

Becoming a Vegetarian - Some Useful Tips

1. Do some research - Not as hard as it sounds, search the internet and you'll find many sites with information relating to being vegetarian. Alternatively, visit a library or bookstore, there are many good books on the subject.

2. When you are shopping look at what vegetarian food is available in the shops. Many supermarkets and food stores, especially the larger ones, tend to stock an increasing range of vegetarian convenience foods, such as veggie burgers, sausages and other frozen or chilled foods that are suitable for vegetarians. Also any health food shop or natural food store will have a good selection.

3. Buy a vegetarian cook book. There are literally hundreds to choose from, there are many that specialise in quick and easy recipes, and many are aimed at beginners who are becoming vegetarian too. Some also specialise in different types of food, for example, Indian, Italian or Chinese.

4. Try a vegetarian recipe - There are literally thousands of them out there, you can easily find them on the internet, from the many recipe books available, or many cookery magazines will have vegetarian recipes.

5. Buy some vegetarian food, don't be afraid to try new things such as the many meatfree replacements out there. However don't rely too heavily on the meat replacements for the meat you eat, but also think about the vegetarian foods you already eat, and try to include more of these in your planning, for example macaroni cheese, vegetable lasagne, baked potato with cheese, spaghetti with tomato sauce, pancakes or vegetable soup! This will help you when becoming a vegetarian.

6. Decide if you want to convert gradually/quickly - and make a plan! Some people go vegetarian overnight, perhaps if they've read about or seen a TV documentary about what happens in slaughterhouses. This way you would get the benefits sooner and know that you were doing it immediately might make you feel better, but you would need to have done some planning and be around people who are supportive of your decision and not have any major disruptions in your life. The making a gradual change plan gives you time to plan when becoming a vegetarian. You'll be more likely to stick to your new diet and you'll have less disruption. However you need to make sure you don't start eating unhealthily as a quick way to replace meat, for example with lots of cheese, eggs and high fat dairy foods. Also it's a good idea not to take too long on going vegetarian altogether or you could end up not cutting out the meat completely. If you want to cut out meat gradually, you could first cut out the red meat, then the chicken and finally the fish, choose whatever you think will suit you.

7. Beware Hidden Animal Products Check the labels when buying food. Of course depending on where you live, the labelling will be better in some places than others. Look out for the "suitable for vegetarians" label. There are many animal products used in everyday foods that make them unsuitable for vegetarians. The most common of these are:

- Gelatin/gelatine - Protein from the bones, cartilage, tendons and bones of animals. Often found in desserts and yoghurts, but also some sweets and marshmallows. When you see any tempting chocolate desserts check the label, in many cases it contains gelatine! The same goes for many yoghurts especially the low fat ones. Organic yoghurts and other dairy produce is more likely to be vegetarian.
- Rennet - This comes from the stomach lining of slaughtered newly born calves. It is used in the making of cheese. However more cheeses are being made vegetarian all the time, they should be labelled as suitable for vegetarians but unfortunately aren't always.
- Animal Fat - Most often found in cakes and biscuits.
- Cochineal (E120) - Red food colouring, found in some sweets, made from crushed insects - would you really want to eat that?
- Eggs - Only buy free-range!

About the Author

Britons throw away 6.7m tonnes of food a year, adding to greenhouse gases from landfill sites, a report.

Source: <http://www.productsherbal.com>