

A complete guide for delightful vegan living



*You name it,
you've got it vegan!*

What is vegan living?

Veganism is a set of choices stemming from a simple logic: *Any* being that feels pain should not be put to pain. Thus, a vegan avoids all animal products: Milk & its products (milk, paneer, cheese, ghee, butter, curd, etc.), meat, eggs, honey (substituting them with their plant-based versions for taste, if desired), wool, leather, fur, pearl, silk, etc. Vegans refrain from animal-tested products too, to the extent possible. Veganism is a win-win-win, in terms of ethics, environmental sustainability and human health.

Vegan food: The healthiest choice

- Plant based food is rich in fiber (essential for good digestion and nutrient absorption), low on saturated fat, and contains no cholesterol. Contrastingly, all animal foods are very high on saturated fat and cholesterol, containing zero fiber.
- No species in nature drinks another species' milk, or any milk at all post infancy. Every animal's milk is tailor-made for her species. The hormonal structure and biology of a cow are drastically different from those of a human.
- Meat too is unnatural. Our so-called canine teeth do not make us omnivorous, as canines are also found in several herbivores (e.g., gorillas, horses, hippos). From laterally moving jaws to long intestines, humans possess a dozen physiological traits that make us plant-eaters, not omnivores.
- Vitamin B12 deficiency is equally common in non-vegans & vegans, so don't be alarmed. It is a modern lifestyle issue. B12 comes from bacteria. Since today's ultra-hygienic ways eliminate bacterial presence, vegans and non-vegans both need to be careful of vitamin B12 levels, and take supplements as needed.
(More on <http://sharan-india.org/vitamin-b12/>)
- Getting regular sunlight is important to ensure adequate Vitamin D levels (More on <http://sharan-india.org/vitamin-d/>).



- Clichéd but crucial: The more raw fruits, greens and vegetables you consume, the healthier you will be.
- Vegan or non-vegan, fried & processed junk foods are unhealthy, and should be avoided as much as possible for gaining good health.

Vegans get ample calcium!

There are plenty of plant based foods that not only have higher calcium content but also have higher absorption rates than animal milk. Some examples include all leafy green vegetables (like coriander, methi, radish, curry patta), til (sesame seeds), ragi, almonds, rajma, peas (e.g., chana), moong sprouts, soya products like tofu.

Debunking the protein myth



Germany's strongest man, Patrik Baboumian, is vegan!

If you consume enough calories, you are bound to get enough protein! That's why protein deficiencies are mostly found in malnourished people. In fact, excess protein leads to serious harm. Anyhow, there are plenty of protein-rich plant foods: all pulses (dal), soy products, all legumes [peas like chana, beans such as rajma, etc.], almonds & other nuts, seeds, and more.

Non-dietary lifestyle changes

Veganism is not just about food; it's about avoiding cruelty in all our choices. There are ample options for non-leather furniture, footwear & accessories. It's very easy to substitute or avoid leather, honey, wool, fur, silk, pearls etc. as well. You can also readily find natural/cruelty-free shampoos, soaps & cosmetics involving no animal testing/ingredients. Visit the page below for an exhaustive list of products:

<http://hyderabadvegans.wordpress.com/lifestyleproducts/>

Buying vegan

Note: Please check the ingredient list before buying anything recommended here, as the ingredients may have changed. Some of the non-vegan ingredients to look for are milk solids, whey, glycerin, gelatin and casein.

