



Ultimate Vegetarian Secrets – How I Dropped 2 Dress Sizes In 30 Days

In this guide we will be looking at the best food and dietary practices that keep us healthy and happy for years to come as well as maintain our optimal weight. After over 30 years of being a vegetarian I have been asked the very same questions over and over again that I am still amazed that after such a long period of time people still ask the same questions. So I am going to attempt to answer these age old questions as well as point out things that are not as obvious as we would like as consumers.

Decisions around what to eat and what not to eat can stem from a passion for food as well as an equal passion for animals, plants and sometimes for insects. It is also a personal decision on ethical living. The older the world gets the more complicated life becomes and the more clever ways are found to produce and display the food so that consumers would buy them. It is therefore up to us as consumers to be aware of what is happening around us before it is too late.

Nobody likes being ill except children when they get to stay home from school, but no one enjoys being terminally ill especially when they realise that it is something that could have been prevented had they known or indeed found a better way of life. Hindsight as they say is 20-20 but enough of the 'if only' sentences let's start today to make better choices around the foods we eat.

1 ounce = 28g

1. What Do Vegetarians Eat?

Contrary to popular belief vegetarians don't eat rabbit food but they eat a well-balanced diet that consist of a combination of proteins, carbohydrates, fats (only as needed), vitamins and minerals. In fact in 1991 the PCRM (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine) introduced a new food pyramid that consists of four new food groups namely: Fruit, Legumes, Vegetables and Wholegrains. The old food pyramid posed serious risks in terms of obesity and cholesterol so this new plan which is already 20 years old may need updating soon as there is better understanding around human consumption as it relates to diseases.

Protein

The number one puzzling piece when it comes to the vegetarian diet is the protein. Where do vegetarians get their protein if they are not eating meat, chicken or fish? In order to address this question I believe that it is more important to understand the human daily requirement around protein before we can venture to learn where the protein will come from.

Nutrient	1-3yrs	4-6yrs	7-10yrs	11-14yrs	15-18yrs
Protein	15g	20g	28g	42g	55g
Iron	7mg	6mg	9mg	14.8mg	14.8mg
Zinc	5mg	6.5mg	7mg	9mg	9.5mg
Vitamin A (retinol equivalents)	400mcg	400mcg	500mcg	600mcg	700mcg
Folate	70mcg	100mcg	150mcg	200mcg	200mcg
Vitamin C	30mg	30mg	30mg	35mg	40mg
Salt ²	2g	3g	5g	6g	6g

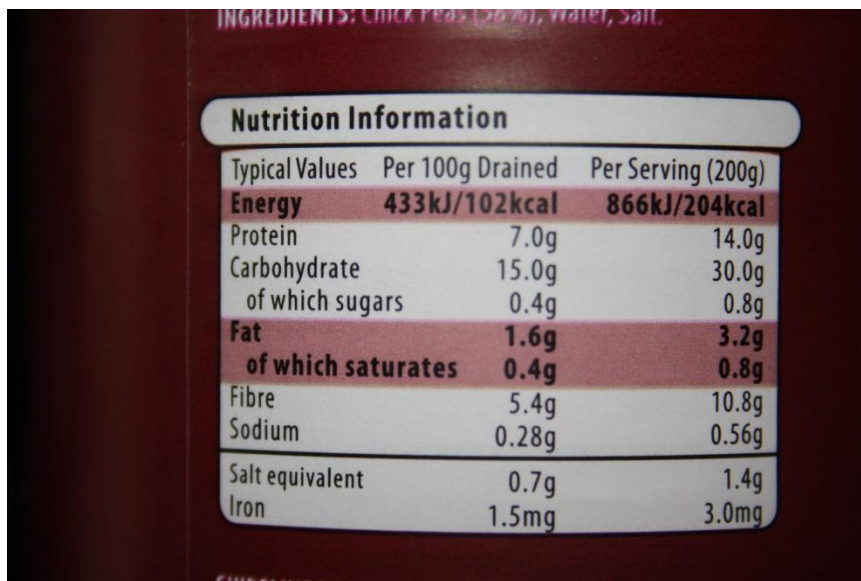
Nutrient	Adults 19-50 years	Adults 50 years and above
Protein	55g	53g
Iron	14.8mg	9mg
Zinc	9.5mg	9.5mg
Vitamin A (retinol equivalents)	700mcg	700mcg
Folate	200mcg	200mcg
Vitamin C	40mg	40mg
Salt ²	6g	6g

The above chart is taken from the Food Standards Agency UK. It gives you a rough idea of your daily nutrient intake.

Now that we know how much our protein intake should be daily. Where can vegetarians get this protein intake? There are a host of foods out there that vegetarians get their protein from ranging from peas and beans to tofu and grains.

Peas and Beans

There are quite a variety of peas and beans available in the supermarket, health food shop or Asian store. These include lentils, mung beans, kidney beans, chick peas, lima beans, split peas, black eye peas, butter beans and garden peas. Each one of these come with various levels of proteins and is ideal for making stews, soups, casseroles and haystacks.



The image shows a nutrition information label for chick peas. The label is titled 'Nutrition Information' and is set against a dark background. It lists typical values, values per 100g drained, and values per serving (200g). The ingredients listed at the top are Chick Peas (26%), Water, and Salt.

