



African American Vegan Starter Guide

Simple Ways to Begin a Plant-Based Lifestyle



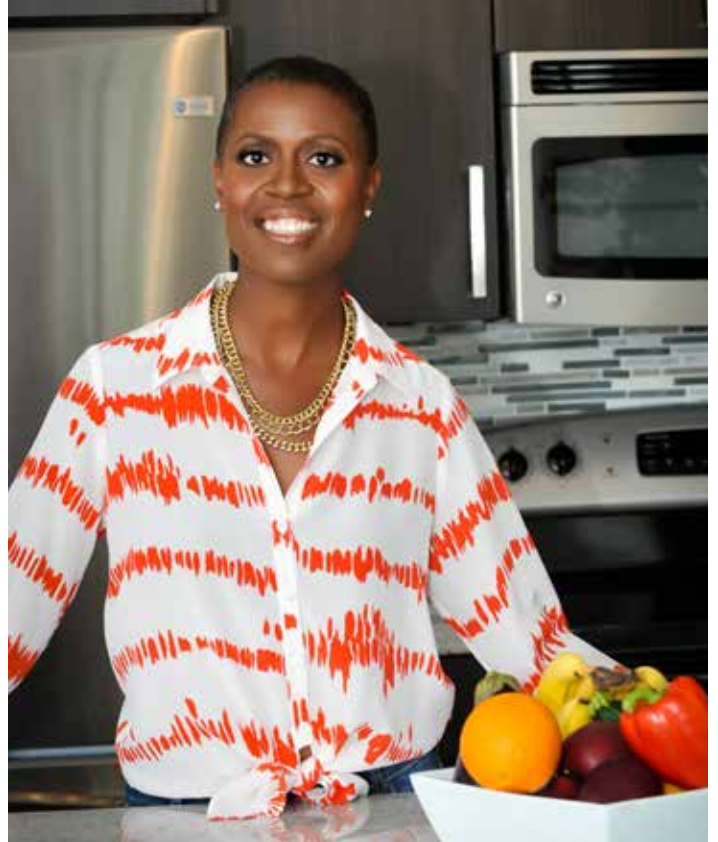


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Welcome

I'm Tracye McQuirter, public health nutritionist, author and vegan for 30 years, and it's my pleasure to welcome you to the African American Vegan Starter Guide, where we show you simple ways to begin a plant-based lifestyle.

So if you've been thinking about going vegan, congratulations! It can be one of the most life-changing decisions you'll ever make. And in this guide, we'll help you get there. I'm joined by some of my expert colleagues in the plant-based field to answer your most common questions about how to transition to vegan food. With everything from why to do it, what to eat, how to get all the nutrients you need, how to make it affordable and delicious, how to eat out and socialize as a vegan, and how to raise vegan children—we've got you covered.



We know going vegan can seem challenging, but don't worry.

We've been there. In fact, in my case, I never thought I'd be a vegan. Growing up, I actually hated healthy food, especially vegetables. In 7th grade, I even wrote a petition against two of my teachers who wanted to make our class camping trip all-vegetarian. (I was overruled.) So what changed for me?

During my sophomore year at Amherst College, our Black Student Union brought legendary civil rights activist and comedian Dick Gregory to campus to talk about the state of black America. Instead, he decided to talk about the plate of black America, and how unhealthfully most folks eat. I was one of them.

During his talk, Gregory graphically traced the path of a hamburger from a cow on a factory farm, through the slaughterhouse process, to a fast food restaurant, to a clogged artery, to a heart attack. And it rocked my world.

For the next few months, I read everything I could about vegetarianism. I was also thrilled to discover there was a large and thriving community of black vegetarians and vegans in my hometown of Washington, DC, who had started the first all-vegan cafes and health food stores in the nation's capital in the early 1980s. I immersed myself in this community, learning how to cook, where to shop, how to make it affordable, the politics of food and much more.

It's been a miraculous 30 years since then. I've gone from hating vegetables, to drinking daily green smoothies, to celebrating 25 years of showing folks just like you how to go vegan for life and love it! So I know if I could do it, you can do it, too. And it's my hope that this guide will be an ongoing source of information and inspiration for you on your plant-based journey.

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracye" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tracye McQuirter, MPH

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Contributors

Editor



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Named a national food hero by *Vegetarian Times*, Tracye McQuirter is a 30-year vegan, public health nutritionist and best-selling author of *By Any Greens Necessary*. She co-created the first vegan website by and for African Americans and directed the first federally funded vegan nutrition program.

Contributors



Demetrius Bagley

Demetrius Bagley is an award-winning producer of the Vegucated documentary and of the Vegan Mashup cooking show. A 20+ year vegan, he's a contributor to *Letters to a New Vegan* and currently works with the Vegan Travel Club.



Jenné Claiborne

Jenné Claiborne is a chef and founder of the vegan food and lifestyle blog Sweet Potato Soul. She's also the founder of The Nourishing Vegan, a personal health coaching company.



Robin D. Everson

Robin D. Everson is an award-winning journalist who successfully reversed Type 2 diabetes with a vegan diet. Her website is The Only Vegan at the Table, where she interviews leaders in the plant-based movement, and more.



Ayinde Howell

Ayinde Howell is a lifelong vegan, chef and founder of the award-winning website iEatGrass.com. He's the author of *The Lusty Vegan* cookbook and host of Like a Vegan, a media cooking show airing on olive.com.



Seba Johnson

Seba Johnson is a lifelong vegan and was only 14 when she competed in the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics, making her an Olympic legend as both the youngest Alpine skier in history, as well as the first black female skier in history.



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Aph Ko is an award-winning writer, performer, and indie digital media producer. She's the founder of Black Vegans Rock and Aphro-ism.



Marya McQuirter, PhD

Dr. Marya McQuirter is a historian and the founder of chocolate & arugula media, a transmedia company specializing in telling stories across multiple digital platforms. A vegan for more than 25 years, she co-created the first vegan website by and for African Americans.



Del Sroufe

Del Sroufe is a chef and the author of *Forks over Knives: the Cookbook*, on *The New York Times* best sellers list for more than 30 weeks; *Better than Vegan*, the story of how he lost more than 200 pounds on a low-fat, plant-based diet; and *The China Study Quick and Easy Cookbook*.



Ruby Thomas, MD

Dr. Ruby Thomas, aka The Plant-Based Pediatrician, is a boardcertified pediatrician with specialized training in preventive and integrative medicine. She's passionate about empowering families to transform their lives and heal from chronic illness through plant-based nutrition.



Rain Truth

Rain Truth, aka The Cultured Vegan, is a passionate vegan chef and lifestyle educator, and proud mother of three vegan children.

Glossary



Cruelty-Free: Indicates that products do not contain animal products and were not tested on animals.

Gluten-Free: A label that indicates that the product does not contain gluten, which is a general name for the proteins found in wheat, rye, barley and triticale.

GMOs: Genetically Modified Organisms, which are organisms (plants, animals and microorganisms) whose genetic material (DNA) has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination.

Mock Meat and Dairy: Food products that have the look, texture and taste of animal meat and dairy products but are vegan.

Nori (nor-ee): Japanese name for an edible seaweed commonly used for vegan sushi rolls.

Nutritional Yeast: A yeast grown on molasses that is heated (to deactivate the yeast), harvested, washed, and packaged as flakes or powder. Also known as nooch.

Organic: Refers to a set of practices used by growers that seek to promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity by not using pesticides, fertilizers, irradiation, industrial solvents or synthetic food additives.

Processed Food: Food that is packaged in boxes, cans or bags, and often contains additives, artificial flavorings and other chemical ingredients.

Raw: Uncooked and unprocessed food, mostly fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Soybean: A type of bean that is high in protein. Edamame, miso, soy sauce, tempeh and tofu are made from soybeans.

Seitan (say-tan; “tan” rhymes with “man”): Made from wheat flour or vital wheat gluten, seitan can be cooked to approximate the look, texture and taste of meat.

Tempeh (tem-pay): A food product made from fermented soybeans.

Tofu (toh-foo): A food product made from soybeans. Also known as bean curd.

Vegan (vee-gan; “gan” as in “organ”): Two of the most common reasons that people become vegans are for health and/or ethics. A person who is vegan for health reasons does not eat animals or animal products (including chicken, fish, beef, pork, milk, eggs and cheese). A person who is vegan for ethical reasons does not eat or use animals or animal products (including for clothing, skincare products and furnishings) and does not support the use of animals for entertainment (including zoos, circuses, marine parks and aquariums) or research and testing.

Vegetarian: A person who does not eat the meat of animals, but does consume the milk and eggs of animals or products made with them, such as cheese.

Vitamin B12: Originates from bacteria (not plants or animals) and is made by tiny one-celled microbes that are in the air, earth and water.



Why Go Vegan?

An estimated 1.4 million African Americans (3%) are vegans and vegetarians (evenly split). And nearly 15 million African Americans (32%) always or sometimes eat meatless meals when eating out. Here's why you should join us.

We Benefit the Most

African Americans have the most to gain from the health benefits of plant-based food because we experience the highest rates of preventable, diet-related chronic diseases in the country.