- Milk: Soy milk is useful in the beginning, as it is readily available in the market. Some stores also stock rice milk and coconut milk.
- Chocolates: Nestlé's dark chocolates, Ritter Sports (1-2 varieties), Lotus and Morde dark compounds. Home-made vegan chocolates can be ordered at 9395323200 (Preethi).
- Biscuits: Hide-n-Seek (plenty of flavors), Oreo, Pickvick, Parle's Coconut and Bourbon, McVities Hobnobs [There may be more; just check the ingredients]. Duke's waffles (except chocolate flavor) are vegan.
- Curd and Cheese Spread: Call 7893225500 to order vegan curd (made from peanuts, cashews etc.) and vegan cheese spread (made from cashews).
- Ice Cream: In Hyderabad, Berry's has just started Soya based ice-creams that taste just like dairy ice-creams and are reasonably priced too. They can be home delivered by calling Mr. Murthy (9391689333) or Mr. Vijay (9866081152).
- Sweets: Haldiram's classic soan-papdi and badam halwa are vegan. Some shops keep boondi laddu made with vegetable oil, and cashew burfi without mava.
- Whipped Cream: Non-dairy whipped cream by Tropolite or Rich
- Plant based butters and mayonnaise: Vegan butters (from peanut, cashew, almonds, sesame, etc.) can be bought from Dakini Foods (Q-mart) and Fab India. Fun-food's diet mayonnaise is also vegan.



Restaurants and Bakeries



Vegans are NOT limited to home food at all. Restaurants of every cuisine serve dishes that are devoid of dairy, eggs, & meat. We just need to clearly specify not to include butter, ghee, cheese, paneer, milk, cream and mayonnaise in the dishes that we order. To ensure compliance, you could tell them that

you are allergic to milk. Wherever feasible, do also summarize veganism.

- Cakes & cookies: There are several bakers who bake vegan cakes on order:
 - *O' Delicacies (Amandine 9581066149)*
 - *Kikaboni (8297661252)*
(They keep over the counter vegan cakes too)
 - *Simple Pleasures (Suneeta 9052206567)*
 - *Lakshmi (9848822962)*
 - *Go Gluten Free (7893549148)*
 - *Ofen Bakery (9849681912)*
- Pizza: If you are a pizza lover, you can enjoy cheese-less pizza in US Pizza, Little Italy and Papa Jones. US Pizza even makes Garlic breads without butter.
- Many Chinese vegetarian dishes are vegan.
- Kikaboni café customizes vegan coffee, tea and milkshakes.
- Subway customizes dairy-free sandwiches, and CCD has a 'Vegan Shake' on its menu.
- Some restaurants also keep tofu or you can buy a tofu packet (readily available in supermarkets) and ask them to make your favorite paneer dish with tofu. If your group has a sizable number, they are likely to cooperate.

Cooking at home

Making plant based alternatives doesn't take much time at all. In fact 80% of the recipes in this booklet can simply be made in just 5-7 minutes time! Wherever applicable, easy tips on making these things almost instantly are also mentioned.

Like with any lifestyle change, there is a tiny bit of ramp up time involved here too. But, once you get the hang of a few basics, you will be surprised to see how easy it is to make everything vegan!

Vegan cooking: general tips

- One can make milk out of various nuts, seeds, beans etc. Some examples are soy milk, almond milk, cashew milk, rice milk, coconut milk, peanut milk, oat milk. The best thing about plant based milks is that they are cholesterol free and growth hormone free. Hence, they do not cause high blood pressure and heart disease. They don't promote diabetes, either.
- Tofu tastes just like paneer, and is healthy too. Rich in protein & calcium, it is available in most stores.
- Tea: As a substitute for milk tea, cashew milk or almond milk work great. Some also prefer soy milk. Many other options exist too: lemon tea, herbal tea, green tea, etc. You may add different herbs like ginger, mint, tulsi, cardamom, mint.
- Coffee tastes great with coconut milk or vanilla flavored soy milk. [Do not boil the coconut/cashew/almond milk. Add them in the last 5-10 seconds before turning off the stove.]
- Almond milk, cashew milk & soy milk are good choices for breakfast cereals.
- Orgran offers a variety of vegan easy baking mixes (cakes, pancakes etc.) and egg-replacers. They are available at Nature's basket stores.



