



Going Veggie: Healthy Eating

Welcome

to a tastier world...

So you want to know more about going veggie? Well, that's brilliant news! It means you're already well on your way to a happier and healthier you. And guess what? It's never been so easy. Vegetarian food is inventive, mouth-watering, convenient and affordable – so prepare to feel great about yourself!

Read on to find out more about how to embrace all things veggie – and live a more delicious life!

What's for dinner?

Everyone wants to enjoy their food – and as a vegetarian you're going to love what's on your plate. The fun part is learning how to make simple switches to your favourite dishes to make them veggie-friendly – and you'll be impressed by how easy it is to get delicious results.

Imagine it's a balmy summer evening: the perfect night for a barbecue and you're craving that special chargrilled flavour. No problem... just fire up the coals and put a veggie twist on a classic British burger.

Or maybe it's Sunday and you fancy a comforting, homely roast with all the trimmings. Easy... a tempting veggie centrepiece, alongside those crispy spuds and Yorkshire pud, will truly treat your tastebuds.

Good for you...

...good for your wallet

Becoming veggie can be a cost effective way to stay healthy, and you may find switching to vegetarian versions of your favourite meals saves you money. Our guide contains helpful hints on staying healthy with a simple guide to essential veggie nutrition. You'll feel nourished inside and out!

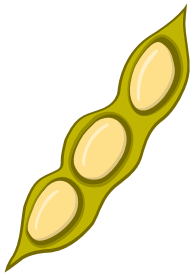
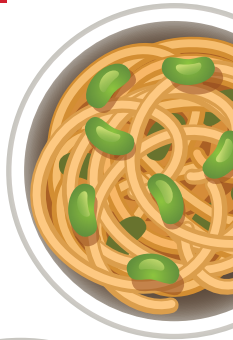
You're in great company

The decision to become veggie is always a personal one, but millions of people around the world have already happily made the same choice. Remember: you're not alone! Chances are you know someone who is veggie. Perhaps your cousin is already vegetarian, or a friend or neighbour. In fact, there are more vegetarians in the world than there are people in the whole of the United States and UK combined – and more join them every day. If they can do it, so can you!



The Protein Switch

The key is making sure you swap meat for other ingredients which provide important nutrients such as protein and iron. Add beans, nuts, tofu or meat substitutes like soya mince to your everyday, usual recipes for a well-balanced meal. After all, nutritionists say plant protein sources are leaner and a positive choice for you and the planet.



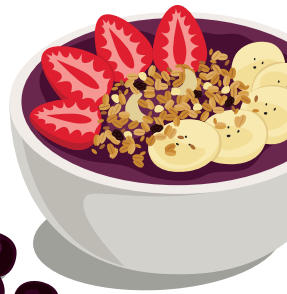
Beautiful Beans

From baked beans to chickpeas, butter beans and kidney beans, these highly nutritious and satisfying foods are a great way to add protein to any recipe. Buy them ready-cooked in tins for convenience, or dried in packets to save money (just remember to soak and cook them properly according to instructions).



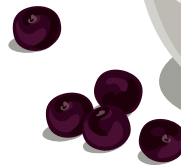
Tricks with Tofu

Tofu is made from soya beans and, when chopped into bite-sized pieces, makes a great addition to a wide range of dishes such as stir fries and curries.



Go Nuts

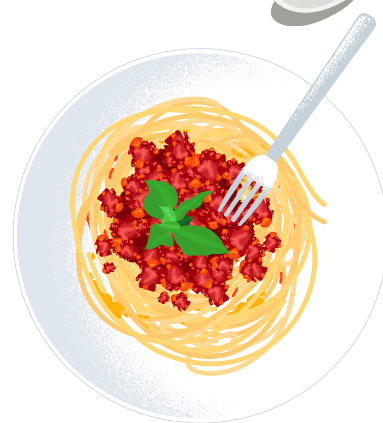
Nuts are a great way to add protein to a meal. Try adding cashews to a curry, or throw some flaked almonds into a salad for extra bite. Peanut butter stirred into coconut milk also makes an indulgent and nutritious sauce for a stir fry.



Mock Meat

The simplest swap is for meat substitutes. This can be a practical way to make sure everyone's happy – especially if you're the only veggie in a meat-eating household. Some might not even notice the difference!

Supermarkets usually stock a range of veggie mince, sausages, fillets and burgers. Versatile and convenient, they're often lower in calories.



Calm those carvery cravings!