There are many state-sanctioned reasons that we experience these conditions, including limited access to healthy food in our communities and targeted advertising and proliferation of low-nutrition, high-calorie food.

However, we have the power to be healthier by continuing to expand our knowledge about and access to nutritious, affordable, convenient and delicious plant-based food.

Better Health

Studies show that eating a healthy plant-based diet, along with exercising at least 30 minutes a day, not smoking, and not being obese, can cut your risk of disability and death from chronic diseases by up to 90%. And of these, eating a healthy plant-based diet is the most beneficial.

In fact, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, states that well-planned vegan diets "...reduce risks of many chronic diseases and may treat, improve or reverse obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, [and] type 2 diabetes." In other words, your diet trumps your DNA.

Staying Healthy for Life

You're never too young or too old to go vegan. The Academy also states that well-planned vegan diets are "...safe for people of all ages, including babies, children, teenagers, pregnant mothers, and adults." And a recent Harvard Medical Study tracked 54,000 women for 30 years and found those who ate a plant-based diet are physically healthier than their meat-eating counterparts as they age.

Saving Animals and the Planet

Compassion for animals and protecting the planet are also fundamental reasons to go vegan. Every year in the United States, more than 9 billion animals on factory farms are cruelly produced, raised and killed for meat, milk and eggs. And according to the United Nations, factory farming causes more global warming emissions than all of the world's transportation combined. As a result, the UN is urging the entire world's population to eat more plant-based food and less meat and dairy to save the planet. (Learn more on page 18).

So going vegan is a win for you, the animals, and the planet. There's everything to love! ●

Interview



Vegan Physician Dr. Milton Mills on Food and Health

Dr. Milton Mills is a renowned physician and lecturer, and serves as associate director of preventive medicine at the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, where he co-authored a study on racial bias in the U.S. Dietary Guidelines. Dr. Mills also serves as an internist at Fairfax Hospital in VA and has worked for years with patients at free health clinics in Washington, DC. We caught up with Dr. Mills to ask why he advises his patients to go vegan.

AAVSG: As a vegan physician, how has it been working with people who are suffering from preventable, diet-related chronic diseases?

MM: It's frequently very heartbreaking to see people suffering and dying from diseases that could have been prevented if they had better information. At the same time, it's gratifying to be able to help my patients heal themselves from these diseases by eating a vegan diet.

AAVSG: Can you give us an example of one of your patient success stories?

MM: Well, there was one particular patient, her first name was Cathy. By the time I started treating her, she had been diagnosed with diabetes for 17 years and her diabetes was very poorly controlled. She was on insulin twice a day, along with oral diabetic

medications, and still her blood sugars were averaging in the high 100s to just over 300 throughout the day. And she had a lot of problems as a result of that—visual disturbances, heart disease, and severe high blood pressure. She also had problems with circulation to her legs to the point that she could not walk a block without having to stop because of pain.

So I talked to her about the causes of diabetes and how the best way to improve her condition was to eliminate animal-based foods like meat, dairy and eggs from her diet. I anticipated that she would start to make gradual changes, but instead Cathy chose to become vegan almost immediately. She stopped eating meat, dairy and eggs, and within a six-week period, she was off all of her diabetes medicines.

She was also being seen at the National Institutes of Health for her cardiac issues and over the course of a year, the doctors there told her she was actually growing new blood vessels in areas that had previously been blocked. She lost more than 60 pounds without trying and where she hadn't been able to walk a block without pain, she was ultimately able to start walking more than a mile a day for exercise. So it was just tremendous to see her essentially get her health and her life back just by changing to a vegan diet.

AAVSG: How does plant-based food make that happen?

MM: We are, from a physiologic and anatomic perspective, plant eaters or herbivores. So when we depart from that diet and start eating diets that are high in animal foods, these toxic foods cause dysregulation of metabolic genes and ultimately manifest them-



selves as disease, like high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

For instance, animal protein increases what's called insulin resistance. Which means the insulin our body normally makes just does not work as well as it should. And that's one of the ways it allows blood sugar to get too high. But plant protein actually helps the insulin in our body work more effectively, helps lower blood pressure and helps our metabolic genes function more efficiently.

Also, fiber, which is only found in plant-based food, plays an essential role. It's broken down by bacteria in our large intestine to produce a number of different compounds that help improve our mental functioning, help improve the health of our central nervous system by helping it function more efficiently, help lower cholesterol and blood pressure, and reduce the risk for heart disease and cancer.

AAVSG: Why do you encourage more African Americans, in particular, to eat more plant-based food?

MM: When we look at the traditional diets of our West African ancestors, we see they were based on a wide range of whole plant-based foods that were very low in fat, like whole grains, green

leafy vegetables, and beans, nuts, and peas. They contained no dairy foods and very little meat on a daily basis.

Studies have shown that when African Americans eat a diet that is consistent with the traditional West African diets of our ancestors—that were primarily or entirely plant-based—we have very low rates of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, and cancer.

But when we eat the standard American diet, not only do we develop these chronic diseases, but we develop them to a greater degree than Caucasians do. And that's because we have a suite of metabolic genes that are often referred to as thrifty genes that developed in traditional West African populations and others that consumed a low-fat, plant-based diet. These thrifty genes are very efficient when African Americans eat whole plant-based foods. But when we eat high-fat, animal-based diets that are low in fiber, these genes are essentially dysregulated. And as a result, African Americans develop chronic diseases at earlier ages and in more aggressive, deadly forms.

So, it's really imperative that we eliminate animal-based foods like meat, dairy and eggs and eat food that is more appropriate for our physiology and our true heritage—a diet that is built around whole plant-based foods. ●

“Studies have shown that when African Americans eat a diet that is consistent with the traditional West African diets of our ancestors—that were entirely or primarily plant-based—we have very low rates of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and cancer.”



What to Eat

Plant-based food can include everything from pancakes to pizza, smoothies to salads, chili to mac and cheese, burgers to burritos, crab cakes to collard greens, BLT to BBQ, and cupcakes to cheesecake. Vegan food isn't just nutritious, it's delicious!

Four Categories of Vegan Food

The four types of plant-based food are fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes, also known as beans and nuts. When you build your meals from these four food groups, you get an unlimited variety of healthy, great-tasting dishes that meet all of your nutritional requirements.

What Makes Vegan Food So Healthy

Because vegan food comes from plants, it's high in disease-preventing fiber, free of artery-clogging cholesterol and low in disease-promoting saturated fat. Animal-based food, on the other hand, is highest in saturated fat and cholesterol, and contains zero fiber. Plant-based food is also high in phytochemicals and antioxidants, which help protect against heart disease, stroke, diabetes and certain cancers.

Imagining a typical 9-inch plate, you want to fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit, one quarter of the plate with a high-protein plant-based food, and the other quarter with whole grains. And be sure your plate reflects the rainbow of colors in fruits, vegetables, beans, and grains.

Creating Well-Balanced Meals

Imagining a typical 9-inch plate, you want to fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit, one quarter of the plate with a high-protein plant-based food, and the other quarter with whole grains. And be sure your plate reflects the rainbow of colors in fruits, vegetables, beans, and grains. (The phytochemicals that produce these colors help prevent and reverse chronic disease.)

What a Typical Day Looks Like

Try to eat 4-5 small meals throughout the day, rather than eat three large meals each day. It'll help you maintain your energy levels throughout the day and can actually lead to eating less food, because you won't get too hungry and overindulge at any given meal.

Here's a sample of what that looks like:

- Morning: Smoothie with fruit, vegetables, nuts or seeds and liquid (like water or almond milk).
- Mid-morning: Bowl of oatmeal with chopped apples or raisins, a dash of cinnamon and an optional teaspoon of flax or chia seeds sprinkled on top.
- Lunch: Large salad with lots of dark leafy greens (like kale and spinach) and a black bean burger or a cup of creamy chickpea soup with a side of cornbread.
- Mid-afternoon: Hummus and avocado slices with whole grain crackers or baby carrots with almond butter.
- Dinner: Veggie stir-fry with broccoli, ginger, red peppers, cashews and mushrooms over wild rice, followed by a piece of fruit.

So that's what a sample of well-balanced meals look like on a daily basis. (Check out Recipes on page 22.) ●



Getting the Nutrients You Need

Vegans (and everyone else) can get vitamins and minerals from food, fortification and fun in the sun.

Wondering how vegans get vitamin B12, calcium, iron and vitamin D? Read on below. (And check out [Top 10 Plant Proteins](#) on page 8.)

Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 originates from bacteria, not plants or animals. It comes from tiny one-celled organisms or microbes that are in the air, earth and water. In our bacteria-phobic, super hygienic world, neither meat-eaters nor vegans typically get enough reliable vitamin B12 in their diets unless they're eating ample B12-fortified food, such as plant-based milks, breakfast cereals, and nutritional yeast (see Glossary on page 2) or taking B12 supplements. That said, animals can harbor the bacteria, which can be ingested by meat-eaters. This is not the case with vegans. Based on the latest research findings for those eating plant-based food, Dr. Michael Greger in *How Not to Die* recommends a B12 supplement (cyanocobalamin) of 2,500 mcg a week or 250 mcg a day for people under age 65. For people over age 65, the amount should be increased up to 1,000 mcg a day.