Typical Values	Per 100g Drained	Per Serving (200g)
Energy	433kJ/102kcal	866kJ/204kcal
Protein	7.0g	14.0g
Carbohydrate	15.0g	30.0g
of which sugars	0.4g	0.8g
Fat	1.6g	3.2g
of which saturates	0.4g	0.8g
Fibre	5.4g	10.8g
Sodium	0.28g	0.56g
Salt equivalent	0.7g	1.4g
Iron	1.5mg	3.0mg

Here is a can of chick peas which give the nutritional information at the back. As you can see 100g of chick peas would give the consumer 7g of protein however the serving size is 200g. So we can get 14g of our required 55g of our daily requirement from chick peas alone.

Dairy Products

A popular easy source of protein for vegetarians who animal products are milks, eggs, cheese and yoghurts as well as all their by-products. It is easy because little or virtually no preparation is required to consume them but if eaten in high quantities they can be dangerous to one's health. I know there are a lot of campaigns by government food bodies encouraging people to eat an egg a day but as there are so many products on the market that are made from eggs it is much better to prevent the onslaught of heart disease by varying one's food choices.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION		
Typical Values	Per 100g	Per 20g Portion
Energy	1663kJ/401kcal	333kJ/80kcal
Protein	26g	5.2g
Carbohydrate	0.1g	0.02g
of which sugars	0.1g	0.02g
Fat	33g	6.6g
of which saturates	19.8g	3.96g
Fibre	0g	0g
Sodium	0.76g	0.15g
Equivalent as Salt	1.9g	0.38g

Above is a photo of the nutritional information on the back of a standard block of cheddar cheese. As we can see it is possible to get 5.2g of protein from a 20g portion of cheese.

Tofu and Soy

Tofu is quite a popular option for vegetarians as it is a plant based option as well as the fact that tofu is virtually tasteless and easily absorbs the herbs and spices of the food that it is cooked in. Tofu is processed soy beans and for those who love being in the kitchen it can be made from scratch at home. There are also a host of other products made from the soy bean including soy milk, soy nuts and soy yoghurt as well as soy cheese. You can buy a block of tofu from the health food shop, supermarket or Asian store.

Meat substitutes

There are a host of readymade meat free meats that can be bought in the supermarkets including veggie burgers, veggie chicken, veggie turkey, veggie ham, veggie roast, veggie sausages and even veggie fish (never liked this one). The brand names include Linda McCartney, Quorn, Morning Star, Realeat, Cheatin, Cheezly, Vegideli, Fry's, Tivall, Worthington, Loma Linda and the list is endless. These come prepacked in a can or in packages frozen or chilled. You can eat some cold while other would need to be cooked. You just need to be wary of the levels salt and fat in these processed foods. These meat substitutes are mainly made from wheat protein (gluten or seitan), soy protein and/or myco protein (from Mushrooms).

and spicy potato wedges

Nutrition information (Typical values)	Per 100g	Per Burger
Energy - kJ/kcal	819/196	516/123
Protein	11.5g	7.2g
Carbohydrate	16.0g	10.1g
- of which sugars	2.0g	1.3g
Fat	9.5g	6.0g
- of which saturates	1.0g	0.6g
Fibre	4.5g	2.8g
Sodium	0.5g	0.3g
Salt equivalent	1.3g	0.8g
Guideline Daily Amounts	Women	Men
From official figures for average adults of a healthy weight	2000 kcal	2500 kcal
Fat (of which saturates)	70g (20g)	95g (30g)
Salt	6g	6g

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Above is the nutritional information for the Quorn chicken style burgers. As you can see one burger gives the consumer 7.2g of protein which again goes towards the RDA of our protein intake.

Nuts, seeds and their Butters

Peanuts, cashew nuts, sunflower seeds and sesame seeds are a great source of protein and a nice way to eat them is in the form of their respective butters. For example sunflower butter, sesame tahini and cashew butter. All too often as adults we think that peanut butter is for kids but it is great for grown-ups too and it is a great source of protein. These butters can be eaten on a slice of bread with sugar free jam or your favourite fruit like banana or they can be used in sauces and even deserts. Other nuts like almonds, hazelnuts and coconut can also be used to make milk. So you will have almond milk, hazelnut milk and coconut milk which are also high in protein and can replace cow's milk.

Ingredients	
Peanuts (91%), Peanut Oil (4%), Cane Sugar, Vegetable Oil, Sea Salt.	
Nutrition	
Typical values. 100g contains: Energy 2510kJ/605kcal, Protein 24.3g, Carbohydrate 15.0g (of which sugars 5.2g), Fat 49.7g (of which saturates 8.9g, mono-unsaturates 27.2g, polyunsaturates 13.5g), Fibre 6.5g, Sodium 0.4g, Salt equivalent 0.9g.	
Each tablespoon typically weighs 15g.	
For guideline daily amounts, please visit: www.tesco.com	

In the above photo we can see the nutritional information for the standard peanut butter jar and as it states 100g of peanut butter gives the consumer 24.3g of protein. So 14g of peanut butter will give the consumer 7g of protein but since the serving size is closer to 30g we can safely assume that

we can get 14g of protein per serving of peanut butter. It is important to be careful about the amount of fat here as well.

