



**FITMOMMA**

30-DAY

VEGAN

TRANSFORMATION

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN

## TO BE VEGAN?

The straightforward definition is a person who doesn't eat, wear, or use animal products. The next 30 days we will focus our learning on the eating portion of this definition. Some people choose to jump all in immediately cutting off animal products cold turkey and others ease into this lifestyle one meal at a time. At some point along the way, all vegans, or part-time vegans, realized the foods we eat affect our bodies, the animals, the environment, and even the health of the human population. In consuming only plants we are drastically limiting our contribution to animal suffering, environmental devastation, and world hunger, and in addition we are fueling our bodies to thrive. Lucky for us, there has never been a better time to be vegan. There are now more options than ever for vegans on restaurant menus and grocery store shelves (plus you can pretty much order anything online these days!). I am excited to be a part of your vegan journey.

*xo,  
Melina*



WEEK 4

VEGAN OUTSIDE

THE HOME

# Week Four

FITMOMMA 30 DAY VEGAN TRANSFORMATION



WEEK 4

# Vegan Outside the Home

There's this whole huge world to discover full of exciting plant foods waiting to be tasted. Good news! Getting around as a vegan is a snap once you know the tricks!

# Maintaining a Vegan Lifestyle

## Dining Out

Dining out is one of life's greatest joys. However, for someone new to vegan eating it might seem like a daunting experience. Not to worry, you can still enjoy a night out and free of cooking even if you are vegan. There are two types of restaurants: those intentionally veg-friendly and those that are accidentally veg-friendly. That's right, most restaurants offer at least one vegan friendly dish and if they don't, are typically happy to cater to vegans.

### KNOW WHO YOU ARE DINING WITH:

Being the "plant eating" friend, most of the time your friends and family will let you choose the restaurant. If you dine with people who are open to the veg life, feel free to pick an all vegan or vegetarian spot. However, if you are dining with your meat-loving uncle, it's best to pick a restaurant that caters to all. One of our favorite restaurants is a sushi spot where half the menu is vegan sushi and the other half is fish sushi. A happy compromise for all those dining.

### PRE-GAME:

Find the restaurant menu online before heading out to a new restaurant. If nothing on the menu is obviously vegan, call ahead and ask if the restaurant will be able to make you a vegan dish off the menu. Chefs appreciate the advanced notice and you will most likely get a better meal than piecing together sides or make an on-the-spot request. A great resource for finding vegan eateries is [www.happycow.com](http://www.happycow.com).

## BE EASY GOING:

However, sometimes you just have to be cool with piecing together several vegetable side dishes (made without butter), a pretty bare salad, or a simple pasta dish. These tend to be easy substitutions at most restaurants. Focus your dining experience around the friends and family you are dining with not the excitement of the vegan food options. Sometimes going out to dinner isn't about the food. Not every meal will be a mind-blowing feat of culinary excellence and that's ok. For nights like that it might be a good idea to eat before you go.

## GO ETHNIC:

Ethnic restaurants frequently have a fair selection of traditional vegetable dishes, so they are normally safe food option choices. Open your culinary experience by trying Ethiopian, Middle Eastern, Indian, Mexican, Chinese and Thai.



# Fast Food Vegan

While it might not be an ideal stop for food, when in a pinch it's helpful to know your fast food vegan options while out, in an airport or on a road trip

## BURGER KING

At Burger King, you can get a garden salad, fries, hash browns and even a veggie burger (just ask for no mayo!) as well as some accidentally vegan treasures such as the French Toast Sticks and Dutch Apple Pie.

## CARL'S JR. (AND HARDEE'S)

The French fries, CrissCut® fries, hash rounds, and hash-brown nuggets at Carl's Jr. (and Hardee's) are all vegan. In the restaurant, there is an all-you-can-eat salad bar that offers a variety of fresh vegetables and a three-bean salad that can be topped with Italian dressing, or raspberry or low-fat balsamic vinaigrette. You can also get the grits.