Calcium

We need about 1,000 mg of calcium each day and just one cup of cooked collard greens and black-eyed peas has 350 mg each.

The key is to eat a variety of plant-based food throughout the day and you'll easily meet your daily calcium needs.

Iron

Plant-based sources of iron include beans, lentils, nuts, whole grains, dried fruits and dark leafy greens. Eating them with fruits and vegetables that are rich in vitamin C (such as strawberries and broccoli) will ensure that enough iron is obtained to meet the recommended daily allowance for women (18 mg for ages 19-50; 8 mg for ages 51 and older) and 8 mg for men (ages 19 and older).

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is made in skin that's exposed to ultraviolet rays from the sun. To meet your daily vitamin D needs, you typically want to get at least 20 minutes of direct sunlight on your face, hands, arms or back two to three times a week. If you're indoors most of the time, some alternatives to sunlight include food fortified with vitamin D, like whole grain cereals and plant-based milks, including almond, rice or soy milks.

So that's how vegans get those common vitamins and minerals —from food, fortification and fun in the sun. ●

Top 10 Plant-Powered Proteins



The perennial “Where do you get your protein?” question can finally be put to rest. Why? Because the largest study in history of people who eat plant-based diets, published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in 2013, found that the average vegan gets 70% more protein than the recommended daily allowance—just like meat-eaters do.

But do you know exactly what protein is and why we need it?

Protein is a vital nutrient that grows blood cells, bones, muscles, skin, hair and other parts of our bodies. There are tens of thousands of different types of proteins in our bodies. Each one is made from building blocks called amino acids. There are about 20 amino acids that make up protein. Eleven of them are made by our bodies and the other nine we have to get every day from the food we eat. These are called essential amino acids.

And how much protein do we need each day? On average, we need to get about 50-70 grams a day, according to the Institute of Medicine’s recommended daily allowance. Another way to calculate this is to multiply your weight by 0.36 grams. So if you’re 140 pounds, you’ll need about 50 grams of protein each day. If you’re very physically active, you need more protein, up to 70 grams daily, and you can easily meet your needs by increasing the amount of protein-rich beans, nuts and grains you eat each day.

Top 10 High-Protein Vegan Foods

1. Tempeh, 1/2 package = 22 grams
(What’s tempeh? Check out the Glossary on page 2)
2. Tofu, 1 cup cooked = 20 grams
3. Lentils, 1 cup cooked = 18 grams
4. Pumpkin Seeds, 1/2 cup raw = 17 grams
5. Almonds, 1/2 cup raw = 16 grams
6. Split Peas, 1 cup cooked = 16 grams
7. Garbanzo Beans (Chickpeas), 1 cup cooked = 15 grams
(Most beans have 14-16 grams)
8. Hemp Seeds, 1/4 cup raw (4 tablespoons) = 10 grams
9. Quinoa, 1 cup cooked = 9 grams
10. Millet, 1 cup cooked = 8 grams

So there you have it. Keep in mind that almost all plant-based food contains some amount of protein, from an avocado (7 grams) to a cup of raw kale (2 grams). The key is to eat different plant food throughout the day and you’ll meet all of your protein needs. ●



Socializing While Vegan

By Demetrius Bagley



Some of your friends will understand your choice to go vegan and others will not (at least not initially). And that's fine! You go ahead and do you. Here are some ways to get the most out of socializing as a new vegan.

Expand Your Network

Seek out new opportunities to grow your social circle by joining vegan Meetups in your local area. It's a great way to meet a variety of vegans—whether activists or foodies, newbies or veterans. If your community has no vegan Meetup or it's currently inactive, consider co-leading one. As an organizer, you'll get to meet more people, and discover and share new vegan happenings, all while providing a space for you and others to connect. Added bonus: eating a meal free from explanations and being on the defensive is so much more enjoyable and relaxing! Part of being vegan, after all, is living with a greater sense of peace.

Explore Locally

Check out your community's green or farmer's markets and explore what vegan eats there are. (Be sure to bring along your lover, friend, family member, or any combination thereof, to share the experience.) Along with buying fresh produce directly from the growers, you'll often find small businesses selling a variety of vegan goodies.

Enjoy the Cookouts

Attending picnics, potlucks, cookouts, or any other food-focused events with omnivores can feel tricky, but it doesn't have to. Vegan food, after all, is food nearly anyone can eat. So be confident about bringing some vegan food to share. The key is to know your host and audience. Providing something sweet, like a fruit salad, a few pints of vegan ice cream or a pan of homemade vegan brownies, can be great crowd pleasers. Healthy drinks, like fresh smoothies, juices or lemonade can also be refreshing to share.

And, of course, be sure you have something substantial to eat, too. Choose something you can easily make (or buy) that you would really enjoy and know that at least a few other people attending would, too. Even better, make sure it's a colorful dish that stands out among the other dishes at the table. (Get Recipes on page 22).

With these tips, you'll be well on your way to enjoying your social life as a new vegan even more. ●

Demetrius Bagley is an award-winning producer of the documentary Vegucated and has godfathered Vegan Street Fair, SoCal VegFest and vegan kickstarters.

Raising Children Vegan

By Ruby Thomas, MD

Many women who are vegan and become pregnant wonder if they should adjust their diets to ensure a healthy pregnancy, but a vegan diet can be totally healthy for you and your baby.

Vegan Pregnancy

A vegan diet can be completely healthy for pregnant women. In fact, it may actually help lower your risk for pregnancy-related complications, such as elevated blood pressure or gestational diabetes. The key to nourishing yourself and your growing baby is to eat as many whole foods as possible from each plant-based food group, including whole grains, fruit, vegetables and legumes, as well as healthy fats. And make extra sure to get adequate amounts of folic acid, vitamin B12, calcium, vitamin D and iron, found in your standard prenatal vitamin. Your doctor may also recommend an extra vitamin D supplement because many women are deficient in this vitamin. Also, be sure to drink plenty of water each day.

Vegan Diets for Infants and Children

A vegan diet can be one of the best ways to ensure a healthy start for your baby, and can help decrease the risk of obesity, heart disease, and cancer later in life. Vegan children may also have fewer problems with allergies and digestive problems. Breastfeeding is best for your baby during the first year of life and is exclusively recommended for the first 4-6 months by the American Academy of Pediatrics. All exclusively breastfed babies should also receive a vitamin D supplement, since it is very important for bone health and development. Vitamin D deficiency is very common in the United States, and breastfed babies and African Americans are at increased risk for this deficiency and its complications.

For your child's first foods, you can start with pureed fruits and vegetables, such as bananas and sweet potatoes. Avocado is also a great first food for vegan babies due to the high amount of good fats that it contains, which are important for brain growth and development.



As your baby gets older, you can introduce an even greater variety of food such as whole grains, seeds, and nut butters. You can also begin to introduce plant milks such as hemp, almond or coconut milk into your child's diet once breastfeeding is complete. At this time, you may also want to begin your child on a children's multivitamin supplement that includes vitamin B12 (see Getting the Nutrients You Need on page 7).

By starting your child on a vegan diet from birth, you're ensuring that your child is exposed to a wide variety of food that will help to enhance the immune system, lower the risk for childhood obesity, and help to guarantee a healthy future. ●

Dr. Ruby Thomas is a board-certified pediatrician with specialized training in preventive and integrative medicine.



Testimonial

My Vegan Pregnancy

By Rain Truth

I am a vegan chef and the mother of three beautiful vegan children. For each of my vegan pregnancies, I studied, researched and sought out vegan alternatives to everything that the traditional doctors required during the prenatal period.

My prenatal pills were vegan and I ate food like beans, lentils, nut butters and grains to get my calcium and phosphorus. I got my omega oils and healthy fats from avocados and coconuts, and I used a liquid supplement, Floradix, to get my iron. I also ate hemp seeds, cashews, dark leafy greens and Spirulina to get my magnesium. I even found a healthier equivalent to the toxic orange glucose drink that was required for my gestational diabetes test.

My pregnancy cravings were avocado, seeded watermelon and Ethiopian food, which also made life a lot easier. (As a vegan, you can almost always find four or five items at an Ethiopian, Thai, Indian or Caribbean restaurant that are or can be made vegan.)

I also made food in bulk, stored snacks and found other vegan or vegan-friendly establishments that delivered, so I would be prepared once the baby came. I made decisions with purpose and intention because I was bringing new life into the world and I knew they were depending on me to know my stuff.

During my first pregnancy, it was difficult to get family members and friends to understand that I was maintaining a healthy and balanced diet without the consumption of animal products.

It seemed that everyone had an opinion about how I should take care of myself and my unborn child. It was intimidating at times, but I equipped myself with the proper tools and preparation.