- Any curry (even Malai Kofta) can be easily *veganized*: Replace ghee/butter with oil, paneer with tofu, dairy cream/mava with cashew cream (sometimes added with watermelon/pumpkin seeds), and dairy-based milk with coconut/cashew milk.
- Curd: Peanut curd goes well with buttermilk, raita etc. For other usages, cashew curd is a good choice. (See recipes section).
- Coconut milk is very cost-effective and can be used to make hot/cold coffee, cold cocoa, ice-creams, kheer etc. Thick coconut milk can also be used with vegan ready-made ice-cream mixes.
- Most of the taste in meat dishes comes from spices. Still, if you want meat-like texture in vegan form, go for mock-meats/soy-nuggets.
- Egg-replacers: A good list of all possible egg replacers that can be used in baking or other dishes is available here:
http://sharan-india.org/dairy_meat_alternatives/

Vegan cooking: basic recipes

Plant based milks

Nut milks [from cashews, almonds and peanuts]

Ingredients:

- ½ cup almonds/cashews/peanuts, Water (2 cups or more)

Procedure:

- Wash and soak nuts in water (almonds overnight, cashews/peanuts for 3-4 hours). Rinse well and blend with water. First make smooth paste with little water, and then add the rest of the water.
- Sieve with a thin cloth (optional).
- Nut milks can be stored in refrigerator up to 3 days.

Easy tip: To make instant nut-milk anytime, soak nuts in large quantities, drain water and deep-freeze them. This way, they can be stored for a month. Thereafter, whenever you want to make milk, just take some nuts out, thaw them in water and blend them!

Coconut milk

Blend grated coconut with equal amount of lukewarm water. Sieve the mixture with a thin cloth. Save the fiber. Once all the milk is extracted, repeat the procedure with the fiber, and a little water to extract the remaining milk. Discard the fiber. This can be stored in refrigerator up to 3 days.



Rice milk

Ingredients

4 cups water, ½ cup uncooked rice (white or brown) or 1 cup cooked rice

Procedure

- Cook rice and water until very soft.
- Let it cool and put mixture into blender or food processor. Blend until very smooth.
- Let it stand for at least 30 minutes, and then pour the liquid on top into another container. Be careful not to let the sediments in or strain it. Refrigerate. It can be kept for at least 48 hours.

Peanut/Cashew curd

- Use 2 cups of lukewarm cashew/peanut milk. (While using peanut milk, let it boil fully, and then let the temperature come down).
- Add 2 teaspoons of curd as a starter, and mix well.
- If you are starting the curd for the first time then, make the curd starter by adding 10-15 chilli stems in small quantity of warm milk and keep overnight. Use this to start the bigger batch of curd.
- Most vegan curds stay well in refrigerator up to 7 days. Store a small quantity from each batch to use it to start the next batch of curd. The starter can also be stored in deep freezer for a month.



Peanut curd-rice

Ingredients

- 1 cup slightly overcooked rice (optionally it can be smashed a little)
- Peanut curd – quantity according to taste
- Salt to taste, Jeera(cumin) powder – 1-2tsp, cumin seeds – 1/2tsp
- Finely chopped mint leaves, Grated ginger, lemon (according to taste)
- For tempering – cumin seeds, mustard seeds, curry leaves, red chilly (1-2), white urad dal, chopped green chilli (3-4)

Procedure

- Boil rice with water (take 3 times more water than rice)
- When rice is half cooked, add ginger, mint leaves, cumin powder and salt. Mix rice and curd together.

In a bowl, take a spoon of oil (optional), and add urad dal, mustard & cumin seeds. Once they pop, add green chillis, red chillis and curry leaves. Pour this over the curd rice mixture. Add curd and lemon according to taste.

Simple cashew based cheese spread

Ingredients

½ cup cashews soaked for at least 3 hours; 3-4 cloves of garlic; salt and black pepper to taste, pinch of turmeric, dried herbs, [Optional: 1 tbsp yellow mustard, 1 tsp onion powder, 1 tbsp Nutritional yeast]

Procedure

Blend all the ingredients in the chutney jar of the blender with a little water and make a smooth creamy paste. Refrigerate it overnight for better results. [*Nutritional yeast* can be ordered from Bon appetite in Pondicherry. Since only a little amount is required at a time, a 150gms jar lasts for almost 6 months.]