## CHIPOTLE

Chipotle offers Sofritas—organic tofu braised with peppers and spices—which you can order in a bowl, burrito, taco, or salad. You have the option of black or pinto beans and brown or white rice. Plus, the restaurant has a great selection of vegan toppings, including mixed fajita veggies, salsas, lettuce, and guacamole.



## STARBUCKS

Starbucks has a sesame noodle dish made with broccoli, carrots, red pepper, snap peas, tofu, pickled cucumbers, and sesame peanuts. The dish comes with a bar of Starbucks dark chocolate for dessert. Other options include a plain or multigrain bagel, classic or blueberry oatmeal, the Seasonal Harvest Fruit Blend, and the Hearty Veggie & Brown Rice Salad Bowl, plus a whole array of dairy-free milk to pick from for your beverage of choice.

## SUBWAY

Subway's Veggie Delite—on Italian bread and without cheese or mayo—is delish. And in select locations, you can enjoy two completely vegan subs: the Malibu Garden (a vegan patty topped with fire-roasted tomato sauce) and the Black Bean (a vegan patty topped with sweet potato curry sauce).

## TACO BELL

Taco Bell has many great options for vegans! The fast-food chain has a variety of sides that are vegan—including the cinnamon twists, chips and guacamole (or pico de gallo), cilantro rice, black or refried beans, and Mexican rice—and all of its salsas are vegan. You can also order the Bean Burrito “fresco style,” the regular Black Bean Burrito without cheese, or the Veggie Cantina Power Bowl (ask for no sauce). Several of Taco Bell's other dishes can be veganized simply by omitting a few ingredients or asking for it “fresco style.” The 7 Layer Bean Burrito can be made vegan if it has five layers—just forgo the cheese and sour cream. The tacos, nachos, Crunchwrap Supreme, and Mexican Pizza are vegan when you hold the meat (substitute beans if you'd like), cheese, and sour cream.



## VEGGIE GRILL

If you live in Southern California a variety of all vegan fast food options are popping up! If you live in the area you must try Veggie Grill, which will be your new go-to spot for a quick bite to eat. Can you believe we now live in a time where vegan fast food is actually a real thing! Other spots include Native Foods Cafe and PowerPlant. Hopefully these options will spread.

## WENDY'S

Head to Wendy's for a plain baked potato, the garden side salad with red Italian dressing, or French fries. You can also ask for a veggie sandwich, which has everything that would normally be included on the burger except the meat—there's even a button for it on the cash register.

For more vegan ordering options at chain restaurants check out [this site](#).

### **ACTION ITEM:**

Explore the website Happy Cow or download **the app** on your phone to have available when needed.



# Vegan at Social Celebrations

Most of us look forward to celebrations; a time when we get together with friends and family to commemorate a special occasion. Birthdays, holidays, weddings, graduations, reunions, or other happy life milestones that are worthy of a celebration! Food tends to be a central feature of such festivities; sharing food and drink is an important way of connecting. These celebrations tend to serve a lot of animal products and the best way to connect with non-vegan family members and friends at these events is with respect and vegan diplomacy. Diplomacy is the fine art of honoring your own ethical principles and social consciousness without judging, condemning, or otherwise injuring another person. Your clarity, warmth and kindly humor will also go a long way toward challenging people without making them feel judged or otherwise threatened. Even if your world is almost entirely non-vegan, it is populated with many who are trying, in their own ways, to make the world a better place.

## Attending Non-vegan Celebrations

The best solution for participating and staying vegan in non-vegan social events is to have a plan!

### Birthday Parties:

#### Throwing a Party

There is no need to announce that you will only be serving 'vegan' food at the birthday party you are hosting. Vegan food is real food! Make the food yummy and most guests won't even notice there were no animal products served. I usually build the menu around the birthday boy's favorite foods then add a few party staple menu items.

#### Attending a Party

When attending another kid's birthday party a best practice is to contact the host of the party to see what they will be serving food-wise. Then prepare a vegan alternative to bring to the party for your kids to eat. Using this approach they will not feel food-isolation at social events. There is almost a vegan option for any meal; chicken fingers, hot-dogs, pizza, burgers, cupcakes, etc. This way there is no pressure on the host to accommodate for your dietary needs and your kids feel just as much a part of the party as everyone else.