Whole grain and Quinoa

Often referred to as the Incas gold, Quinoa is originally from Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. It is a great source of protein and it contains all the amino acids and is therefore known as a complete protein. One can get as much as 18 grams of protein from just one cup of Quinoa. Other whole grain foods include whole wheat, brown rice, oats as well as other cereals like buckwheat, barley, bulgur wheat and millet. Oat protein is almost equivalent in quality to soy protein, the World Health Organisation has shown that it is equal to milk and egg protein.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION	Typical Values Per 100g	Typical Values 30g with 170ml Skimmed Milk	
Energy	1633kJ 386kcal	489.9kJ 117.1kcal	
Protein	11.1g	9.1g	HIGH
Carbohydrate (of which: Sugars)	73g 1.3g	30.03g 8.8g	BREAKFAST LUNCH
Fat (of which: Saturates)	5.5g 1.1g	1.8g 0.4g	LOW IN SATURATES
Fibre (by Engryst) (of which: Soluble : Insoluble)	6.1g 2.7g 3.4g	1.8g 0.8g 1.0g	STARCH BRAN ENDOSPERM
Sodium	Trace	Trace	LOW
Thiamin (B1)	0.85mg	0.33mg	60% of RDA (PER 100g)
Iron	4.1mg	1.56mg	29% of RDA (PER 100g)

As we can see from the nutritional information from the oats package the consumer can get 9.1g of protein from oats when eating 30g with 170ml of skimmed milk.

Protein Summary

If someone on a vegetarian diet decided to eat a bowl of porridge for breakfast they would have obtained 9.1g of their RDA for protein. They then decided to have wholewheat pasta with chickpeas for lunch and added a Quorn chicken style burger to that then the breakdown of protein would be as follows:

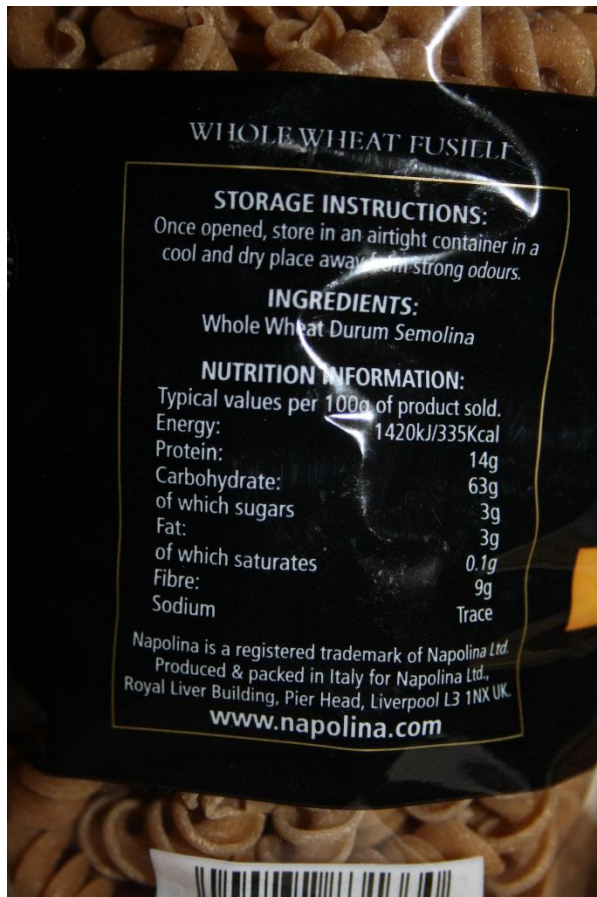
100g of wholewheat pasta 14g of protein (see photo below)

1 Quorn burger 7.2g of protein

200g of chick peas 14g of protein

So far in two meals a consumer would have totalled 44.3g of protein out of the required 55g of the RDA for protein. For the evening meal that consumer can decide to have bread and peanut butter and with a serving size of 30g they can surpass their RDA but they can also end up in a bit of a

situation where they have been eating all sorts of other things like fruits, vegetables, tea, juice and desert which means that achieving one's protein requirement for one day can be easily achieved but can be easily surpassed to the point of eating too much. The RDA is only a recommended guideline and as a result some people may require more or less in their personal diet.



There are also some great tips from the USDA here,
http://www.choosemyplate.gov/tipsresources/vegetarian_diets.html

Often times you would hear a list of things that vegetarians cannot eat but people are more interested in a big list of what can be eaten. The issue with a big list is that each recipe is prepared in a different way depending on where you go. So here is a list but be sure to check the ingredients
<http://michaelbluejay.com/veg/eat.html>

Vitamin B12

If you are worried about vitamin B12 not being available in your vegetarian diet you can easily add nutritional yeasts like Marmite and Vegemite to any sauce or stew just to ensure that you cover all the bases.

2. Why Are Brown Rice and Whole Wheat Bread Important?

So many people continue to believe that a vegetarian diet simply means the absence of meat and the presence of vegetables without understanding a bit more about the 'why'. After understanding the why everything else seem to fall into place. One of those is the change from white bread and white rice.

Research has indicated that the consumption of whole grain may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease as well as reduce the occurrence of type II diabetes. The USDA has said that in general most Americans eat an average of 15g of dietary fibre per day. The recommended fibre intake per day for women is 25g and for men is 38g.