Plant based butters

Coconut butter

Blend small pieces of coconut in a chutney jar of your mixie. Scrape the sides in between. Keep blending until it starts sticking together. Now take this mixture out on a thin cloth (without adding any water) and squeeze as much coconut cream as you can. Refrigerate this for about 2 hours (less if your refrigerator is at high temperature) and you will get thick coconut butter. (This has to be consumed quickly after taking it out of the fridge as it melts really fast.)

Nut/seed butters

Nut/seed butters made from peanuts, almonds, cashews and sesame are excellent spreads. They can also be used in making cookies or whipped cream. While using peanuts or almonds, roast them first. Take off the skin for peanuts. Grind the nuts in chutney jar until the powder sticks together. Scrap the sides and grind again until it becomes a smooth creamy paste. 1-2 tbsp of peanut/olive oil can also be added to make the paste really smooth [Optional: add a bit of salt or/and sugar for taste]. Most nut/seed butters can practically be made in just 5 minutes, and they can be stored for a long time in the refrigerator.



Vegan desserts

Many desserts like besan ladoos, sheera, custard, paysam, carrot halwah, etc. can easily be made with oil instead of ghee and using plant based milk instead of animal milk.

Simple vegan fruit-based ice-cream



Blend $\frac{1}{2}$ kg of any pulpy fruit (such as mangoes, chickoo, custard apple, soaked apricots, etc.) with a handful of cashews (or even lesser) or tender coconut pulp and 2 spoons of sugar (or according to taste). Freeze the mixture for at least 2 hours, and scoop!

Basic vegan ice-cream

½ cup soaked cashews blended into cream with 0.75ltr thick plant based milk (coconut/soy) is a very good ice-cream base. One can also use tender coconut pulp, non-dairy whipped cream. Various flavours such as cocoa, kesar, pistachio, coffee, etc can be added to this base.

Tip: For good texture, whip the ice-cream mix once or twice and re-freeze. A lot more recipes for vegan ice-creams can be found here: <http://www.thealternative.in/lifestyle/whats-plate-13-ways-can-scream-vegan-ice-cream/>

Raw vegan sugar-free kulfi

Ingredients

2 tbsp cashews, 2 tbsp almonds, 1 tbsp pistachio nuts, 1 cup pitted and dates (soaked for 4 hours), 1.5 cup soy/coconut/rice milk (or water), a pinch of cardamom



Procedure

Powder all the nuts with cardamom. Blend soaked dates with ½ cup plant based milk until the mixture is smooth.

Basic vegan whole wheat chocolate cake

Ingredients

1 cup whole wheat flour, 1 cup sugar or other sweetener, ½ tsp salt, ¾ tsp baking soda, 1/3 cup cocoa powder, 1 tsp vanilla, 1/3 cup sunflower oil, 1 tsp vinegar, 1 cup cold water/plant based milk, ½ cup baking powder

Procedure

Preheat the oven to 175 degrees. Combine and sift all the dry ingredients into a bowl and mix well. In another bowl mix wet ingredients. Combine both dry and wet mixes. Stir until mixed without lumps. Pour into a baking dish, and bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely.

Indian vegan recipe websites & food bloggers

- Richa: <http://veganricha.com/>
- Vaishali: <http://holycowvegan.net/>
- Harini: <http://tongueticklers.com/>
- Rithika: <http://veganontheprowl.blogspot.in/>
- Susmitha: <http://blog.veganosaurus.com/>
- SHARAN: <http://sharan-india.org/vegan-recipes/>

Facebook communities

Note: Open for anyone interested in veganism (not just vegans)

- Hyderabad vegans: <https://facebook.com/groups/hyderabad.vegans>
We do monthly potluck lunches and other events to support those exploring/trying vegan living.
- Vegans in India: <https://facebook.com/groups/vegansinindia/>

More details about veganism

A compelling FAQ-styled article covering various aspects of vegan living:
<http://hyderabadvegans.wordpress.com/why-vegan-detailed/>

Contact Us

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Note: More detailed pointers/recipes can be found at
<http://hyderabadvegans.wordpress.com/tips-for-a-smooth-shift/>

*No being that feels pain should be put to pain.
Let's uphold that in our everyday choices!*