If you have occasional cravings for meat, they're easy to satisfy. It's likely what you're actually missing is a protein-rich meal with that hint of salt and fat. You can recreate the hit with a juicy Quorn burger, dusted with smoked paprika to give it that fresh-from-the-barbecue taste, served with crispy, seasoned potato wedges. Or delve into a bean chilli made more indulgent with toppings of cool avocado and crème fraîche.

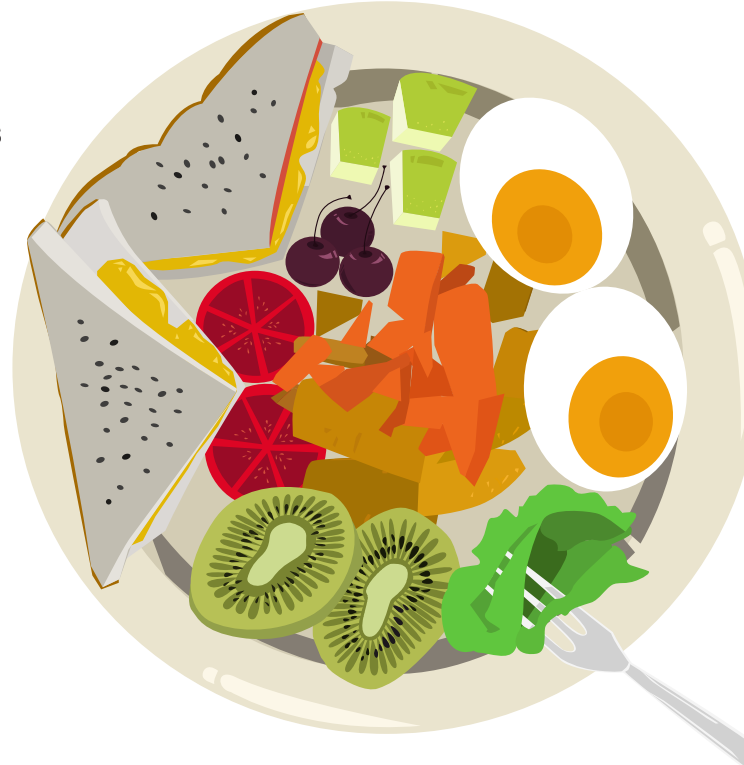


Lift your Lunch

Anyone can get stuck in a lunchtime rut with a lunchbox filled with the same old familiar, limp sandwiches. Fortunately, it's easy to dodge this pitfall with the wealth of colourful veggie options available. With a little imagination, your lunch can be exciting, inspiring and packed with protein.

Salad days

Get creative and turn a simple salad into a nourishing meal! Add soft-boiled eggs, marinated tofu, tasty lentils or seeds to crunchy leaves, sweet peppers, onions and herbs. Add carrots, beetroot or sweet potato for extra depth of flavour and colour.



Cheesed off with sandwich fillings?

Mix egg mayonnaise with watercress, slip in a few Quorn slices or try falafel with beans and a spicy salsa for a more interesting lunch break.



Baked potatoes

Simple and very nourishing. Try a sweet potato for extra yum-factor! To turn a humble spud into an indulgent lunchtime feast, pile on a veggie chilli topped with Greek yogurt and a sprinkling of spring onions and feta; top with cottage cheese with fruity pineapple; or simply add baked beans with melted Cheddar cheese.






But what should I eat?



For those curious about how vegetarian nutrition works, a little bit of learning can go a long way. With this in mind, here's a bit of practical theory for you.

To give you a head start with nutrition, on the next couple of pages we've provided some meal inspiration based on the foods people tell us they love: pasta dishes, filled baked potatoes, chillis and curries. These meal ideas show you how a fairly basic day's intake as a vegetarian can meet all your nutritional needs. As it's a common (if unfounded) concern with some people new to a vegetarian diet, these mealtime ideas focus in particular on where you get your iron and protein from.



Nourish

Confused by carbs? Ignorant about iron? Knowledge is power, so they say – and knowing a little bit about vegetarian nutrition can do you the power of good. It's about making the most out of being veggie.

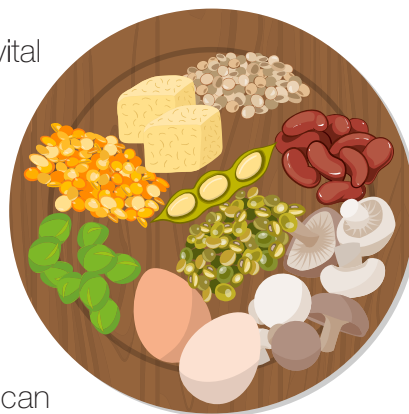
If your veggie meals are well thought out, they can be nutritious and healthy. A nutritionally balanced plate of delicious veggie food means you can get all the iron and protein your body needs.