When I was pregnant with my second child, the doctor told me I needed to eat meat so the baby would thrive on a physical, emotional and mental level. Needless to say, I switched doctors. My third and most recent pregnancy was drug-free and very smooth and quick. I make baby food for my 8-month old and will continue to raise her as a vegan, just as I do with my other children. My experiences have even led me to start a vegan youth culinary program for children, exposing them to plant-based food that they might not otherwise have. I'm always thinking of creative new ways to share my own family's healthy vegan lifestyle with others. ●

Rain Truth, aka The Cultured Vegan, is a passionate vegan chef and lifestyle educator, and proud mother of three vegan children.

Interview

Vegan Olympic Skier Seba Johnson

Seba Johnson, a vegan since birth, was only 14 when she competed in the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics, making her an Olympic legend as both the youngest Alpine skier in history, as well as the first black female skier in history. Always an advocate for animals, Seba speaks internationally about her activism during and since making history. We caught up with Seba to find out what it was like growing up vegan.

AASG: In what ways do you feel you benefited from growing up as a vegan?

SJ: Without question, the individuals that my vegan upbringing benefited the most were the animals I did not eat the past forty-three years of my life. In comparison to my childhood classmates, however, I hardly ever got sick. My vegan food and vitamin D from the sun kept me healthy and better able to focus while in class or on the mountain training.

Being raised a vegan from birth also afforded me a lifelong expression of compassion and empathy, which we are all born with but is unfortunately brainwashed out of us by the detrimental impact the meat and dairy industries have on school children via learning material or commercials. My empathy extends toward all individuals who suffer injustices, such as discrimination, oppression, abuse, exploitation and captivity. I've had a lifelong, unwavering need to help alleviate the amount of suffering that exists in the world.

AASG: How did your omnivore family, friends and teachers respond?

SJ: Growing up "strict vegetarian" (since the word vegan wasn't mainstream then) was not understood. My mother's side eventually stopped inviting us to holiday gatherings because they didn't want to hear about the animal cruelty involved with eating "traditional" meals, although we always brought a vegan dish to share.



My childhood friends still reach out to me today about the exotic fruits and vegetables they tried at our house for the first time; like artichokes, pomegranates, avocados, rice wrapped in grape leaves and other items they had never eaten at home.

At school, teachers and the school cafeteria staff were instructed to serve my sister and I only the (canned) vegetables and fruit during lunch and often times that meant a tray filled with a double serving of potato tots. My mother would pack us lunch with avocado or marinated artichoke heart with mustard and lettuce sandwiches—my favorite. The kids would tease us about the smell, but I thought it was much more pleasing than the smell of the meat lunches they had. When I was a kid, I couldn't wait to grow up because I just knew the world would be vegan by then!

AASG: How did being vegan affect your training and performance as the youngest Olympic alpine ski racer in history?

SJ: Oh my, where do I start? Firstly, it was difficult securing clothing and ski equipment sponsors who would adhere to my ethical and moral refusal to wear animal skins, fur, wool, silk or down, all of which were rampant in winter sport attire. Secondly, since I was well aware of animal suffering, I found the racism and death threats I received as a 14-year-old during my first Winter Olympic Games was a frightening taste of the hatred that existed in the world, towards animals and towards one another.



Lastly, because vegan food wasn't readily available in the Olympic Athlete's Village, I requested organic mixed berries, multi-grain breads, and other vegan fare, so huge Russian hockey players and other athletes were then able to feast on these new additions, too!

AASG: What tips would you give to parents raising vegan kids today?

SJ: Tip 1: Keep your course, no matter what family, friends or strangers may say about raising your kids vegan. Never falter. Trust me, your kids will thank you profusely for raising them vegan when they grow up! Tip 2: Be honest with your children about why they're vegan. Explain why the oppression and exploitation of any individual on earth is wasted energy that could be better used protecting, preserving and improving life for everyone who shares this planet. ●

Without question, the individuals that my vegan upbringing benefited the most were the animals I did not eat the past forty-three years of my life.



Eating Healthy on a Budget

By Robin D. Everson

Many people believe that fresh, nutritious food is expensive, when in reality, the opposite is true. I maintain a food budget of \$200 per month for one person on a healthy vegan diet. Here are some tips to show you how to do it, too.

Eat Whole Food

Make whole plant-based food like legumes, vegetables, fruit and whole grains the majority of the food you buy. They're not only cheaper than packaged and processed food, but more nutritious, too.

Buy the Basics in Bulk

I buy items that I use on a regular basis in large quantity and in bulk because it's usually cheaper and I'm not paying for unnecessary packaging.

For example, a 42-ounce container of old-fashioned oats costs about \$1.89 and lasts for two months. Bulk beans cost about 69 cents to \$2.00 per pound, will last a week and can be used in a variety of dishes. Similarly, whole grains, like rice and quinoa, cost 50 cents to \$2.00 per pound for the week.

Buy Fresh Fruit and Veggies

To stay within your budget, try a new vegetable each week and keep a list of the ones you like. Prices vary between 25 cents to \$3.00 per pound, so always buy what's in season and what's on sale. Also try to buy organic produce whenever possible because it's not sprayed with cancer-causing chemicals. If that's not possi-

ble, check out the Environmental Working Group's "Clean 15" list (available free at ewg.org), which lists the least-sprayed produce that doesn't have to be purchased in organic form. It's also fine to buy frozen veggies, too, since they can sometimes be cheaper than fresh.

Grow Your Own Food

If you aren't already growing your own food, check out your local nursery and ask about organic plants that are easy to grow. You'd be amazed at how easy it is to grow your own kale, spinach, grape tomatoes, bell peppers, herbs and more.

Consider the Big Picture

Your new way of eating can benefit not only your health and your wallet, but also the environment and the planet. Like anything new, eating healthy on a budget will take some practice, but you'll be a pro in no time. And you might find yourself helping your family and friends eat better and save money, too. ●

Robin D. Everson is an award-winning journalist who writes about the good things in life—art, culture, events, food, healthy living, people and places.



Menu

5 Tips for Eating Out

Today it's easier than ever to eat out as a vegan. There are hundreds of vegan restaurants around the country, and most other restaurants now have specifically vegan options, unintentionally vegan options or dishes that can easily be made vegan. So check out these simple tips for eating out like a pro.

#1: Eat at vegan restaurants. There are more than 600 all-vegan restaurants in the U.S., with every state included, so make this your first option. To find vegan (or vegetarian) restaurants in your area, check out HappyCow.net, VegDining.com, or do an online search for local vegan restaurants.

#2: Eat at world cuisine restaurants. If you're not already doing this, eat at restaurants where the cuisine is Indian, Ethiopian, Mexican, Korean, Italian, Thai and more. Many dishes are already vegan or can be made vegan with little effort. And in the process, you might expand your palate and discover new favorite foods.

#3: Check out the menu in advance. When you're going to non-vegan restaurants, check out the menu online first, as you would at any new restaurant. If you have questions about ingredients or how a dish is prepared, call the restaurant ahead of time and ask. Don't be shy. You can also ask if they can make a vegan dish for you, if necessary. To find out what vegan options are available at popular chain restaurants or fast food places, check out the [VeganXpress](#) app.

#4: Ask the waiters what they recommend. For impromptu visits when you can't do advance planning, ask the waiters for suggestions. There may be unlabeled vegan options on the menu or the waiters may know of a special vegan dish not on the menu that the restaurant prepares for vegan customers. Or you can ask if they can prepare something simple like sautéed or roasted vegetables (in oil instead of butter) over brown rice or a baked sweet potato.

#5: You don't always have to eat. This may not be a tip you'd expect, but it's fine to go out to a restaurant for an hour or two, enjoy the company of your friends and family, and not eat. This is especially true if it's a place where you doubt they're used to the whole vegan thing. Whatever the reason, it's ok for you not to eat. Just smile and say, "I'm fine." "I'm good." "I'm just enjoying the company." And then talk and laugh and enjoy the company. After all, that's much of the fun of eating out, anyway. ●

How to Handle Family Reunions

Wondering how to answer questions about why you're not eating Grandma's mac and cheese at your next family gathering?

These tips will help you handle those situations with love and grace.

#1: Never answer a question at the dinner table about why you became a vegan. Most folks don't really want to know right then anyway. They may be feeling defensive about how they're eating compared to you. Or if they genuinely want to know, other people at the table might not want to hear about it. So whenever you get this question, just simply suggest (with a smile) that you talk about it later.

#2: If you feel you have to say something right away, try this: "I just wanted to eat healthier and I feel really good!" or "I just decided to change how I eat and it's been great!" If they press you further, that's the time to say "Well I'm sooo glad you're interested! Let's talk about it some more after dinner." If you do have that conversation later, share your story and be sure to recommend a few books and movies they can check out for more info.

#3: Be prepared so you're not tempted to eat the meat and dairy. That may mean bringing plenty of your own vegan food (from home or your favorite veg restaurant) so you have enough for seconds and dessert, like everyone else. That way you won't feel deprived.



#4: Fix your vegan plate first. Trust us on this one. If you don't get all the food you want first, your relatives will eat all your vegan food along with their meat and dairy, and you'll be left with hurt feelings and no second helpings. And be sure to put separate serving utensils on each of your vegan dishes. That way, the fork for the ham won't be used for the tofu cutlets and the spoon for the deviled eggs won't be used for the vegan mac and cheese (see recipe on page 26). Again, no hurt feelings.