## Birthday Parties Continued:

### Some birthday grub ideas:

- Fruit Tray
- Veggie tray with hummus
- Chips/salsa/guac
- Pasta salad
- Lentil Bruschetta with pita chips
- Quinoa Salad
- Chia Seed muffins
- Fruit Pizza
- Vegan Cupcakes and/or Cake -> make your own or google search vegan cake to locate bakeries. Also, if you live close to a Whole Foods store, they have a variety of vegan baked good options.
- Easy Catering Options - Chipotle has a wide variety of vegan options and provides reasonable catering prices. If catering is the food option of choice, most restaurants provide a catering option so I would inquire with your favorite local vegan restaurant.

## BBQ

American BBQs are centered around grilling up and serving animal products. Here are my best practices for staying vegan at these events:

- Eat before you go
- Go to the BBQ with enough dishes for you and your family to have a complete meal in addition to sharing the vegan goodness with guests. I try to make vegan friendly bbq alternatives. Seriously, everything has a vegan alternative from potato salad to hot-dogs.
- Bring your favorite vegan burgers for grilling and/or a batch of carrot-dogs

## Holidays

Meals and non-vegan family members are among the most difficult situations to deal with, whether it's Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas, Hanukkah, or another family traditional event. You want to be part of these occasions and you want your children to be a part of these celebrations, yet you also want to honor your rights and values. Think of things that will make you more comfortable during these times of celebrations or opt to celebrate through non-food activities. Below are the 3 viable options for creating a comfortable setting for you and your family.

### Create a Happy Compromise

Reach out to the holiday host ahead of time and hold the compromise conversation to establish details that you and your family will be comfortable with and provide the host with enough time to emotionally process your requests. First, offer to bring vegan-friendly dishes. Through these dishes your family is introduced to wonderful vegan food and may even switch to the vegan dishes over time. This option keeps the doors open and may impact your family in unexpected ways. Also, offer a gentle vegan education about what is and isn't vegan. Do not expect the host to have a complete understanding about what you do and do not eat. Next, ask the host to keep the large turkey or ham carcass hidden in the kitchen instead of on the center of the table for you and your children to stare at throughout your meal. Finally, go over some basic dining etiquette in regards of what to say to your children. Kindly request the host and other guests refrain from pitying or patronizing your vegan children because they do not eat the same food as everyone else.

### Offer to Host

Offer to host this year's holiday celebration and insist you will provide all of the food for the celebration. Ask your family to come empty-handed with open hearts. Emphasize that you want your guests to relax and enjoy the time together with family.

### Opt to Dine with Vegan Friends

If sharing a meal where meat is served is no longer a comfortable option for you, and your family is not ready to enjoy a meatless holiday meal, the only remaining option is to dine with vegan friends and offer a non-food gathering at a later date to celebrate. When telling your family about alternate plans, be positive and genuine. Share your excitement about this vegan celebration and how much you look forward to the family hike tomorrow.

## Weddings

Write on the response card that you are vegan, if the response card does not clearly have a vegan food option to pick from. Most wedding response cards have a spot to write in any food allergies which is a perfect section to mention you are vegan. If the bride and groom know ahead of time you want a vegan meal, most caterers will happily make that happen. We attended our friend's wedding in Atlanta, Ga and they were serving a bbq buffet. However, we had let them know ahead of time we were vegan and so they had made both my husband and I a big plate of vegan food! It was delicious and caused no stress.

However, if a vegan meal isn't an option at the event, carb load on dinner rolls and sneak a larabar into your clutch. The most non vegan friendly part of the wedding is usually cocktail hour. So just prepare yourself to make it through cocktail hour with no food or just the snacks in your clutch. If there is a vegan food option, it's a bonus to celebrate! Adopting the mindset that there won't be a vegan option and planning ahead is the safest option.

**ACTION ITEM:** Prepare a two sentence summary of why you have chosen to go vegan. Having this ready will save you tons of time and patience when people start asking questions.



