

## Why Become a Vegetarian?

- For your long-term health – to reduce the risk of getting heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, certain forms of cancer and many other serious diseases.
- To feel better right now – a healthy vegetarian diet can often help treat a wide variety of diseases, either alone or in combination with medication and/or surgery.
- For the environment – raising farm animals causes a very large amount of water pollution and soil erosion, destroys ecosystems and contributes greatly to global warming.
- For the hungry – animals return only a fraction of the nutrition they're fed. Eating crops directly leaves more for everyone else, especially in poorer countries.
- For the animals – in today's factory farms animals are harshly treated before being killed unnecessarily to produce unhealthy food.
- For spiritual enhancement – a surprisingly wide variety of the world's major religions, leaders and teachings recommend a vegetarian diet.

## How we can help!

Whether you're already vegetarian, or just thinking about it, we're here to help. Vegetarians of Washington is an independent, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization of people from all walks of life who are interested in a vegetarian diet for a variety of reasons: health, environment, compassion for animals, spiritual, and more.

### **You don't have to be a vegetarian to join.**

We encourage people to discover the advantages and experience the pleasures of vegetarian food. We suggest that you proceed at your own pace and do the best you can.

Our **Monthly Dining Event** includes a catered multi-course buffet-style dinner each month. All are welcome to attend. Members of Vegetarians of Washington receive a special discount price.

**Free classes** are offered on the many benefits of a vegetarian diet at various local venues throughout the region. These include practical information on shopping, cooking and nutrition.

Vegetarians of Washington has produced several **helpful books**, including our latest: *In Pursuit of Great Food: A Plant-Based Shopping Guide*.

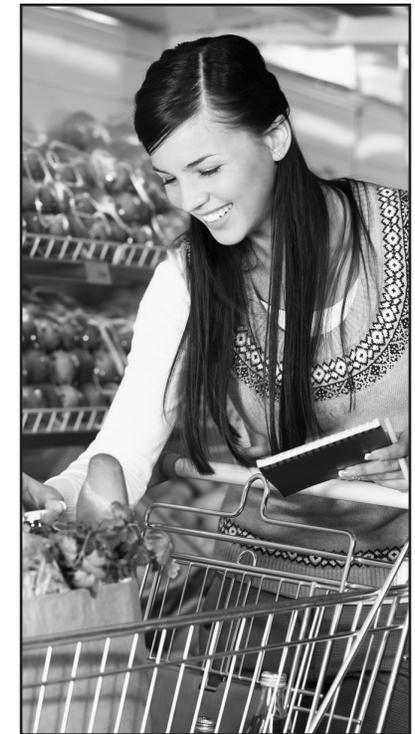
**Vegfest**, the largest vegetarian food festival in the United States, is held at the Seattle Center in the Spring of each year. It is a celebration of healthy vegetarian food including cooking demonstrations, talks by doctors, a giant vegetarian bookstore, and a huge variety of free food samples to try.

Members receive a free vegan cookbook when they join. Our high-quality e-newsletter covers local news and events.

Learn more at [VegofWA.org](http://VegofWA.org)

**Vegetarians**  
OF WASHINGTON

## Become a Vegetarian - a Beginners Guide



*It's Healthy, Delicious  
and Easy to Do*

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## Healthy Ideas for Eating at Home

Here are some quick, easy meals to get started. Be willing to experiment and learn:

**Breakfast :** Fruit juice, fruit, oatmeal or natural cereal (find one you like which has little if any added sugar, colors, flavors), soy or almond milk

**Lunch :** Vegetable or bean soups, veggie burgers, baked beans on toast

**Dinner :** Pasta with tomato sauce cooked with added vegetables,  
- Can of beans, mixed with BBQ sauce, served with rice and cooked veggies  
- Beans, rice, corn with salsa rolled up in a large tortilla wrap  
- Tofu cubes in Thai curry sauce, served with rice and veggies.