#5: Know that all the questions (and teasing) will eventually go away. As you become easier and more nonchalant about eating vegan, your relatives will take it in stride, too. And don't be surprised to find some of your relatives coming to you for advice on how to eat healthier. Who knows, you may end up being a catalyst for change in your family. ●



How to Transition to Vegan Food

The switch to vegan food can be easier than you might think. The key is consistency and practice. Don't be discouraged if you stop and start a few times. Most people do. Just know that every single plant-based meal you eat makes a difference—for your health, the animals, and the planet. These tips will help make your transition simpler.

Learn More

Read and watch everything you can about eating vegan. Talk to vegans you know about how they transitioned, what challenges they had and how they overcame them, and what things they love most about their vegan lifestyle. Support yourself with knowledge—it works! A recent survey of nearly 8,000 vegans found that more than 40% were inspired to go vegan after watching an educational video or movie, nearly 30% were motivated by an article, book or song lyric, and another 25% were encouraged to become vegan by a conversation with another person.

Veganize Your Current Meals

Choose some of your favorite meals that you cook on a regular basis for lunch or dinner, and then veganize them. For example, curried chicken can become curried chickpeas or a hamburger can become a grilled or sautéed portobello mushroom smothered with sautéed tomatoes and onions. You'll be surprised at how easily you can make your most familiar meals vegan.

Find New Vegan Recipes

Make a habit of leisurely checking out vegan recipe sites once a week or so when you have some free time. That way, you'll expand your awareness about the infinite variety of vegan dishes that exist, you'll identify some favorite, go-to sites for mealtime inspiration and you'll train your brain to think vegan when it comes to food.

Take Food Preparation Classes

When you're transitioning to vegan food, you may need to learn a whole new set of skills, so why not take classes from an expert in vegan cooking? It'll help cut your learning curve in half. And it's a great way to taste new food, meet new vegan-friendly people and have some fun at the same time.

Keep a Stash

It's a good idea to keep a stash of your favorite healthy snacks in your desk or the refrigerator at work, in your car or in your purse or bag. These can include fruit, nuts, popcorn, baked chips and more. You'll find they come in handy during those times when there's no other vegan food available.

Enjoy the Transition

Celebrate the fact that you're taking this life-changing step toward eating healthier. That's a tremendous achievement. ●



Saving Animals *and the Planet*

Compassion for animals and protecting the planet are also vital reasons to go vegan. Here's why.

Animals on Factory Farms

Every year in the United States, more than 9 billion chickens, cows, pigs and turkeys are cruelly bred, raised and killed for meat, milk and eggs on factory farms.

These animals are sentient, individual beings with emotions, personalities, intelligence, family bonds and social relationships. They live confined in crowded ammonia and feces-infested cages, stalls or sheds, often unable to turn around, and fed with antibiotics to mitigate the filthy conditions. They're also pumped with hormones to make them grow bigger and faster, which can leave them unable to stand to support their abnormally large bodies, but does get them to the slaughterhouse quicker.

So-called "humanely-raised" animals don't fare much better. "Free-range" and "free-roaming" are just terms used for marketing and raising prices. The USDA has no inspection systems in place to make sure that farms can back up these labels. These animals are still treated cruelly, enduring painful procedures, including forced impregnations, castrations, branding and de-

beaking, and are still sent to the same slaughterhouses to be killed in the same way as other factory farm animals.

Factory Farming and the Planet

Factory farming is also unsustainable and destructive to the Earth. Animal production for meat and dairy products causes more global warming than all of the world's transportation combined. The methane gas from the manure of livestock accounts for more greenhouse gas emissions than all of the cars, busses, trains and planes on the planet.

Livestock production is also the leading cause of water pollution and soil degradation in the world. And if the corn, soy and other grains fed to factory-farmed animals in the United States were instead consumed directly by people, nearly a billion people around the world could be fed.

The United Nations has also reported that "a global shift towards a vegan diet is vital to save the world from hunger...and the worst impacts of climate change." What we eat has a direct impact on our climate, and if we don't act on that knowledge, are we any different than climate change deniers?

We can start today by eating more plant-based food. ●

On Animal Liberation

by Aph Ko

As African American animal rights activists living in a white supremacist patriarchy, many of us have come to the conclusion that our experiences of racial oppression are deeply entangled with animal oppression on a fundamental level.

Entwined Oppression

Many of us bristle at the idea of being compared to animals. This is no surprise given the fact that we were legally defined as chattel for 250 years, and we are still feeling the aftershocks of enslavement today.

However, anti-racist African American animal rights activists also understand that black people and animals are being oppressed *because* of the system of white supremacist patriarchy in this country. We argue that our oppression is a *layer* of animal oppression, especially since “animal” refers to any being that deviates from that system’s ideally imagined human, which is a white man.

From enslavement through today, white racial violence against black people happens, in large part, because the state still relegates black people to sub-human or animal-like citizenship. So while racial oppression and animal oppression are often thought of as two distinct and separate forms of oppression, we see, in fact, that it’s not a matter of comparing and contrasting the way the two groups are treated, but realizing that we have a common source of oppression.

Tokenism and Exploitation

In this same vein, many of us are accustomed to seeing white animal rights organizations use imagery of racial oppression to gain sympathy for animal oppression. An example is depicting a bound and chained person next to a bound and chained animal or a lynched person next to a hanging animal. This is deeply troubling, especially since these same organizations don’t seem to support African Americans in our own struggles to attain full human citizenship today. The assumption that black oppression is “historical” sustains the post-racial mythology that we are all equal today, particularly when black people are experiencing police violence, mass incarceration and environmental racism in part because we are still viewed as sub-human and animal.

Moving Forward

So where do we go from here, knowing that racial and animal oppression are deeply entangled? We continue to take anti-speciesist stances ourselves. Speciesism occurs when humans are viewed as the superior species, which leads to the exploitation of animals. And so, in response to speciesism, we choose to live vegan lifestyles, through the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the skincare products we use, and our work to end factory farming, circuses, zoos and more. We use whatever resources we have to make a change.

And we bring our understanding of the interconnectedness of racial and animal oppression when we organize in predominantly white animal rights spaces. We ensure that these issues are addressed as an integral part of our work together. If we don’t, we only end up reproducing a white supremacist patriarchy, rather than creating true liberation. ●

Aph Ko is an award-winning writer, performer, and indie digital media producer, and the founder of Black Vegans Rock and Aphro-ism.

Stocking Your Kitchen

Maintaining a well-stocked pantry and fridge is a great way to have everything at your fingertips to prepare healthy, well-balanced meals every day. It also helps get your creative juices flowing, saves time in the kitchen and saves money on eating out.

This list is a general resource, so don't feel you need to stock all of this food in your kitchen. Just use it as a guide to help create or add to your own master list so you can get started on your vegan food journey with confidence. And if some of the food on this list is new to you, that's good! Try out a new food a few times a month and see how you like it.

Fresh Fruit

Apples
Avocados
Bananas
Mixed Berries
Cherries
Cucumbers
Kiwi
Peaches
Pears
Plums

Dried Fruit

Apricots
Cherries
Figs
Medjool dates
Prunes
Raisins

Oils (Optional)

Coconut oil
Flaxseed oil
Hemp seed oil
Olive oil
Virgin coconut oil
Sesame oil

Herbs and Spices

Basil
Cayenne
Cilantro
Cinnamon
Dill
Fennel
Ginger
Nutritional Yeast
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Thyme
Turmeric

Vegetables

Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Collards
Dandelion greens
Kale
Mustard greens
Spinach
Swiss chard
Mixed frozen vegetables

Sweeteners

Coconut sugar
Date sugar
Molasses
Pure maple syrup

Breads, Tortillas, Crackers

Spelt bread
Sprouted-grain bread (cinnamon raisin, sesame, etc.)
Whole-grain crackers
Whole-grain pita bread
Whole-grain tortillas

Nut and Seed Butters

Almond butter
Cashew butter
Peanut butter
Sesame butter
Tahini (made from sesame seeds)



Condiments, Sauces, Spreads

Balsamic vinegar
BBQ sauce
Black sesame seeds
Hummus
Ketchup
Mayo (non-dairy)
Mustard
Pasta (marinara) sauce
Peanut sauce
Pesto
Red wine or white wine vinegar
Rice vinegar
Salsa
Stir-fry sauces, like hoisin and black bean sauce

Plant-Based Milks

Almond milk
Coconut milk
Hazelnut milk
Hemp milk
Oat milk
Rice milk (from brown rice)
Soy milk

Nuts

Almonds
Brazil nuts
Cashews
Flax seeds
Hemp seeds
Pecans
Pistachios
Pumpkin seeds
Sunflower seeds
Walnuts

Beans

Black beans
Black-eyed peas
Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
Falafel mix
Lentils (French, green, red)
Lima or butter beans
Navy beans
Red kidney beans
Split peas

Whole Grains

Barley
Black, brown or wild rice
Bulgur
Corn
Millet
Quinoa
Rolled oats
Whole grain spaghetti

Whole Grain Pastas and Noodles

Angel hair
Fettuccine
Penne
Soba
Spaghetti
Spirals (or Rotini)
Udon

Tofu, Tempeh, Seitan

(For definitions, see Glossary on page 2)

Seitan (cubed or diced)
Tempeh (sliced or strips)
Tofu, extra firm (for stir-frying, oven-baking, grilling)
Tofu, soft (for dips, puddings, baked desserts)



Recipes



Sweet Potato Pancakes

Serves 3

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons ground flax seeds + 4 tablespoons water
1½ cups whole spelt flour
1/3 cup coconut sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg (freshly ground)
1½ cups soy milk (or another non-dairy milk)
1 teaspoon apple cider or white vinegar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup + 2 tablespoons mashed sweet potato
2 tablespoons coconut, grapeseed or canola oil + more
for frying pancakes (or use Earth Balance to fry)
Toppings
Real maple syrup
Vegan tempeh bacon
Toasted coconut, nuts and/or seeds

Instructions:

Combine the flax and water in a large mixing bowl to make the flax egg. Combine the flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, baking soda and spices in another large bowl. To the flax egg, add the soy milk, vinegar, vanilla, sweet potato and oil and whisk well, until combined. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients until just combined.