# Sending Vegan Kids to School

In the school setting, gaining respect for our children's veganism and guaranteeing their needs are met are paramount. When our children are under adult supervision away from home, we cannot presume that others understand what being vegan means or entails. Unless there is a reason for people to know about veganism -- for instance they are vegan themselves, have a vegan partner, friend, or family member, or have studied vegan nutrition -- they most likely will know very little about it. It is our responsibility to become vegan educators and inform teachers what vegans eat and what we choose not to eat as well as how they can best be of assistance to our child. Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring that vegan children are comfortable in the school environment.

## HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE REQUESTS WE CAN PRESENT TO TEACHERS:

- To notify the parents (you) when special treats will be given out to students so you can provide a vegan alternative (ex: holiday food, reward treats, birthday celebrations, etc)
- Shield vegan children from teasing or bullying due to their dietary choices
- Avoid drawing attention or patronizing vegan children because they do not eat the same foods as the rest of class
- Inform teacher-aides, substitute teachers, and guest instructors in advance about the child's special dietary requirements

## PREPARING FOR PEER PRESSURE

You and your children are likely to encounter some negative reactions or questions from peers when announcing your vegan dietary choices. To best prepare your children for these reactions talk to them from a young age about their food choices and what it means to be vegan. I already see my 3 year old discussing his eating preferences with his friends when we have them over for playdates. It usually goes something like this:

My son to his friend: “Do you like vegan food too?”

Friend; “Yes”

My son: “Mom, Ashton likes vegan food.”

At this age it's not about understanding all of the complexities of what it means to be vegan but creating a basic understanding of what we do eat and what we choose not to eat. You will genuinely be surprised with how much your children will connect with this lifestyle. In their head it is logical for them not to eat their animal friends that they bond with in books and imaginary play. More often than not, other children will be curious about your child's interesting foods!

In addition to reading books and dinner table discussions, we actively ask our children, “Why don't we eat animals?,” and are usually entertained with their responses. My son replies with a simple, “Because we are vegan.”

We will further ask, “Do you know why we are vegan?,” and his usual response is, “Because it makes cows sad when people eat them.” True.

Children will discuss their dietary choices in ways that work for their age. Build on that knowledge as they grow so your children can relate and respond to peer curiosity calmly and with confidence.

## PREPARING FOR VEGAN BLUNDERS

Most likely your child will unintentionally eat something with animal products in it either at a school function or in a pot luck setting. While most teachers or parent hosts will try their best to ensure your child doesn't eat any animal products under their care, it's not their job to monitor your child's food consumption at all times. We also now live in a time when so many foods resemble their dairy/meat counterparts, our children can easily be confused. The best option is to learn from the experience, open up an age appropriate discussion around it with your child and then move on. No need to fret about it.

**ACTION ITEM:** Sit down and have an open discussion with your child about your food choices and ask if they know what it means to be vegan. Share their response with the group.





# Vegan While Traveling

Assume nothing. When traveling you must plan, do your food research and never assume you'll just eat something when you get there. But put all worries away, with some planning ahead, anything is possible.

## TIPS FOR STAYING VEGAN ON THE ROAD

Going into a store with a list will set you up for success. Sticking to the list will save you from making impulse purchases which add up quickly on your grocery bill. In addition, building a list around your planned weekly menu will ensure you aren't purchasing food items that will spoil before you use them. Planning is especially important if you are responsible for feeding others as well as yourself. Most importantly, never shop hungry.

1. **Be Prepared.** It's always best to have some snacks on hand like assorted veggies and fruit, larabars, homemade trail mix, banana bites, etc. If you can, bring a small cooler with an ice pack, and stock it with some hummus, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, pasta salad, etc. We personally have never had a problem bringing a cooler with food on the plane – it's ok with TSA as long as you're not bringing in liquids. Other foods to think about bringing in small containers are your vegan superfoods; nutritional yeast, chia seeds, hemp seeds, packets of nut butters, microwave oatmeal packets, powered green juice like Amazing Grass. It's also a good idea to bring some basic kitchen tools if you're staying in a hotel, such as a can opener, small knife, travel cutting board, bowl, and traveling utensil set. If the travel is driving distance, I have been known to even bring my vitamix along for the ride.
2. **Do Your Research.** Before you leave, do a quick online search of vegan-friendly restaurants, Whole Foods Market, Trader Joe's or other health food stores at your destination place. Your best bet is to write down whatever you find because the internet connection might be less than perfect at the place you're visiting, so jot down a few notes (name of the place, address, etc.). Some helpful sites include Happy Cow, Veg Guide, and Trip Advisor.

