." She recommends experimenting with flavors that replicate meat sensations. "So many people don't know about smoked paprika!" she says. "It's not super spicy and has this wonderful smoky flavor that people who like ham and bacon are used to." And caramelized onions, she says, "are the bacon of the vegetarian world," adding a viscosity and a "sort of greasiness" that meat eaters can sometimes miss when they switch. —J.R.

Meatless Proteins

"People don't know you can get all your protein from a good mixture of reasonably intact grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables," says T. Colin Campbell, professor emeritus of nutritional biochemistry at Cornell University. We require about half a gram of protein for each pound of body weight. —J.R.

FOR VEGETARIANS WHO EAT EGGS AND DAIRY

(*lacto-ovo vegetarians*)

1 percent milk (1 c.)	8 g
Yogurt (6 oz.)	6 g
Large boiled egg	7.5 g
Cheddar cheese (1 oz.)	7 g

FOR STRICT VEGETARIANS WHO EAT NO ANIMAL BYPRODUCTS

(*vegans*)

Lentils (1 c. cooked)	18 g
Black beans (1 c. cooked)	15 g
Veggie burger	about 13 g
Chickpeas (1 c. cooked)	12 g
Quinoa (1 c. cooked)	8 g
Peanut butter (2 Tbsp.)	8 g
Almonds (1 oz.)	6 g
Soy milk (1 c.)	8 g
Bulgur (1 c. cooked)	5.5 g
Wheat bread (2 slices)	7 g
Cooked spinach (1 c.)	5 g
Cooked broccoli (1 c.)	4 g
Tempeh (4 oz.)	41 g
Seitan (3 oz.)	31 g

The Vegetarian Bookshelf

- + *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*
by Deborah Madison
- + *How to Cook Everything Vegetarian*
by Mark Bittman
- + *World Vegetarian*
by Madhur Jaffrey
- + *Super Natural Cooking*
by Heidi Swanson

- + *Vegan Soul Kitchen*
by Bryant Terry
- + *The Enchanted Broccoli Forest*
by Mollie Katzen
- + *The Conscious Cook*
by Tal Ronnen
- + *Moosewood Cookbook*
by Mollie Katzen

- + *Licking Your Chops*
by Kim O'Donnel
- + *Hot Sour Salty Sweet*
by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid
- + *Chez Panisse Vegetables*
by Alice Waters

Veggie Love—Hearty, Satisfying Recipes

TOMATO SOUP WITH POACHED EGGS

SERVES 4

2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for toast and drizzling

3 to 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced, plus one clove for toast

Pinch of hot red pepper flakes

1 28 oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, coarsely chopped, with juice

3 c. water

1½ tsp. kosher salt

¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

4 large eggs

4 slices rustic bread

Shredded basil, for garnish (optional)

1. In a straight-sided skillet over medium heat, cook the oil, sliced garlic, and pepper flakes until garlic is just beginning to turn golden, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, water, salt, and pepper.

2. Bring mixture to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer covered for 10 minutes.

3. Crack one egg into a small bowl. Carefully lower edge of bowl into simmering liquid, allowing egg to slip into pot. Repeat with remaining eggs. Cover pot and cook until whites are cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, brush bread with oil and broil until golden; rub with garlic. Place one slice in each of four shallow bowls; sprinkle with basil. Spoon soup and poached eggs over toast, drizzle with a little more oil, and serve immediately.

MUSHROOM, SPINACH, AND SCALLION TART

SERVES 8

1 lb. mushrooms (combination of button and shiitake), trimmed and sliced ½-inch thick

5 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1 tsp. kosher salt

12 scallions, ends trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces, washed and shaken dry

3½ c. (about 4 oz.) flat-leaf spinach, stemmed, washed, and shaken dry

10 sheets phyllo dough, 14 by 9 inches each

6 oz. fresh goat cheese (about ⅔ c.)

3 large eggs

⅓ c. milk

3 Tbsp. chopped mixed fresh herbs, such as dill and cilantro

1. Preheat oven to 425°.

2. On a baking sheet, toss mushrooms with 2 tablespoons oil and ¾ teaspoon salt.

Roast for 10 minutes. Toss in the scallions and roast for 15 minutes more. Push mushrooms and scallions to one side and place spinach on empty side, roast until wilted, about 3 minutes. Let cool briefly, then squeeze spinach dry.

3. Brush an 11-by-7-inch rectangular tart pan with a removable bottom (or a 10-inch round pan) lightly with some of the remaining oil. Working with one piece of phyllo at a time and keeping the rest covered with plastic wrap, brush a sheet of the pastry very lightly with olive oil. Fit into tart pan, leaving a one-inch overhang. Brush a second sheet with oil and fit into pan. Repeat with remaining sheets, creating a crust that is at least five layers thick over the bottom of the pan. Fold edges at top.

4. Crumple a double layer of aluminum foil into a rectangle the size of the bottom of the tart and fit into crust to weight down center. Place on a baking sheet and bake until edges are golden and begin to set, about 7 minutes. Remove foil and bake until golden all over, about 3 minutes more. (Remove from oven, leaving baking sheet. Tent edges with foil if browning too quick.)