So in order to increase this the USDA has recommended that more unrefined wholegrains should be eaten compared with refined wholegrains that has been fortified with minerals and vitamins.

3. Can Vegetarians Become fat/obese?

Yes. The idea of getting the balance right is imperative when it comes to consuming a balanced diet. When one consumes too many calories the extra calories that are not used up turn to fat in the body hence the reason why there is a big focus on moderation. People often say salads and vegetables are not fattening so you can eat as much as you want but I will have to disagree because over loading the system just causes other issues as well.

Also, eating too many fats and protein rich foods can also lead to over-weight even as a vegetarian. I became over-weight at one point because eating was like a comfort food for me. So instead of eating to live I ate to solve problems. One day I decided to only eat when I am hungry and to eat the correct size portions in order to reduce the size of my stomach and I dropped a dress size in one month.

4. Why Are Vegetarian Women Prone to Suffer from Iron Deficiency?

The straight answer is because of a women's monthly cycle she needs to make up for the 'blood loss' by eating foods high in Iron or taking an Iron supplement daily. Obviously it is better to just eat foods high in Iron because I find that taking an Iron supplement really opens up my appetite a lot which means I want to eat more than usual.

Some women wonder if being vegetarian affects the menstrual cycle and to be honest I have three sisters and we have not noticed anything different at all. The difference occurs with birth control medication.

The difficulty with Iron is not necessarily where to find it but to realise that the body needs vitamin C to be present in order to absorb Iron. So someone taking an Iron supplement like Ferroglobin should drink a glass of juice high in vitamin C to help with the absorption of Iron. Great sources of Iron include chickpeas, spinach, lentils, soy, hummus and tofu.

5. What is Nutritional Yeast Flakes?

This is not to be confused with Brewer's Yeast. They are nutrient flakes that are used in vegetarian recipes to make the food taste cheesy, giving a yellow color and providing some protein. Some of them are now fortified in Vitamin B12 which helps with the B12 that is lacking in plant based foods.

What is Vitamin B12?

It is only needed in small amounts daily and it comes from bacteria, it's used in the formation of blood cells as well as normal functioning of the nervous system and brain. Pernicious anaemia is incredibly rare as B12. Vegetarian sources include eggs, dairy, fortified soy, rice or oat 'milks', fortified cereal and nutritional yeast.

6. What Do Teenage Vegetarians Eat?

There are no major changes except for those involved in heavy sports. The key here is getting the balance right. Teenage boys seem to be hungry more often than anyone else so the trick is to ensure that they eat healthy options as it is so easy to eat junk food.

Having a big breakfast is a great way to start the day and when this is not feasible then a healthy pack lunch would do the trick. My teenage son liked the fact that he can prepare his own packed lunch but he always ate it on the way to school or as a second Breakfast☺. It is very funny.

I practically gave up on sending cooked food with him as he often brought it back home. If it was something he liked then it would be eaten long before lunchtime. So I got him 'Cheatin Chicken' and 'Cheatin Ham' slices so he can get really creative with his sandwiches. Other days he would buy lunch in the canteen.

They generally have microwave ovens in school so the best option is to make pies and pizzas long in advance and freeze them. The child then takes it to school as packed lunch and he/she is able to heat it up then at lunch time.

I will be testing a few new recipes that are great freezer food and will be sharing these with my fans shortly.

7. Why Do People Become Vegetarian?

There are many reasons why people become vegetarian and broadly speaking there are five (5) categories that most reasons would fall under. These include – food safety, religious beliefs, animal rights, health concerns and environmental issues.

Food Safety

Medical research has found that around 5,000 Americans die from food related diseases every year. There are many recalls of meat contaminated with e-coli on a large scale. Also, local restaurant consumers got ill from eating meat or eggs that were not cooked properly.

Religious Beliefs

Many religions advise their members that a vegetarian diet can lead to a better spiritual experience when compared to eating meat. Many religions encourage a holistic approach to a healthy lifestyle by encouraging their members to have a better physical body which results in a closer spiritual experience and better human relationships. In the US, it is believed that Seventh-day Adventist is the largest group that traditionally follow a vegetarian lifestyle and are generally speaking lacto-ovo vegetarians.

Health

A study was conducted comparing the general health of people on diets mainly comprising animal food compared with people who did not eat meat and it was found that people who ate meat had a much higher propensity to contract cancer, heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. For this reason many doctors have placed their patients who suffer with these diseases on a strict low meat or non-meat diet so as to increase longevity.

Ethics

Many people believe that animals should not be slaughtered for the sake of feeding humans even if it means switching to a non-meat diet. It has been found that many animals such as cattle and chickens are kept in such unspeakable conditions because the demand for meat by the consumer is so high and for this reason many people have become vegetarians.

Ecology/Environment

It has been found that the cost to the environment in order to rear cattle to make beef burgers is quite high. Up to half of the rainforests of the world have been cleared all in the name of beef burgers. Approximately 1000 species a year has become extinct due to the constant clearing of rainforests. When compared to the fact that 60 million people die every year from hunger and the fact that all those lives could have been saved if only 10% of Americans ate less meat. As if that was

not bad enough the world's shortage of fresh water is becoming worse by constant animal farming. Believe it or not farmers who produce meat are the biggest water polluters. In order to produce only one pound of meat a farmer would need to use 2,500 gallons of water. The average meat eating human being would eat 750 chickens, 36 pigs and 36 sheep over his/her lifetime.

