

HOW TO START A VEGAN LIFESTYLE



If you're looking to start a vegan lifestyle, it's important that you do your research before making the change. Veganism is a huge commitment, with a large list of benefits and consequences that can potentially come from following this diet.

Here are some helpful tips for how you might go about starting the transition from being an omnivore to becoming a full-fledged vegan.

1. Get Educated

First things first: educate yourself on what goes into following a vegan lifestyle. While taking out animal products from your life will make one aspect of your lifestyle easier, there is a lot more to it. You'll need to think about where you are going to get protein from if you don't eat meat or fish. Here's a little hint – there is protein in pulses, tofu, quinoa, tahini and even some vegetables (1).

2. Make a Plan

Before making any changes, it's important that you plan out what this new vegan lifestyle is going to look like for you. Will this be a gradual change or are you looking to go cold turkey? Do you want to find alternatives for all of the animal products in your life or are there some that you don't mind keeping? Many people choose to take small steps over time rather than make major changes overnight, which can often help ease them into their new diet and end up sticking with it for good! Another option to dip your toe into the idea of a vegan diet is to try it for a week or month. Veganuary (2) is a concept where you try it for January. The best bit is that lots of other people will be doing it too so you can encourage each other along the way.

3. Find Your Motivation

Understanding why exactly you're choosing to start living as a vegan is what will ultimately keep you going when temptation strikes. Have a list of all the reasons you want to make this change and refer back to it whenever you feel yourself wavering in your commitment. You are likely to already have one of these motives but if you are on the fence one of these listed below might help you to make the final decision.

* Health Benefits - there are many benefits of a vegan diet. From boosting the immune system that keeps illness at bay to reduce the chances of getting a life-limiting disease. Plus a whole lot more (see other article/video).

* Animal Rights/Animal Welfare - the way animals bred for meat are treated is shocking. Many meat-eaters choose to turn a blind eye but for those of us with a conscience, a plant-based diet is the only option.

* Environmental Impact - vast areas of land and rainforest are being chopped down to make way for grazing cattle. This has led to many species of animal being close to extinction. In addition, farming livestock increases greenhouse gases. So going vegan significantly reduces your carbon footprint (3).

* Spiritual Beliefs - if you lead a spiritual life you care about all of God's living creatures.

* Religious Reasons - Many religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism follow a meat-free diet. Plus many other world-wide religions or concepts of eating, Ahimsa and Ital to name just two find killing animals for food taboo (4).

* Social Justice/Humanitarian Issues Animals are not only bred and killed for meat but the way they are treated is often cruel. But it is not just the animals. The poultry industry has an extremely bad reputation for the way it treats its workers (5).

4. Get Support

If you find that veganism is something that you're passionate about, it might be a good idea for you to get involved with others who have made or are currently making this transition. You can join Facebook groups (6), follow other vegans on social media, or look into local meetups where you can chat about all things vegan! Be sure not to let anyone try and discourage you from your new lifestyle choice, as their negativity won't help either of you.

5. Be Healthy

Prepping all of your favourite non-vegan foods for when you're craving them and stocking up on vegan alternatives for your favourite snacks and condiments will help you to stay healthy throughout this transition. If you aren't eating a well-balanced diet after changing to veganism, it's more likely that you'll find yourself feeling sluggish or hungry. With the right support system, meal plan, recipes, and resources, you should have everything you need to be successful!

6. Stay Positive

Veganism is all about making an impact with your actions. You can make a conscious effort every day while conducting business as usual to ensure that no animals are hurt in the process of getting dinner on the table. Don't worry if major changes don't happen overnight; taking small steps each day will lead you to the positive outcome that you're hoping for.

7. Have Fun

Look into vegan alternatives for your favourite foods and spend some time sourcing recipes. Cooking can be relaxing and baking is cathartic. Dive deep into the recipes and add your own touch. Or you can mix it up and order from a subscription service. Popular ones are Purple Carrot and Fire Road (7). This is a fun and easy way to discover new foods and recipes. “Being healthy has to be boring” said no one ever!

By finding activities and foods that you enjoy, it's easier than ever before to create a life full of yummy vegan dishes!

With these tips and tricks, transitioning from an omnivore diet to become a vegan should be an easy process! Be sure not to get discouraged if it doesn't work out right away; everyone hits road blocks now and then. Keep yourself motivated with what you've learned here. Educate yourself on all aspects of the lifestyle, make the appropriate plan, and see it through until the end.

This should be enough to get you started on their vegan journey. Bon voyage.

References

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