Just follow these simple tips every day:

- Stock up on protein with 2 to 3 portions a day of beans, pulses, eggs or meat substitutes
- Choose a starchy carbohydrate like potatoes, bread, rice or pasta as the base for each meal
- Bag your 5-a-day by eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables
- Aim for 2 to 3 portions of milk and dairy products or dairy alternatives
- Hydrate! Aim to drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid
- Think healthy: choose reduced-fat, no-added-sugar and low salt products

Protein

We've said it before, but it's vital to think about new sources of protein! Beans, peas and lentils (all types of pulses) are naturally low in fat and high in fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals. Tofu and products made from mycoprotein such as Quorn are also great options which can be switched into most veggie meals. And don't forget eggs – they are convenient and versatile!



Iron

The main sources of iron for vegetarians are cereals and bread, beans and lentils, nuts, seeds and leafy green veg. Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron – so drink a glass of orange juice with your meal, or add a portion of veg or a salad.



Starchy carbs

Around a third of the food you eat should be lovely, starchy carbs. Always opt for wholegrain wherever possible – it'll contain more fibre and nutrients than white or refined starchy products, and will help you feel fuller for longer. Choose wholegrain bread, pitta and chapattis; wholewheat pasta and brown rice; and wholegrain breakfast cereals and oats.



Five-a-day

Aim to eat a broad variety of fruit and veg in different colours for maximum nutritional impact – think of it as eating a rainbow! A small 150ml glass of fruit juice or smoothie counts towards your five-a-day – and beans and lentils count too. In fact, one-third of what you eat every day should be fruit and veg. Fresh, frozen and canned all count!



Dairy

Keep your bones strong by eating a variety of dairy products such as milk, yogurt and cheese – all good sources of protein, vitamins and calcium. If using dairy alternatives – such as soya milk and yogurts, or almond milk – choose unsweetened, calcium-fortified options.



Fat, Sugar and Salt

While fat, sugar and salt can make food taste great, it's best not to consume too much. Swap butter for a lower fat spread, and choose low salt options when buying seasoning like stock cubes. Boiling or grilling food is healthier and just as tasty as frying with oil. An occasional treat of ice-cream, cakes and sweets is something we all love – but it's worth remembering they can contain lots of sugar and fat.



Hydrate

It's thirsty work staying healthy, so keep topped up with water, lower fat milk and sugar-free drinks throughout the day. Tea and coffee count too! Fruit juice and smoothies also count, but because they contain high amounts of fruit sugars you should limit your intake to around 150ml a day – that's just one small glass.



Meal inspiration

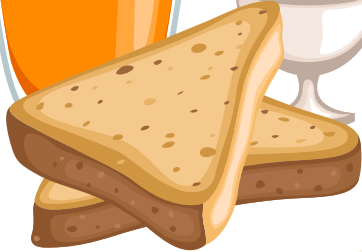
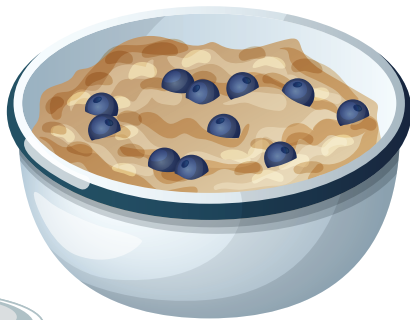
It's official – veggie food can be deliciously tasty and good for you, as long as you plan what's on your plate. We're here to help with a selection of mouth-watering ideas based on exactly the kind of dishes you love – think comforting pasta, baked potatoes piled with fabulous fillings, satisfyingly-spicy chilli and gorgeous aromatic curries.

When you eat a variety of nutritionally balanced meals throughout the week (such as those overleaf), it is easy to get all the nourishment you need. The meal ideas on the next couple of pages are packed with fibre, whole foods and colourful fruit and veg, and will make healthy eating as easy as (veggie) pie! So, get inspired by our simple guide and vary those dishes to keep it interesting. It'll all taste amazing!

What Should I Eat?