8. How Can I Become A Vegetarian, What Types Are There?

There are a few things to consider when one decides to become a vegetarian. The first is the reason for making that decision. This is important because it determines the passion behind the motive and if the passion is not strong enough then the change would probably last a few days or weeks but if the intent is powerful enough then that person would last a few months or years.

Once the passion is there to become a vegetarian then the only two other things needed are resources and support. The right resources could include a plethora of things like a kitchen, the necessary utensils, adventurous taste buds, availability of ingredients, knowledge of one's recommended daily allowances, awareness of one's allergies, knowledge of substitution in recipes, easy vegetarian recipes.

In terms of support it would be great for beginners to join a group of like-minded vegetarians online and offline just to help them along the way until they can churn out healthy vegetarian meals in confidence.

Another important thing to consider is what type of vegetarian one wants to become. As there are a few types available ranging those who eat eggs and milk to those who continue to eat milk. The most important thing to remember is that a true vegetarian eats no meat at all including chicken and fish.

There are also those who only eat plant products and have removed all animal products from their diet including honey. Studies have shown that people on a pure plant based diet have a much lower risk of developing cancer.

If you are 100% new to the vegetarian diet and would like to make use of a few resources to learn more then I would recommend the vegetarian starter kit, you can download it here <http://www.peta.org/living/vegetarian-living/free-vegetarian-starter-kit.aspx>. There is also one available from vegetarian times and you can download it here http://www.vegetariantimes.com/2007/pdf/vegetarian_starter_kit.pdf

Vegetarian Types

There are mainly three types of vegetarians namely; lacto-ovo vegetarians, ovo vegetarians and lacto vegetarians. There are also vegans but they have been classed under the terms vegan in recent times and have no longer been classified as vegetarians.

Lacto-ovo vegetarians are people who don't eat any meat at all and they go as far as to exclude chicken and fish from their diet. But they still include eggs and milk and their by-products in their diet.

Ovo vegetarians are similar to lacto-ovo vegetarians in that they exclude meat, fish and poultry from their diet and they even exclude animal milks but they are still content to include eggs and its by products in their diet.

Lacto vegetarians are also similar to lacto-ovo vegetarians in that they exclude all meat, fish and poultry from their diet but they also exclude eggs and all its by-products. They are however happy to include animal milks in their meal plans.

For the people that exclude all meat, fish, poultry, milk, eggs, honey and gelatin from their diet they are called vegans and contrary to popular belief they can lead a very healthy lifestyle only eating plant based foods and they have a much lower risk of contracting cancer and heart disease.

9. How Do I Get My Kids to Switch to Vegetarian?

I have entertained a lot of children in my lifetime and they always seem to have the same set of favourite foods. These include pasta, noodles, rice, chips, crackers and bread. If your children only seem to like these and nothing else then congratulations your children are normal and you have half the battle won.

Every child would tend to like one vegetable as well. So for one of my children it is broccoli and for another it is sweet peppers. Find out what your children can tolerate and work your way from there.

The good news is that the pasta, rice, noodles, crackers and bread have protein in them already so you will be killing two birds with one stone. Some children don't like sauce on their pasta but would take cheese so experiment with the cheese. Also, try giving them small pieces of tofu to start and it will grow on them.

If your children are willing to experiment you can try the veggie sausages, veggie burgers and veggie meat balls with the pastas and noodles. These seem to work well when you decide to make an occasion of the food, so for the 4th of July have veggie burgers and veggie hot dogs.

Another big secret is getting the children involved in the food preparation, they surprisingly eat what they make 😊

10. What Sweets Are Suitable For Vegetarians?

I guess you are probably wondering what is wrong with regular sweets. Well some sweets use crushed beetles, others use gelatine which is obtained from the bone marrow of animals. Here is a list of food additives that vegetarians should not eat, <http://www.veggieglobal.com/nutrition/non-vegetarian-food-additives.htm>

You might find it difficult to keep track of all these additives but the trick is to find a few things that you like to eat and look up the ingredients online or on the pack. Then keep eating the same ones as opposed to trying something new every week.

You can always abstain from commercial sweets and make your own at home or just don't eat sweets they are bad for your teeth anyway ☺

If you must eat sweets then always read the label and keep your eye on the news, here is one example, http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2007/05/070523_mars_bars.shtml

Check to see if there is a logo with "suitable for vegetarians" on the pack and then you can know for sure if it is suitable for vegetarians.

11. How To Buy Vegetarian Food On A Budget?

In order to get the most out of your food budget the best way to approach shopping on a tight budget is firstly planning in advance, then deciding on a weekly menu, while cooking think about storing the excess and finally finding clever ways to bring left overs back to life.