Preheat a skillet and melt a couple tablespoons of coconut oil on the surface. Ladle some batter onto the skillet (about ½ cup) and fill with as many pancakes as you can comfortably fit. I can do 3 in my skillet. Cook on each side on medium-low heat for about 3 minutes. Flip when the center starts to bubble. Place cooked pancakes onto a clean plate which you can keep warm in the oven at its lowest setting. Complete with the remaining batter. To serve, top the pancakes with maple syrup, vegan tempeh bacon, toasted coconut, nuts or seeds.

Recipe by Chef Jenné Claiborne, sweetpotatosoul.com



Bliss Breakfast Smoothie

Serves 2

Ingredients:

- 1 ripe frozen banana, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup strawberries (remove green hulls)
- 1 cup orange juice or coconut water or plain water

Instructions:

Place all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth and creamy. Enjoy immediately!

Recipe by Traci Thomas, Black Vegetarian Society of GA, bvsga.com

Coconut Cashew Milk

Serves 2-3

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups cashew pieces
- 3 cups coconut water
- 3 medjool dates, pitted
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions:

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend on the highest speed. Serve immediately. For a thinner nut milk, strain the liquid through a cheesecloth.

*Recipe by Tracye McQuirter, MPH, from her book *By Any Greens Necessary*, byanygreensnecessary.com*



Hearts of Baltimore Crab Cakes

Serves 2

Ingredients:

Garlicky Dill Aioli

- 1/2 cup vegan mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic

Crab Cakes

- 3 tablespoons grapeseed or safflower oil, divided, plus more for frying
- 1 (14-ounce) can hearts of palm, (not packed in sugar), roughly chopped to the consistency of crab meat
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup diced red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons Old Bay seasoning
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1/4 cup vegan mayonnaise

Breading

- 1/2 cup gluten-free bread crumbs, or more
- 1 tablespoon Old Bay Seasoning
- Lemon wedges, to serve

Instructions:

Garlicky Dill Aioli: Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl. Mix well and add salt and pepper to taste. Set in the fridge to keep cool.

Crab Cakes: Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the hearts of palm and sauté for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Cook until golden brown on all sides. Set aside to cool. Add the celery and peppers and mix well. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a skillet over medium-heat heat. Add the onions and sauté until translucent, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Remove from the heat, add to the hearts of palm, and mix well. Add the Old Bay seasoning, cornstarch and mayo. Transfer the mixture to a mixing bowl and mix well. Set aside to cool to room temperature, then shape the mixture into four round patties.

Breading: In a shallow bowl, combine the bread crumbs and Old Bay seasoning, stirring to mix. Coat the patties with the breadcrumb mixture and refrigerate for 20 minutes. Heat about 3 tablespoons of oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat until hot and shimmering. Carefully place the patties in the skillet and cook until golden brown on each side, approximately 2 minutes per side. Watch closely to prevent burning. Transfer the cooked patties to a plate lined with paper towels to drain any excess oil. Serve hot, topped with the aioli, with lemon wedges on the side.

Recipe by Chef Ayinde Howell from his book [The Lusty Vegan](#); [ieatgrass.com](#)



Cashew Ginger Stir-Fry

Serves 2-4

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons sesame oil
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped
- 1 head broccoli, chopped (florets only)
- ¼ cup cashew pieces
- 1 tablespoon tamari or low-sodium soy sauce
- Dash cayenne
- 1 tablespoon Thai curry paste (optional)

Instructions:

Heat the sesame oil in a skillet. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, and red pepper and sauté until soft, 2-3 minutes. Remove these vegetables from the oil and set aside. Using the same oil, turn up the heat and add the broccoli to the hot oil. Stir-fry for about 10 minutes. Reduce heat, add the vegetables back in and add remaining ingredients. Stir and let sit covered on low heat for another 5 minutes. Serve over brown rice or whole-grain pasta.

*Recipe by Tracye McQuirter, MPH, from her book *By Any Greens Necessary*, byanygreensnecessary.com*



Oven-Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Medjool Dates

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 1 (10-ounce) package shaved Brussels sprouts (see Pro tip)
- 2 cups pitted dates, torn into quarters
- 3 tablespoons grapeseed or safflower oil
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F. In a 9 x 13-inch baking dish, combine the Brussels sprouts and dates with the oil, salt and pepper. Toss to make sure all the pieces of dates and Brussels sprouts are covered evenly. Sprinkle the garlic on top. Roast for 20 minutes or until the garlic has caramelized and the dates and Brussels sprouts have browned on top. Pro-tip: If you cannot find shaved Brussels sprouts, take the Brussels sprout and cut from top to bottom; lay flat and then slice thin shreds, as if it were an onion.

Recipe by Chef Ayinde Howell from his book The Lusty Vegan, ieatgrass.com

Mac & Cheese

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

- 2 cups elbow noodles

Cheese Sauce

- 1/2 cup grapeseed oil
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1/2 cup nutritional yeast flakes
- 2-3 cups soy milk (to desired thickness)

Instructions:

Cook elbow noodles per package instructions and place in a large bowl. Add all cheese sauce ingredients, except milk, to a blender and start to blend on high speed. Slowly add milk until smooth and creamy. Combine cheese sauce with noodles in the bowl, making sure noodles are well covered. Place mixture into a 9-inch baking dish and cook for 45 minutes or until golden brown. / *Recipe by Chef Tsadaqueyah Emmanuel, majani.biz*





All Hail the Kale Salad

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

2-3 bunches curly kale, washed and chopped or torn into small pieces
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 medium red onion, chopped
2 avocados, chopped
1 orange bell pepper, chopped
5 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
2 tablespoons tamari or low-sodium soy sauce
2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
Cayenne pepper, to taste

Instructions:

Place the kale in a large bowl and pour the olive oil over it. Toss with salad tongs to make sure all the leaves are coated. Add in the rest of the ingredients and toss well. If possible, let marinate at room temperature for about half an hour before serving.

*Recipe by Tracye McQuirter, MPH, from her book *By Any Greens Necessary*, byanygreensnecessary.com*



Chickpea “Tuna” Salad

Serves 2-4

Ingredients:

14-ounce can of salt-free chickpeas, drained and rinsed
¼ cup vegan mayo OR ¼ cup vegan mayo + 2 table-
spoons mashed avocado
1 tablespoon Dijon or whole grain mustard
1½ tablespoons Ume plum vinegar (add a splash more if
you are using avocado instead of mayo)
2 teaspoons celery seeds
1 celery rib, chopped
2 tablespoons minced green onion or red onion or
shallot
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (more to taste) or crushed
chili flakes
4 leaves romaine or kale
Seasoned nori or unseasoned (dried and toasted sea-
weed)
Toasted bread

Instructions:

Place the chickpeas, mayo, mustard, Ume vinegar, celery seeds, celery, onion, black pepper, and cayenne pepper into a food processor. Pulse a few times until incorporated and minced. Careful not to over blend. You shouldn't be pulsing more than 20 seconds. Serve over toast with romaine lettuce and nori.

Recipe by Chef Jenné Claiborne, sweetpotatosoul.com



Lentil Fritters

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

2 cups dry lentils (soaked overnight; do not cook)
1 small sprig fresh sage (8 leaves)
1 small onion, diced
4 cloves garlic
1 bell pepper, diced
1 tablespoon sea salt
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
1/4 cup olive oil

Instructions:

Combine all ingredients in a food processor, pulse several times and then run for a minute, scraping sides as needed. Add enough water to make a thick batter. Use desired scoop size and pan fry in a cast iron skillet (preferred) for 2-3 minutes or until brown on both sides.