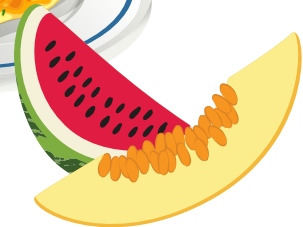
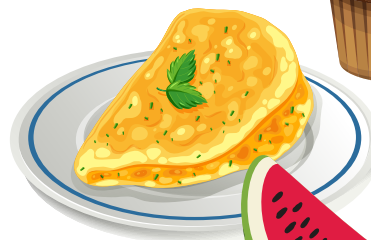
Breakfast

Kick-start your day the healthy way with a nourishing bowl of muesli, porridge or bran flakes for a wholegrain hit – or whip up some scrambled or poached eggs for protein! Add a sprinkling of berries to your cereal or pour a small glass of juice to bag one of your five-a-day while adding essential vitamin C, which helps your body absorb iron.



Lunch

Move things on with a bit of variety! If you had cereal or porridge for breakfast, it's time for a more substantial lunch. Choose a mixed-veg omelette, falafel or Quorn sandwich slices in a veg-packed salad. Follow an egg breakfast with something lighter: a grain-based dish like couscous or brown rice salad, a wrap or soup packed with vegetables and beans. Remember, beans and lentils count towards your five-a-day! Round things off nicely with some nuts, fruit or yogurt.



Dinner

Aim for an equal balance of protein and carbs. Whether you're having lentils, tofu or veggie mince, pair with something grain-based like rice, noodles or pasta. Add nuts to a veggie curry, or throw some beans into a stew. Squeeze in extra veg by having some in your main meal and on the side – try a salad, or steamed broccoli. For more richness and extra protein, sprinkle on some cheese or a spoonful of yogurt or crème fraîche.



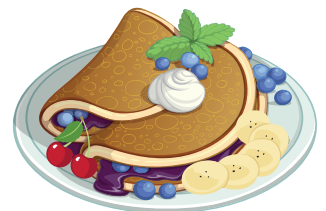
Snacks

Keep your blood sugar levels stable and add a nutritional boost with a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack. Dip some carrot sticks in a pot of creamy hummus for protein – more veg towards your five-a-day. Drink milk (or non-dairy alternative) for a convenient, quick and nutritious snack full of protein and calcium. But keep it varied – try cereal bars and trail mix (if you didn't have grains or nuts for lunch), fresh or dried fruit, cheese or peanut butter on crackers.



Desserts

If you love pudding then good news! It can actually be nutritious, as long as you watch out for sugar and fat. Try low fat custard with bread and butter pudding and you'll be bagging some protein! Try fresh or frozen yogurt as a healthier alternative to ice cream and top with crunchy granola and fresh fruit. And don't forget humble rice pudding – fabulous with sliced banana or a handful of berries.



Nutrition FAQs

Should I swot up on soya?

No need – scientists have found soya foods to be nutritious, safe and healthy. Products made from soya beans such as tofu, soya milk and soya yogurts are a great protein source and can be a good alternative to dairy.

And the amount you eat doesn't matter – for people consuming typical or above average amounts, studies show no adverse effect on fertility or hormonal balance. For women in particular, there may even be positive advantages! For optimum benefits if you're replacing dairy foods with soya, choose products fortified with calcium.

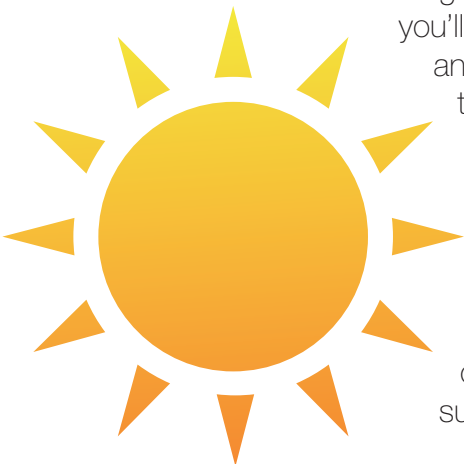


What's the key to Omega 3?

Omega 3, one of the so-called 'good fats', is vital as part of a healthy diet and is crucial to keep our eyes and brains in tip-top condition. There are plenty of non-veggie sources – but veggies can get their fix from munching on walnuts, using rapeseed oil, sprinkling flaxseeds on breakfast cereal and by eating omega-enriched eggs.