## TIPS FOR STAYING VEGAN ON THE ROAD

3. **Airport Food:** Airports usually have some reliable veggie-friendly options (completely overpriced of course). I'm pretty sure every airport in the U.S. has a Starbucks and Starbucks oatmeal is vegan. Also, you can usually find whole pieces of fruit through airports, bags of nuts, pretzel and hummus packs, and granola bars. In addition, most sandwich stands can put together a veggie sandwich for you, and if there's a Mexican restaurant on your way, you can always rely on a bean and rice burrito.
4. **Lodging:**
  - I. **Airbnb** - If possible, opt for an AIR BNB. This way you can usually find yourself a spot with a small kitchen where you can continue to prepare your own meals. Locate a local grocery store and stock up on some easy vegan staples.
  - II. **Hotel** - Get creative in the hotel. Bring some packets of microwave oatmeal and heat up water in the coffee maker for breakfast. Don't be shy, ask the hotel kitchen if they can accommodate or provide the hotel kitchen with the ingredients to blend you a yummy smoothie.
5. **International Travel:** If you're traveling abroad, consider learning beforehand what the words for meat, eggs, milk, butter, etc. are in the language of your host country. Your life just might get a little easier when you can successfully communicate that you do not eat these items to the waiter serving you. There's also a very handy book called Vegan Passport that you can bring with you, and just show the appropriate page to whomever is making your food so they know what to make you.

**ACTION STEP:** If you have an upcoming trip start planning. Make a list of your favorite easy to travel vegan foods and research the area.

# Continued Education

Becoming vegan can be a profound and rewarding physical, emotional, and spiritual journey. As a vegan your dietary choice has immense impacts: the preservation of dwindling resources, powerful protection for health, and dramatic reduction in the pain and suffering of animals. There are few choices in life that offer such diverse, positive outcomes. Continued education about a plant-based lifestyle is so important for staying informed and passionate about your decision to eliminate animal products from your diet. The more educated you are on the plant-based lifestyle, the easier it will be to maintain. Below are some of my favorite resources for fueling my passion to raise a plant-based family!

## BOOKS

- [Eating Animals](#), by Jonathan Safran Foer
- [The Plantpower Way: Whole Food Plant-Based Recipes and Guidance for The Whole Family](#), by Rich Roll
- [Vegan Pregnancy Survival Guide](#), by Sayward Rebhal
- [Becoming Vegan](#), by Brenda Davis, R.D. & Vesanto Melina, M.S., R.D.

## WEBSITES + BLOGS

- [Findingvegan.com](#)
- [Happycow.com](#)
- [onegreenplanet.org](#)

## DOCUMENTARIES

- [Forks over Knives](#) (Netflix)
- [What the Health](#) (Netflix)
- [Food Inc](#) (Netflix)
- [Vegan: Everyday Stories](#)
- [Before the Flood](#)

## PODCASTS

- [Lean Green DAD Radio](#)
- [Live Planted](#) - Practical Vegan Living
- [No Meat Athlete](#) (not just for athletes)
- [The Rich Roll Podcast](#)

# Continued Education

## SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

- [Vegnews](#) (ig)
- [Nomyourself](#) (ig)
- [plantphilosophy](#) (ig)
- [Engine2diet](#) (ig)
- [Nutrition\\_facts\\_org](#) (ig)
- [Cheap Lazy Vegan](#) (YouTube)

## APPS

- [Is it vegan?](#)
- [Oh She Glows](#)

“When your daily choices are made out of reverence for life,  
And respect for the connection among all things,  
This world becomes a better place  
It is that simple”

**ACTION STEP:** Congratulate yourself for making such a profound lifestyle change! You should be so proud. Share with the group how you feel about your confidence in your ability to maintain this lifestyle going forward.