**Snacks :** Fruit – eg. apple, banana or peach  
- Baby carrots or zucchini sticks dipped in hummus or salsa  
- Trail mix or raw nuts  
- Natural snack bar eg. Cliff bar

## Healthy Options for Eating Out

**Subway** – ask for a grilled veggie patty (they all have them available, even if not listed) with lettuce and other veggies on a whole wheat sub.

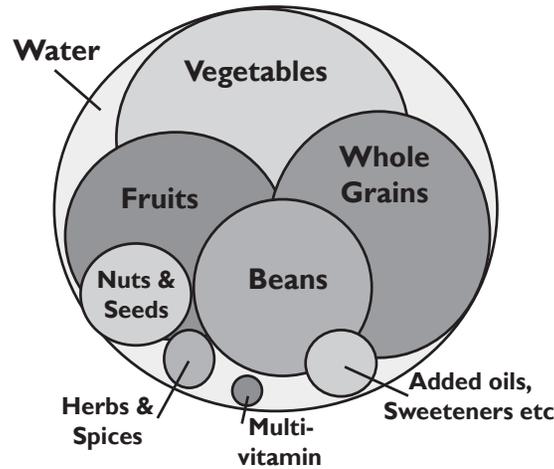
**Burgers** – ask for a veggie burger. Hold the cheese and mayo if possible. Choose a side salad, instead of fries.

**Mexican** – try a bean burrito, soft veggie tacos, veggie fajitas. Hold the cheese and sour cream.

**Pizza** – ask for a veggie pizza with extra tomato sauce and hold the cheese

**Asian** - Most Asian restaurants, such as Thai, Chinese or Indian, have plenty of veg options, using tofu, lentils, or chickpeas and lots of vegetables.

## What Foods to Eat



### The New Food Groups

Base your meals around the following foods, take a one-a-day type multi-vitamin for nutritional insurance and drink 6-8 cups of water every day:

**Vegetables** – such as broccoli, cabbage, carrots, sweet potatoes, collard greens, kale, eggplant, okra, bell pepper

**Fruits** – such as pear, bananas, oranges, watermelon, blueberries, grapes, tomatoes

**Whole grains** – such as whole wheat bread, corn, oatmeal, quinoa, brown rice

**Beans** – such as soy products, tofu, peas, peanuts, black beans, pinto beans. Also meat substitute products such as veggie burgers and dogs, veggie chicken, veggie deli slices.

**Nuts and Seeds** – in moderation, such as walnuts, almonds, cashews, Brazil nuts, flax, chia, sesame seeds. Many alternative milks and cheeses are based on nuts, soy or grains.

**Herbs & Spices** - such as garlic, onions, basil, cilantro, parsley, chili powder, cumin, ginger.

**Added oils, sweeteners** - in moderation, such as olive oil, canola oil, maple syrup, dark chocolate.

## How to Shop for Healthy Foods

**Tip:** Read ingredient labels. Look for high fiber and low in fat, sugar, and salt.

**Fruits** - buy those you like, wash them right away and leave a few out for healthy snacks, store the rest in the refrigerator. Frozen fruit is great in smoothies.

**Vegetables** – look for fresh vegetables in season, frozen vegetables are good for adding nutrition to meals, tomato sauce (low sugar, salt) is a good base.

**Meat Substitutes** - these vary in taste and texture, so be willing to experiment. They also vary in fat, sugar and salt, so compare ingredients to minimize these.

**Beans** – cans of vegetarian baked beans, veg chili, and many other beans, unsalted peanuts etc are good to keep in the kitchen. Dried lentils are easy to cook.

**Whole grains** – buy whole wheat bread, wraps, buns, easy cook rice, whole wheat pasta

**Nuts and seeds** – look for raw or dry roasted, unsalted bags of trail mix or mixed nuts (no candy added)

**Drinks** – fruit juice, soy or almond milk. Water is best.

### Key Points

A healthy vegetarian diet based around fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and beans is your ultimate goal. Be willing to try new foods, be willing to learn, but don't try to change all at once.

Make changes gradually, and allow your taste-buds to adapt. Make healthy choices whenever you can. Don't be afraid to ask for what you want in restaurants. Every healthy choice you make will make a difference to your health, to the environment, to the animals and for your spirit.