Planning

I found that one of the best ways to plan in advance is to break down each meal of each day into simple pyramids. So for example I used the age old carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals method. Each day of the week for each meal it would be as follows:

Day 1				
Meal	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Carbohydrate	Oats	Yoghurt	Basmati Rice	Popcorn
Protein	Oats, Milk	Yoghurt	Lentil Peas	
Fat	Milk	Yoghurt	Olive oil	
Vitamin	Sultanas	Banana	Cucumber	
Mineral	Sunflower Seeds	Pear	Tomato	

Day 2				
Meal	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Carbohydrate	Museli	Bread/Wrap	Brown Rice	Banana Bread
Protein	Museli, Milk	Cheese	Kidney Beans, Tofu	
Fat	Milk	Cheese	Olive oil	
Vitamin	Sultanas	Mango, Lettuce, Cucumber	Lettuce	
Mineral	Sunflower Seeds	Strawberries		

Once you have all 5 days completed then you can decide which brand you will buy that taste good and that you can afford. Then make a list of what items you will buy and you can also check online for the current prices. Check the total and decide if you can afford it, if not you can check for special offers or make purchases from the cheaper supermarkets. You can also decide to do a few things homemade like popcorn, no need to buy microwave popcorn when you can pop it yourself at home as it works out cheaper.

1. Peas and beans can be bought in the can or dry.
2. Vegetables can be bought in the can, frozen or fresh
3. Fruits can be purchased fresh or frozen

4. Baked beans on toast is a great vegetarian meal especially if the kids are hungry.
5. Be sure to stock up on dry ingredients like whole meal flour, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, couscous and noodles as they can be quick to prepare. I can teach you how to make dumplings.
6. Store potatoes in a dark place in a brown bag as they are sure to last longer. They only take 7 minutes to cook in the microwave.
7. Coarse sea salt gives food a more vibrant flavour than regular salt.
8. Never run out of garlic as it gives the simplest meal a great flavour.
9. Vegetable stock cubes are also very handy to put flavour into food (choose low salt option).
10. A great source of vitamin B12 is yeast extract (Marmite and Vegemite).
11. Tinned tomatoes or tomato paste in tubes is a great ingredient in sauces and stews.
12. Coconut milk powder can turn a dish from good to great.
13. Curry powder just makes food taste good.
14. If Olive oil is too expensive you can always get Rapeseed oil instead.

Cooking with a plan

Once you have decided that you have all the items that you need for the week, decide what you are cooking a day in advance and ensure you have all the ingredients and how much time you need as well as what you will do with the left overs.

Store left overs carefully so that when you decide to use them up they still look edible as I am sure eggplant/aubergines would not go well in smoothies 😊

Freezer Storage

I recently picked up a book entitled [Dinner in the Freezer](#) which has a ton of helpful tips on dishes that can be frozen including soups, casseroles, curries, oven bakes and savoury tarts. Although it is not a book with vegetarian recipes you can substitute with a vegetarian meat alternative and follow through with the basic concepts. It is my intention to try out all the recipes and come back to you with my findings so I may have a vegetarian version of this so that vegetarians can have an easier time getting vegetarian meals ready 😊

12. How To Make Vegetarian Lasagne?

Vegetarian Lasagne is simple and fun depending on your audience. Here is what you will need:

- 1-2 packs lasagne sheets (no precook required)
- 500ml Red Lasagne sauce (homemade or store bought)
- 500ml White Lasagne sauce
- 350g Cheese (rennet free) grated
- 500g Quorn mince or Seitan or veggie sausages - chopped
- 2 Sweet Peppers chopped
- 1 onion chopped
- 5 cloves of garlic crushed and chopped
- 1-2 tbsps of olive oil

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees Celsius (fan oven). In to a pan, pour olive oil and sauté the onion, sweet peppers and garlic add the mince/seitan/sausages sauté a little until golden and pour red lasagne sauce into pan. Let the sauce cook through and remove from heat.

1. Into a dish pour some of the red sauce mixture so as to thinly cover the base
2. Cover with the lasagne sheets one sheet thick
3. Pour a thin layer of white sauce
4. Layer the white sauce with a sprinkling of cheese (optional)
5. Repeat steps 1-4
6. At the very last (top) sprinkle the rest of the cheese to cover the white sauce.
7. Bake in the oven at 200 degrees for 30 to 45 minutes or until golden brown.
8. Remove from oven and allow it to cool down before serving. Great with potatoes (roasted or baked) and salad.

13. How To Survive Pregnancy As a Vegetarian? (~~and not get fat~~) 😊

A good vegetarian diet can provide you and your baby with all the nutrients, vitamins and minerals you need to have a healthy delivery.

As I have done this twice before, although it does not make me an expert I can give a few pointers that you can understand as I have been in your shoes. One thing for sure is that I never had a craving for meat, fish, chicken, eggs or milk. In fact one of my favourite cravings was broccoli 😊

I am a lacto-ovo vegetarian and although I have eggs only occasionally I don't miss it a lot. The one thing I hated about pregnancy was drinking milk. During the early stages of my pregnancy my doctor and I will have an argument over drinking milk and then we would come to a compromise. I had a bad experience with milk when I was younger but I don't mind having milk in cereal or flavoured milk but never straight, yuck!

After visiting your family doctor he would probably advise you to take supplements like calcium, folic acid and iron, etc. Just follow the instructions but if you can help it you can find the same additional nutrients in common foods except folic acid of course. Calcium can be found in broccoli and iron in Spinach.

Just in case you did not know being pregnant for many women means having lots of cravings as well as for some being unable to stand the smell of certain things like onions cooking or eggs (got that with my first pregnancy).

