

Veg Out!

By Woodland Publishing, Inc.

October is vegetarian awareness month—a month dedicated to the vegetarian lifestyle. What is vegetarianism? Vegetarianism isn't a new idea, but a lifestyle deeply rooted in the past. The International Vegetarian Union states that in the mid-1800s, the British Vegetarian Society coined the term “vegetarian” from the Latin “*uegetus*” meaning “lively” and suggestive of the English word “vegetable.”

Now is a good time to begin enjoying a vegetarian diet. The fall harvest is full of delicious seasonal fruits and vegetables including apples, artichokes, squash, peaches, beans and apricots.

Type of Vegetarians

The strictest form of vegetarianism is **vegan** or total vegetarianism. Vegans include only foods from plants in their diets—fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, seeds and nuts. **Lacto-vegetarians** eat dairy products, but eliminate eggs, meat, poultry and fish from their diets. The **lacto-ovo-vegetarian** diet includes all dairy products, even butter, cheese and eggs, but omits meat, poultry and fish. **Semi-vegetarians** practice the least restrictive form of vegetarianism and integrate everything but red meat, or meat derived from mammals, into their diets.

What do Vegetarians Eat?

Vegetarians eat a wide variety of foods. Many companies now produce vegetarian alternatives to almost every food and dish. Burger King® offers the BK VEGGIE® burger that replaces the traditional beef patty with Morningstar Farms® Garden Veggie Patties. The vegetarian fare at Subway® restaurant chains includes the Veggie Delight® sandwich full of vegetables and served on fresh bread.

It's Not Easy Being Green

Experts caution that a vegetarian diet can be unhealthful if it contains too many calories and not enough nutrients. For example, a vegetarian might replace meat in their diet with high-fat cheeses and oils, or fill up on meatless junk food, like ice cream or potato chips, increasing their consumption of saturated fats and empty calories. To avoid this, careful planning should be made to include essential nutrients in the diet.

It's Good to be Green—Why?

- *To fight off disease.* Former Surgeon General C. Everett Kopp said that 70 percent of all Americans are dying from diseases that are directly tied to their eating habits. A low-fat vegetarian diet is one a powerful way to stop the progression of coronary artery disease or prevent it entirely. A vegetarian diet also may reduce the risk of certain types of cancer.
- *To keep your weight down.* A study from the Preventative Medicine Research Institute found that overweight people who followed a low-fat, vegetarian diet lost an average of 24 pounds in the first year.
- *To live longer.* According to Dr. Michael F. Roizen, MD, author of *The Real Age Diet: Make Yourself Younger with What You Eat*, a switch from the standard American diet to a vegetarian diet will add about 13 healthy years to your life.
- *To save money.* According to *Vegetarian Times* magazine, meat accounts for 10 percent of Americans food spending. Eating vegetables, grains and fruits in place of the 200 pounds of beef, chicken and fish each non-vegetarian eats annually cuts typical individual food bills by an average of \$4,000.00.

So listen to Mom and eat your veggies!