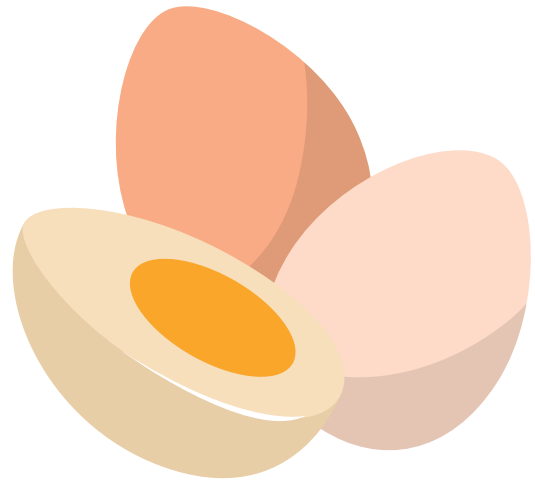
Veggie vitamin pills – are they vital?

As long as you're eating a variety of balanced veggie meals you'll have no problem getting all the nutrition you need – and supplements can never be a substitute for proper, tasty veggie food! One exception for some of us, however, is vitamin D – the 'sunshine vitamin'. Adults living in the UK – whether vegetarian or not – are now recommended to consider taking a daily 10 microgram vitamin D supplement during autumn and winter, simply because the sun doesn't shine enough! And those who don't get outside much or routinely cover their skin should take a vitamin D supplement throughout the year.



Egg-stravaganza – how many eggs is too many?

Good news for egg lovers – there is currently no recommended limit on the number of eggs people should eat. So as a veggie looking for a convenient source of protein, you can enjoy eggs as much as you like – as long as your meals are generally balanced, healthy and varied. Eggs do contain cholesterol, but this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Eating too much saturated fat is actually worse for raising the amount of cholesterol in our blood, so if you've been advised to watch your cholesterol levels make sure you prioritise cutting down the amount of saturated fat you eat.



Don't be too cheesy

You may love cheese, but as a veggie it's important not to rely on it too much – it can be high in saturated fat. As a guide, it's best to consume no more than a matchbox-sized piece of full fat hard cheese a day. Try choosing healthier products such as cottage cheese, reduced fat cheddar or other lower fat options.



Being Veggie – the Big Questions

Where can I find vegetarian recipes?

There is a huge wealth of tasty ideas and recipes online – all you need to do is Google. If you fancy a risotto, search for terms such as 'risotto' and '+ vegetarian' and you'll be spoiled for choice. Whatever you're looking for, it should be easy to find. Alternatively, visit our Vegetarian Society website for more delicious recipe ideas.

Is it true that vegetarians need to take vitamin pills to stay healthy?

No. There is no need to take supplements if you are eating veggie meals which are balanced and well thought-out. These should meet all of your nutritional needs. The only exception is vitamin D. Government guidelines on vitamin D, the 'sunshine vitamin', now recommend all adults in the UK – whether vegetarian or not – should consider taking a daily 10 microgram supplement in the autumn and winter because of low sunshine levels. Additionally those who don't get out in the sun or always cover their skin when they do, should take a vitamin D supplement throughout the year.

What if I want advice on vegetarian nutrition?

Come to us! The Vegetarian Society website has plenty of up-to-date information about veggie nutrition, and we're happy to help with any queries you might have. Just get in touch! You'll also find information available from the British Dietetic Association and NHS Choices.

Still have a question?

Get in touch: www.vegsoc.org



About the Vegetarian Society

Here at the Vegetarian Society we are passionate about veggie food! We want everyone to know how varied and delicious vegetarian dishes are – and how easy it is to enjoy and maintain a veggie lifestyle.

We want you to love being a vegetarian, and love what's on your plate as much as we do. So how can we help? Simply put, we support and represent vegetarians, and offer help, up-to-date advice and inspirational recipes which are as fresh as a box of newly-picked veg!

Got any questions?

Get in touch – we're here to help if you are looking for advice for yourself, your friends or family. And we'll guide you through everything, from the important first steps of becoming a vegetarian to providing nutritional advice. If you'd like to get in touch, drop us an email at: info@vegsoc.org, or turn to the back cover for other ways to contact us.

Our Vegetarian Society Approved trademarks, which you can find on products and restaurant menus, makes finding veggie meals and ingredients easier.

We're also keen to encourage all veggies to get some flour on their aprons by coming along to our Vegetarian Society Cookery School, which offers a fun, hands-on and informative experience in a friendly atmosphere. Get messy, get creative, and eat well for life!

With us here to help you, there's nothing else you need to worry about.

All that's left is for you to enjoy living life as a veggie. Welcome to a delicious new world!

www.vegsoc.org



To make the most of everything vegetarian food has to offer, join the Vegetarian Society!

Find out more at www.vegsoc.org/jointoday or call 0161 925 2000.



The Vegetarian Society of the United Kingdom Ltd
Parkdale, Dunham Road, Altrincham, WA14 4QG

0161 925 2000 

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