The most important tip I can give you is that eating for two is not necessarily true and this is one way to not increase in weight too fast. Just eat a normal size meal and the extra food will come from the cravings.

It is imperative that you not catch a cold or flu as it can affect the babies teeth or skin (sounds strange I know). If it is a planned pregnancy ensure that from conception to delivery you are happy about the baby and no one around you is depressed or fighting as this can affect the baby as well.

It is important to monitor your calcium, protein and B12 intake all the same and if you want a gentle reminder as to what foods contain these then go to pages 1-7.

14. What To Feed Vegetarian Babies?

Feeding baby can be a very sensitive issue and although I have some experience in this area and as research change over time I have decided to leave this topic to the professionals who practice infant nutrition on a regular basis. You can download more information here:

<http://www.vegsoc.org/document.doc?id=9>

In my experience I found it really important to let baby try many different fruits and vegetables only one a day just to make sure the baby is not allergic to anything as well as to get them use to different tastes and textures and to see which foods baby really likes.

At one point I found that buying baby foods from the supermarket was a waste of money because my babies just did not like it and they were more interested in eating the same things I ate. Of course if this is the case for you then reduce the amount of salt, sugar and other additives in the food you prepare so that baby can have some as well.

Obviously, the little jars from the supermarket really come in handy when you are out and about or suddenly discover you have a hungry baby on your hands who does not want to have his or her bottle.

Yoghurts (kids ones) are also brilliant choices for keeping baby interested and satisfied. Both my children liked eggs a lot when they started eating solid foods. I know that there is no need for protein early but I just thought I mentioned that they really liked eggs.

From toddlers to 3+ both my children started changing what they liked to eat to something different. This can be quite frustrating especially when you have stocked the kitchen with foods they liked before the change.

One day they would like this food and the next day not want it at all, so buy what they like in manageable quantities or you will either have to throw it out or eat the lot.

Children tend to get fooled by pretty packaging as well as advertisements on TV so be careful what you let them watch and if you can help it don't carry them shopping to often in larger supermarkets as the small green grocer, food mart or vegetable market with fruits and vegetables is the best.

Don't be surprised if your child only wants to eat pasta and noodles and maybe rice apparently it is normal although I have heard a lot of frustrating stories from Mother's who are desperately trying to get their children between ages 3-7 to eat anything else apart from chips.

This may sound weird but my daughter did not know what sweets were until the age of 3 when I took her to the doctor. Guess who introduced her to sweets? You are right the doctor, he rewards all the children with jellies and a sticker and I felt so helpless because I did not want to cause a scene. She looked at the sweets and was wondering for a while what they were 😊

15. Best Vegetarian Meals for Grilling/a Barbeque?

Some of the best vegetarian foods for grilling include tofu, seitan, gluten, onions, vegetarian sausages, vegetarian burgers, sweet peppers, courgettes, mushrooms, aubergines, potatoes and pineapple. Vegetarian kebabs are excellent because all the food is on a stick in small bite-sized chunks and once these are cooked and ready you can have it with delicious salads and pizza.

So quite simply take all the vegetables that you finally decide to grill and chop them in fairly big pieces. Into a bowl place all the clean vegetables and sprinkle on top some sea salt, grated garlic, oregano and olive oil, let the vegetables or veggie meats stay in the mixture for about an hour and then either place them directly on a grill or place them on skewers and place the skewers the grill.

15. What Is the Number One Secret For Increasing the Taste of Vegetarian Cooking by 70%?

Many people complain about the fact that they try a recipe but it did not come out well. The number one thing that anyone should realise about cooking is as humans we eat with our eyes before we eat with our mouths. If you remember this then the rest is perspiration. 80% inspiration is what good chefs are made of.

So if you want great tasting food the important thing to remember is what is giving that recipe the flavour, if you want the food to taste great then chose great tasting ingredients. For example if you are making soup you would think that the most basic ingredient is water, guess what it isn't water it is actually homemade vegetable stock.

If you are steaming rice you would think that the most basic ingredient is water, guess what it is not, it is actually vegetable stock or coconut milk. My advice to you is to take a step back and think before you start cooking really feel inspired to make a great dish and no matter how simple it is make it a sensation.

Secret Seasoning

During my travels I picked up this shocking concoction that can turn a simple dish into a tongue wagging sensation!

Shocking Garlic Puree

Ingredients

5 pegs of garlic
1 teaspoon oregano
1 teaspoon sea salt
mortar & pestle

Crush the garlic pegs, remove the skin, rinse and place into the mortar add in the sea salt and oregano and grind into a smooth paste. Great for curries, stews, barbeques/grills and even pizzas. Below is a photo of one I did recently.



Bonus Chapter – Drop 2 Dress Sizes In 30 Days

Thanks for your patience so far as I went through to explain all the different areas of being vegetarian. I did not want to launch straight into the vegetarian weight loss without you my reader having a good understanding about being vegetarian in the first place.

In this chapter I want to take you step by step on what I did to drop 2 dress sizes in 30 days. I hope to achieve this by taking one day at a time.

To start with I must let you know that food became a comfort for me years ago and so I eat more than usual when I get stressed. I know a few other people who are just like me in this regard so you are not alone.