Recipe by Chef Tsadakeeyah Emmanuel, majani.biz



Smoky Black Bean Bisque

Serves 4

Ingredients:

1 small yellow onion, diced small
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons cumin seeds, toasted and ground
2 teaspoons minced fresh oregano
3 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
4 cups cooked black beans
2 1/2 to 3 cups vegetable stock
Sea salt to taste
1 lime, quartered (garnish)
1 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro (garnish)
1 small red onion, diced small (garnish)

Instructions:

Sauté the yellow onion in a stockpot over medium heat for 8 minutes. Add water 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time to keep the onion from sticking. Add the garlic, cumin, and oregano, and cook for another minute. Add the chipotles, black beans, and vegetable stock and bring to a boil over high heat. Decrease the heat to medium and cook the soup, covered, for 20 minutes. Season with salt and purée the soup in batches in a blender. Return the puréed soup to a pot and keep warm. Serve garnished with the lime wedges, cilantro and red onion.

Recipe by Chef Del Sroufe from his book Better Than Vegan, chefdelsroufe.com

Baked Sweet Potato Fries + Three Vegan Dips

Serves 2-4

Preparation:

Make sure to soak the cut sweet potato fries for an hour before baking. This will help to remove some of the starch and will allow for a crispier baked fry. For the avocado wasabi and tamarind ketchups, you'll need to use a food processor. A blender could work, but expect to have a difficult time getting all of the sauce out from the bottom of the machine.

Ingredients:

Baked Sweet Potato Fries

2 medium sweet potatoes
2 tablespoons coconut, grapeseed, or canola oil
¼ tsp salt

Chipotle Aioli Dipping Sauce

½ cup vegan mayo
1 tablespoon chipotle sauce from a can of chipotle peppers (also called adobo sauce)
1 teaspoon lime juice, freshly squeezed

Avocado Wasabi Dipping Sauce

1 ripe avocado
1 tablespoon wasabi powder (or less if you're sensitive to heat)
1 teaspoon lime juice, freshly squeezed

Raw Tamarind Ketchup

1 cup cherry tomatoes
½ cup dates, pitted (soaked, if they're hard)
2 teaspoons tamarind paste
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

Instructions:

Baked Sweet Potato Fries

Peel the sweet potatoes and cut into fry shapes—about ¼ inch thick and 4 inches long. Soak the cut sweet potatoes in cold water for 1 hour. Preheat oven to 400°. Remove the sweet potatoes from the soaking water and dry them with a clean kitchen towel. Toss them on a baking sheet with oil, and spread them evenly on the sheet. Top with a sprinkle of salt before baking for 30 minutes. Flip the potatoes about 20 minutes into the baking. Serve with the dipping sauce.



Chipotle Aioli

Place the vegan mayo, chipotle pepper and lime juice into a small mixing bowl and whisk until combined.

Avocado Wasabi

Place ingredients in food processor and blend until creamy. You'll probably need to press down the sides of the food processor a couple of times to make sure it all gets blended.

Raw Tamarind Ketchup

Place ingredients in food processor and blend until smooth or leave a bit of texture in the ketchup, if you prefer. You'll probably need to press down the sides of the food processor a couple of times to make sure it all gets blended.

Recipe by Jenné Claiborne, sweetpotatosoul.com

Very Berry Ice Cream

Serves 4

Ingredients:

3 bananas, sliced
1 cup frozen berries
¾ to 1 cup unsweetened almond milk, well chilled
¼ teaspoon stevia powder
Zest of 1 lemon

Instructions:

Place the sliced bananas on a baking sheet and place in the freezer until hard, about 2 hours. Combine the frozen bananas, frozen berries, ¾ cup almond milk, stevia powder and lemon zest in a blender and purée until smooth and creamy. Add more almond milk, if necessary, to make a creamy consistency. Serve immediately.

Recipe by Chef Del Sroufe from his book Better Than Vegan, chefdelsroufe.com

Chocolate Mousse Tartlet

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

For the crust

1 cup pecans and 1 cup raw macadamia nuts
½ cup pitted medjool dates (7-8 dates)
1-2 tablespoons unsweetened shredded coconut
2 tablespoons pecans, chopped

For the filling

½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 ripe avocados, peeled and seeded
½ cup raw agave nectar, or to taste
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup coconut water or plain water (use more or less water for desired thickness)

Instructions:

To make the crust, place the nuts and dates in a food processor using the S blade and process until a well-mixed dough is created. Press the dough into the bottoms of 4 to 6 4-inch tartlet pans. For the filling, place all ingredients in a blender and mix well. Scoop the filling into the pans, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until cool, about 30 minutes. Sprinkle the coconut or pecans on alternate tartlets before serving.

Recipe by Tracye McQuirter, MPH, from her book By Any Greens Necessary, byanygreensnecessary.com



ChocoChip Cookies

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

2 cups Bob's Red Mill gluten-free brown rice flour
1 cup organic coconut sugar
1 teaspoon aluminum-free baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup unsweetened almond or flax milk (I prefer almond, mom prefers flax)
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 cup vegan chocolate chips

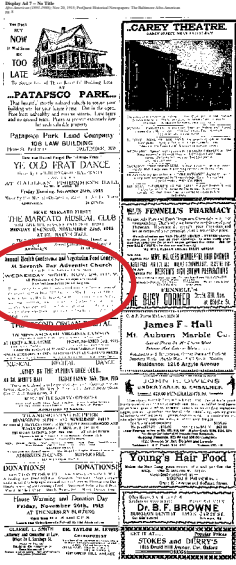
Instructions:

Place parchment paper on ungreased cookie sheet. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl, mix the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. In a separate bowl, mix the coconut sugar, coconut oil, almond milk and vanilla. Combine wet mixture with dry ingredients and stir together. Add chocolate chips and gently mix again. Use your clean hands to make cookie balls into the size of a spoon. Place onto cookie sheet and press down a bit. (Add more chocolate chips on top to make uniform, if you desire). Bake for 8 minutes. Check your cookies at 8 minutes and if necessary cook for 2 more minutes. Remove from oven and set on cooling rack for about 5 minutes. Grab your glass of almond milk and enjoy.

Recipe by Nahjee Truth, son of Chef Rain Truth, theculturedvegan.com

Historical Highlights

African American foodways are rooted in the plant-based diets of our ancestors. As Bryant Terry notes in his book, *Afro-Vegan*, “for thousands of years, traditional West and Central African diets were predominantly vegetarian—centered around staple foods like millet, rice, field peas, okra, hot peppers, and yams.” And this plant-rich, culinary heritage has survived and thrived through 400 years of our sojourn in the United States. In that tradition, African Americans are pioneers in the plant-based food movement. This timeline offers highlights of that culinary heritage from 1915 to 1999.



1915

The Baltimore Afro-American newspaper prints an ad for The Annual Health Conference and Vegetarian Food Congress at the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which states, “of especial interest to those who desire to prepare nourishing foods without the use of flesh meats.”



1958

Alvenia Fulton, ND, PhD, opens Fultonia Health and Fasting Institute, a combination health food store, vegetarian café and herbal pharmacy on the south side of Chicago. It's believed to be the first health food establishment in an African American neighborhood in the U.S.



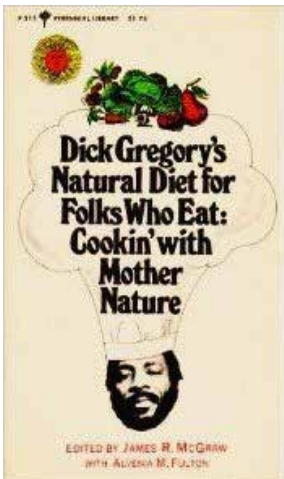
1965

Dick Gregory, activist and comedian, becomes a vegetarian based on the philosophy of nonviolence practiced during the Civil Rights Movement, which he extends to the treatment of animals. Gregory goes on to become one of the most influential vegan activists in the country.



Early 1970's

Dr. Booker T. Whatley, Tuskegee University professor and horticulturalist, originates the idea of Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) from his concepts of direct marketing of produce as a tool for small farmers through “clientele membership clubs” and “pick-your-own produce programs,” in an effort to create a black agrarian middle class.



1974

Dick Gregory and Dr. Alvenia Fulton write *Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat: Cooking with Mother Nature*, an instant classic.

A Farewell To Chitterlings

Vegetarianism is on the rise among diet-conscious blacks

BY ALTHEA SMITH

1974

Ebony magazine features an article titled “A Farewell to Chitterlings: Vegetarianism is on the rise among diet-conscious blacks,” featuring Cecily Tyson; Taj Mahal; Earth, Wind and Fire; and Dick Gregory.

founder aspect of an American black flinging away his barbecue bone for a celery stalk. On the other hand, many blacks in this land of meat and honey had never been accustomed to meat on their daily menus—at least not until they had attained that ultra-refined hot shit status that made them card-carrying members of the middle class.

Therefore it has followed in the peculiar pattern of the classical absurdity, that some American blacks who can now afford filet have elected instead to dine on raw carrots and cabbage juice.

The parade of black dieters leading this meatless march stars Cicely Tyson, Johnny Nash, Taj Mahal, the members of Earth, Wind and Fire, and—when she feels like it—Lola Falana. The fasting protester and civil rights hell-raiser Dick Gregory has gone beyond vegetarianism and into “fruitarism.” Whatever the label and whatever the reasoning, these diet-conscious zealots are steaming, creaming and picking their way across this meat-infested region determined to stave off America's open-mouthed nutritional suicide.