5. Reduce oven to 375°. In a blender, puree the goat cheese, eggs, milk, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt until smooth. Add herbs and pulse to combine. Spread vegetables over crust and pour custard over top.

6. Place tart back on baking sheet in oven and bake until custard is set, 20 to 23 minutes. Pull tart from oven and let cool 10 minutes on wire rack. Remove sides of pan and cool at least 10 minutes more, until ready to serve. If not serving right away, slide off of bottom and onto wire rack.

SPRING VEGETABLE RAGOUT

SERVES 4

Serve this light ragout over pasta, polenta, or tortellini to make it a main dish. Sprinkle with Parmesan and drizzle with oil.

3 medium leeks, white and pale green parts only, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced into half moons (about 2 c.)

1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1 tsp. kosher salt

12 oz. asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces (about 2½ c.)

1 c. water

6 oz. sugar snap peas, cut into 1-inch pieces (about 1½ c.)

8 radishes, quartered

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

1 Tbsp. unsalted butter

1 Tbsp. minced fresh herbs, such as chives and tarragon

1. Soak leeks in cold water 5 minutes; lift out and drain. Repeat until no grit remains on bottom of bowl. Set aside.

2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add leeks and salt and sauté until leeks are tender, about 2 minutes. Stir in asparagus, then water. Simmer covered for 2 minutes. Add snap peas and radishes, cover, and simmer for 2 minutes more.

3. Stir in mustard until well combined, then swirl in butter and herbs. Serve immediately.

SPICY CAULIFLOWER

SERVES 4

3 Tbsp. grapeseed oil

¾ tsp. whole cumin seeds

1½ tsp. whole mustard seeds

1 large onion, thinly sliced (about 3 c.)

¼ c. finely shredded peeled ginger

5 cloves garlic, very thinly sliced

1½ tsp. kosher salt

1 medium head cauliflower, about 2 lbs., cut into large florets

¾ c. water

1 c. cooked chickpeas

1–2 small red chiles, thinly sliced, seeds removed for less heat

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over high heat in a large skillet. Add spices and cook until fragrant and golden, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Stir in the onion, 3 tablespoons ginger, 3 tablespoons garlic, and ¾ teaspoon salt. Cook until onions are tender and golden at the edges, 4 to 6 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside.

2. Wash and dry pan and return to medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon oil; heat until shimmering. Add half the cauliflower and brown on one side, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from pan, and repeat with remaining oil, cauliflower, ginger, and garlic.

3. Combine batches of cauliflower in pan. Add water and remaining salt. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook until tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in chickpeas and chiles; cook uncovered until chickpeas are heated through and liquid is gone, about 3 minutes.

4. Stir in onions and serve.

V **Vegan** no animal derivatives

S **Special diet** no dairy, wheat, soy, eggs, peanuts, or tree nuts



SPICY CAULIFLOWER

SHALLOT-MARINATED TOFU WITH MISO DIPPING SAUCE

SERVES 3 TO 4

1 Slice one container **extra-firm tofu** into ½-inch pieces. Place a double layer of paper towels on a baking sheet, and arrange tofu on towels. Top with double layer of paper towels and a baking sheet. Weight down with a few cans for 20 minutes.

2 Whisk together 3 Tbsp. **lemon juice**, 1½ tsp. **grated lemon zest**, 3 Tbsp. **orange juice**, 3 Tbsp. **grapeseed oil**, 3 thinly sliced **shallots**, 2 Tbsp. finely shredded **cilantro**, and 1 tsp. **Dijon mustard**. Season with **salt and pepper**.

3 Transfer tofu to a baking dish, and pour marinade over top. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

4 Remove tofu, scraping off excess


marinade, and set marinade **aside**. Heat a nonstick pan over **medium heat**. Add tofu in a single layer and cook until crisp, about 6 minutes. Turn and cook the other side, 3 minutes more. Remove from pan.

5 Add shallots and remaining marinade to the pan. Simmer until shallots are tender, about 6 minutes. Spoon over tofu and serve immediately with miso dipping sauce.

MISO DIPPING SAUCE

Whisk together ¼ cup **orange juice**, 1 Tbsp. **miso**, 2 Tbsp. **grapeseed oil**, 1 tsp. **grated ginger**, 1 tsp. **grated garlic**, 1 tsp. **rice vinegar**, and ¼ tsp. **kosher salt**.





MUSHROOM, SPINACH,
AND SCALLION TART

COLD PEANUT NOODLES

SERVES 4

Cook $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. **whole-wheat spaghetti** in a large pot of salted boiling water. Whisk together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **natural creamy peanut butter**, 2 tsp. **low-sodium soy sauce**, 1 tsp. **toasted sesame oil**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **chile garlic paste**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. grated **ginger**, 1 tsp. grated or minced **garlic**, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **sugar**. Thin with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup **water**. When noodles are done, drain and rinse under cold water. Toss sauce with pasta, and thin with more water if needed. Serve topped with a salad of shredded **bok choy** and **carrots** dressed with **soy sauce**, **rice vinegar**, and a little **toasted sesame oil**. Season with **salt**.

FOR MORE RECIPES, SEE PAGES 111–112.