Day 1

On the first day I decided to fast, I ate breakfast before sunrise and drank water all day then ate again at sunset. The goal is to cleanse your body of all impurities.

Breakfast

Oatmeal porridge with sultanas (no sugar as it can give you flatulence)

Yoghurt

Banana

Dinner

Salad (feta cheese, spinach, baby tomatoes) or Soup with bread

Day 2

On the second day I wanted to lay down my goal for the rest of the 30 days and so the goal I set was to reduce the size of my stomach. Essentially, eat less and only eat when I am hungry as opposed to a comfort food. Drink lots of water between meals as it helps with the digestion and weight loss.

I discovered that the porridge worked really well for me on the previous day as I did not feel hungry at lunch time. So I had my breakfast at the normal time (not before sunrise) and I had a small afternoon meal and in the evening I had a light supper.

Breakfast

Oatmeal porridge with sultanas
Yoghurt
Fruit

Afternoon meal

Noodle Salad

Supper

Mango
Nuts

Day 3-9

I had more or less the same breakfast every day and for the afternoon meal I will have many different salads but be careful not to eat anything high in fat.

Breakfast

Oatmeal Porridge with sultanas (the oatmeal in the morning is super important because oats not only cleanses the intestines but gets rid of the fat as it goes through your system)
Yoghurt
Banana or other fruit

Afternoon meal

Noodle Salad
Or
Wholemeal Pasta Salad
Or
Vegetable Salad
Or
Vegetable and Gluten Salad
Or

Vegetable and Tofu Salad

Or

Heavy vegetable Soup

Supper

Popcorn & Fruit

Or

Gluten Vegetable Stew with Wholemeal bread

Or

Tofu Vegetable Stew with Wholemeal bread

Or

Mini haystacks

Or

Steamed Potatoes with Vegetables

Day 10-16

At this point you should have noticed some weight loss as well as the fact that you can no longer eat 3 items for breakfast. You can eat the oatmeal porridge with sultanas and possibly half of a banana and no yoghurt at all. So what I did is push the yoghurt out until my afternoon meal and I could not eat a remotely heavy salad anymore but only a light one.

Breakfast

Oatmeal Porridge with sultanas (the oatmeal in the morning is super important)

Banana or other fruit

Afternoon meal

Small Noodle Salad

Or

Yoghurt and Green Salad

Or

Small Wholemeal Pasta Salad

Or

Small Vegetable Salad

Or

Small Vegetable and Gluten Salad

Or

Small Vegetable and Tofu Salad

Or

Light soup with wholemeal bread

Supper

Popcorn & Fruit

Or

Gluten Vegetable Stew with Wholemeal bread

Or

Tofu Vegetable Stew with Wholemeal bread

Or

Mini haystacks

Or

Steamed Potatoes with Vegetables

Or

Peanut Butter and Sugar free jam

Day 17-23

So now you would have at least dropped one dress size if you were following the meal plan fully and drinking lots of water throughout the day. You can decide to exercise if you want to help lose weight faster but it should not be necessary. It is important to keep a check on your emergency foods like low fat popcorn, bananas and other fruit, salad items and sugar free jam and peanut butter.

This is an important point in the meal plan because you should feel comfortable eating only two meals a day and not necessarily feeling hungry. Stay away from situations that will disrupt your diet like parties, restaurants and dinner parties especially if you know that you don't have the will power to say no to food especially when you are not hungry. The habit to nibble because everyone else is eating is really a danger sign to be aware as you have come this far.

Breakfast

Oatmeal Porridge with sultanas (the oatmeal in the morning is super important)

Banana or other fruit

Late Afternoon meal

Small Noodle Salad

Or

Yoghurt and Green Salad
Or
Small Wholemeal Pasta Salad
Or
Small Vegetable Salad
Or
Small Vegetable and Gluten Salad
Or
Small Vegetable and Tofu Salad
Or
Light soup with wholemeal bread

Supper

Popcorn & Fruit
Or
Peanut Butter and Sugar free jam

Day 24-30

So you should have dropped 1.5 to 2 dress sizes at this point you are feeling great and you noticed that you are now hungry at 3pm or 3:30pm and your last meal was breakfast. Depending on the time you leave work or pick up the children from school you are starving so the trick is to have your meal as late as possible (don't starve yourself as it is not necessary) about an hour before leaving work to go home. When you get home you will not have a need to nibble on emergency food but you can prepare a small meal and probably eat a small amount well before 6pm.

Only eat if you are hungry and don't try to eat a whole pot of food take your time and eat and enjoy the meal.

Breakfast

Oatmeal Porridge with sultanas (the oatmeal in the morning is super important)
Banana or other fruit

Late Afternoon meal

Small Noodle Salad
Or
Yoghurt and Green Salad
Or

Small Wholemeal Pasta Salad

Or

Small Vegetable Salad

Or

Small Vegetable and Gluten Salad

Or

Small Vegetable and Tofu Salad

Or

Light soup with wholemeal bread

Supper

Popcorn & Fruit

Or

Peanut Butter and Sugar free jam

Now that you have achieved your new dress size go shopping and reward yourself with clothes not food and watch what you eat moving forward and enjoy your smaller tummy and smaller body 😊

I am anxious to hear your feedback so drop me a line on my facebook fanpage:

<http://www.facebook.com/LoveVegetarianWithAlvern>