Predictably, a number of the black converts to this better way of eating are former fatties. For example Taj Mahal, the six-foot four banjo-picker who brought the blues out of the



1976

Mary Keyes Burgess publishes *Soul to Soul: A Soul Food Vegetarian Cookbook*.



1979

Aris La Tham opens Sunfired Foods, a live vegan food company in Harlem.

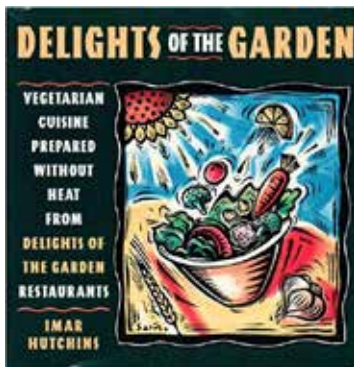
1982

African Americans in Washington, DC, begin to open the first all-vegan cafes and health food stores in the nation's capital.



1983

The first Soul Vegetarian restaurant is established in Chicago by African Hebrew Israelites and becomes the largest chain of vegan restaurants in the world, with 14 locations in the U.S., Israel, Ghana and the Caribbean.

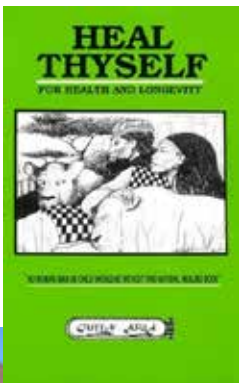


1992

Morehouse College graduates open Delights of the Garden raw vegan restaurants, with their first location in Atlanta, followed by Washington, DC, and Cleveland. The restaurant publishes *The Joy of Not Cooking: Vegetarian Cuisine Cooked Only By The Sun* in 1994.

1993

Queen Afua publishes *Heal Thyself for Life and Longevity*, another instant classic.



1995

Karyn Calabrese opens Karyn's Fresh Corner raw vegan restaurant in Chicago, the longest running raw vegan restaurant in the country.



1997

Marya McQuirter, PhD, and Tracye McQuirter, MPH, create blackvegetarians.com, the first website by and for African American vegetarians.



1997

The Black Vegetarian Society of Georgia is founded by Traci Thomas, the first such organization in the nation, which becomes a model for similar groups across the country.



1999

Anusha Amen-Ra opens the Sacred Space Retreat in San Francisco, the first black-owned vegan retreat center and substance use recovery facility in the country.

Check out Influencers on page 34 to see more of the people leading the way in the plant-based movement today.



Influencers

Here are a few of the most influential plant-based eaters of the country's estimated 1.4 million African American vegans and vegetarians.

Activists

Coalition of Vegan Activists of Color (COVAC)
Ron Finley, guerilla gardener
Aph Ko, founder of Black Vegans Rock
Nana Kwaku Opare, physician
Christopher-Sebastian McJetters, staff writer at Vegan Publishers

Actors

Kimberly Elise, Kimberly Elise Natural Living website
Cicely Tyson, actor
Forrest Whitaker, actor
Persia White, actor and musician

Athletes

Seba Johnson, Olympic skier
Carl Lewis, Olympic champion
Salim Stoudamire, NBA player
Venus Williams, tennis player

Bloggers/Media Producers

Demetrius Bagley, producer of Vegucated
Tasha Edwards, founder of The Sweetest Vegan web show
Monique Koch, founder of Brown Vegan website
Toi Scott, founder of Afro-Genderqueer website
Brandie Skorker, founder of Feministfists website

Chefs

Jenné Claiborne, founder of Sweet Potato Soul
Ayinde Howell, lifelong vegan and author of *The Lusty Vegan*
Del Sroufe, *The New York Times* best selling author of *Forks Over Knives: The Cookbook*
Lauren Von Der Pool, author of *Eat Yourself Sexy!*

Entrepreneurs

Anusha Amen-Ra, owner of Sacred Space Retreats
Afya Ibomu, holistic nutritionist
Ama Opere, plant-based lifestyle coach and co-owner of Opere Institute
Stephanie Redcross, founder, Vegan Mainstream
Russell Simmons, founder of Def Jam Records, producer, author
John Salley, former NBA champion, owner of Vegan Vine Wines,
Latham Thomas, maternity lifestyle maven and founder of MamaGlow,
Keith Tucker, founder-producer of Hip Hop Green Dinner

Musicians

Erykah Badu, singer and songwriter
Leona Lewis, singer and songwriter
Stevie Wonder, singer, songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist
Stic Man (Khnun Muata Ibomu), rapper, Dead Pres member and author

Nutritionists and Physicians

Columbus Batiste, MD, physician
Paulette Chandler, MD, MPH, physician
Milton Mills, MD, physician
Alicia Simpson, MS, RD, LD, registered dietitian
Ruby Thomas, MD, physician
Kim Williams, MD, past president of the American College of Cardiology

Politicians

Cory Booker, U.S. senator from New Jersey
Clifton Roberts, 2016 U.S. presidential nominee for the Humane Party

Restaurateurs

Brenda Beener and Allen Beener, mother-son owners of Seasoned Vegan in Harlem
Erika Boyd and Kirsten Ussery, owners of Detroit Vegan Soul in Detroit
Princess Dixon, owner of Healthful Essence in Atlanta
Hebrew Israelite Community of Jerusalem, owner of Soul Vegetarian Restaurants
Makini Howell, owner of Plum Bistro in Seattle
Matti Merrell and Rodney Perry, owner of Green Seed Vegan in Houston

Scholars

Angela Davis, PhD, human rights activist and professor
A. Breeze Harper, PhD, founder of the Sista Vegan Project

Trailblazers

Karen Calabrese, restaurateur
Dick Gregory, human rights activist, entrepreneur and comedian
Annette Larkins, chef and entrepreneur
Queen Afua, founder of Queen Afua Wellness Center and author
Marya McQuirter, PhD, vegan website pioneer and historian
Tracye McQuirter, MPH, vegan website pioneer and author
Aris La Tham, chef, entrepreneur and teacher
Traci Thomas, founder of Black Vegetarian Society of GA

Recommended Resources

Animal Sanctuaries

Farm Sanctuary: A farm animal protection organization with animal sanctuaries in New York and California that provide volunteer opportunities.

Poplar Spring: A sanctuary for farm animals and wildlife in Maryland that provides volunteer opportunities.

Athletics and Fitness

Brendan Brazier: Learn how to thrive as a vegan athlete with his book and magazine.

Torre Washington: Learn how to be a vegan bodybuilder through his e-book and website.

Autobiography/Transition Stories

Letters to a New Vegan: Words to Inform, Inspire, and Support a Vegan Lifestyle, edited by Lantern Books. Offers guidance to new vegans from longtime vegan activists and leaders.

Sistah Vegan: Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society, edited by Breeze Harper. First volume of its kind to explore food politics, identity, sexuality, health, anti-racism, animal rights and more through the lens of black female vegan experiences.

Cookbooks

Beginner Cooks:

Quick and Easy Vegan Comfort Food: 65 Everyday Meal Ideas for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner with Over 150 Great-tasting, Down-home Recipes, by Alicia Simpson

Why Vegan is the New Black: More than 100 Delicious Meat and Dairy Free Meal Ideas Your Whole Family Will Love, by Deborah Cooper

Avid Cooks:

Afro-Vegan: Farm-Fresh African, Caribbean, & Southern Flavors Remixed, by Bryant Terry

Documentary Films

Forks Over Knives: A film that shows most, if not all, of the degenerative diseases that afflict us can be controlled, or even reversed, by eating a whole food, plant-based diet.

Vegucated: A film that follows three omnivores who agree to adopt a vegan diet for six weeks.

Families

Veggie Soul Food: A website by the Theus family for families interested in veganism.

How-To Apps

Animal Free: A list of vegan and animal ingredients found in food and other items.

Happy Cow: A guide to vegan restaurants and stores around the world.

Vegan Express: Find out what's vegan at fast food places and popular chain restaurants.

How-To Books

Becoming Raw: The Essential Guide to Raw Vegan Diets, by Brenda Davis, RD, and Vesanto Melina, MS, RD

By Any Greens Necessary: A Revolutionary Guide for Black Women Who Want to Eat Great, Get Healthy, Lose Weight, and Look Phat, by Tracye McQuirter, MPH

How Not to Die: Discover the Foods Scientifically Proven to Prevent and Reverse Disease, by Michael Greger, MD

Never Too Late To Go Vegan: The Over-50 Guide to Adopting and Thriving On a Plant-based Diet, by Carol J. Adams, Patti Breitman and Virginia Messina

Nutrition Information

NutritionFacts.org: Provides free updates on the latest in nutrition research via bite-sized videos on nearly every aspect of healthy eating.

Pregnancy

Mama Glow: A Hip Guide to a Fabulous and Abundant Pregnancy, by Lathan Thomas

The Everything Vegan Pregnancy Book, by Reed Mangels, PhD, RD

Young Chef

Haile Thomas: Be inspired by this accomplished teen chef, health advocate and speaker.

