

# VEGETARIAN FACTS



## A CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO SHOPPING, COOKING & EATING "GREEN"



### WHAT IS A VEGETARIAN?

Simply put, a vegetarian is someone who doesn't eat any type of meat, including fish and poultry. Those who still consume eggs and dairy products are called "lacto-ovo" vegetarians.

### WHAT IS A VEGAN?

A vegan (*pronounced "vee gan"*) is a strict vegetarian who doesn't consume any type of animal origin foods, such as eggs and dairy products. In general, both vegetarians and vegans eat diets mostly containing legumes (beans, lentils, peas), whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

### HEALTH BENEFITS

Many studies show that on average, vegetarians tend to:

- have lower blood pressure
- be less likely to be overweight
- have lower incidence of heart disease and stroke
- have lower rates of cancer and stronger immune systems
- be less likely to develop type II diabetes

**Note:** These benefits are derived from a diet rich in "whole plant foods" which includes fruits, vegetables, legumes (beans, lentils, peas), whole grains, nuts and seeds. Whole, or unprocessed, plant foods are high in fiber, antioxidants, phytonutrients, and good fats such as monounsaturated and Omega 3 fatty acids. They are also rich in vitamins and minerals. For example, vitamin C and folic acid are found exclusively in whole plant foods. Whole plant foods are also low in saturated and trans fats. The benefits of these many nutritive compounds can prevent and even reverse myriad chronic diseases.

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### Dietary Concerns

The only nutrient not found in strict vegetarian, or vegan, diets is B12. Since this vitamin is only naturally occurring in animal-origin foods a vegan could, over time, develop a deficiency. However, many cereals and soy milks are fortified with B12, so it is easily incorporated into a vegan diet. If you are considering becoming a vegan, be sure to consume B12 through a fortified food or by supplement. It is recommended that vegan women who are pregnant or nursing take a B12 supplement.

### Getting Enough Protein

It has long since been established that even strict vegetarians have very little likelihood of protein deficiency, as long as their diet includes varied whole grains, legumes (beans, lentils, and peas), nuts and seeds. All these foods are good sources of protein, and foods do not need to be "combined" in order to receive all the essential amino acids. On the contrary, most Americans consume two times the protein that they need, which can have detrimental effects, such as bone loss. Whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds also provide the diet with iron and zinc—two other nutrients often believed to be low in a vegetarian diet.

### Obtaining Adequate Calcium

Strict vegetarians, or vegans, can obtain calcium through dark green vegetables, many nuts and seeds, beans, as well as fortified soy milk and soy products. In addition, because vegans are less likely to over-consume protein, they often will not need the high amounts of calcium to offset bone loss that most Americans do.

### Vegetarian Children

As long as a child's diet contains sufficient fat (good sources are nuts and nut butters, avocados, coconut milk, and olive oil), low amounts of processed foods, and plenty of whole grains and legumes, children thrive on vegetarian diets!

*For more information, visit [VRG.org](http://VRG.org) or [PCRM.org](http://PCRM.org).*

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### RECIPES

*These delicious recipes are perfect for vegans, vegetarians and anyone with dairy allergies. The menu combines a Mediterranean flavor balanced with fresh produce—a beautiful dinner for entertaining.*

#### Mediterranean Crostini

1 can chickpeas, drained  
¼ c. olive oil, plus 2 T.  
1 T. lemon juice  
1 garlic clove, minced  
sea salt and pepper  
¼ c. Apollo Olives,  
pitted and finely chopped  
2 T. minced celery  
1 pepper, roasted and  
chopped into small pieces  
12 slices toasted crostini  
(see recipe below)

**Make spread:** In a food processor combine chickpeas, ¼ cup olive oil, lemon juice and garlic. Process until smooth.

**Make relish:** Combine chopped olives, celery and red pepper with 1 T. of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Top the crostini with the chickpea spread and add the relish on top of each one. Drizzle with the remaining olive oil.

#### Crostini

1 crusty baguette  
½ cup olive oil  
sea salt and fresh ground pepper  
to taste

Preheat oven to 400° F. Cut bread into ½-inch thick slices on a bias. Brush both sides of each slice with olive oil and sprinkle top sides with salt and pepper. Toast in oven for 10–12 minutes until golden brown.

#### Wild Mushroom and Caramelized Onion Phyllo Turnovers

8 oz. white mushrooms, sliced  
8 oz. Portobello mushrooms, chopped  
4 oz. porcini mushrooms  
½ c. good red wine  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped  
2 T. chopped thyme

2 T. extra-virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper to taste  
grape seed oil for brushing  
1 package Fillo Factory Phyllo Dough

Sauté the onions and the garlic in the olive oil and then add the mushrooms. Sauté for 3 minutes and then add the. Add the thyme and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cool the filling completely before placing inside the phyllo.

Working quickly (phyllo dries out very easily), place one sheet of phyllo on a cutting surface with the longest edge horizontal to you. Brush the phyllo with the oil and top with another sheet. Repeat this process until you have a layer of three sheets. Cut the phyllo from top to bottom into 4 equal strips.

Place 1 T. of the filling on one end of each strip. Fold the corner of the phyllo strip over the filling to create a triangle. (This is just like folding a flag.) Continue folding the phyllo over the filling rotating the triangle until you reach the end of the strip. Brush the triangle with a little oil and place on a parchment lined baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 425° F oven for 8–10 minutes or until golden brown.

#### Sautéed Winter Chard with Garlic and Olive Oil

2 bunch of winter chard (Swiss, red,  
rainbow or yellow chard)  
3 T. olive oil  
3 cloves of garlic  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Wash chard well and cut off thick stems, cut or tear leaves into large 4-inch pieces. Set aside to drain.

In a large sauté pan, heat oil on medium heat and add garlic. Slowly toast the garlic until golden and crispy. Add chard in batches, adding more as it wilts. Cook chard until tender, constantly turning to wilt all leaves (4–5 minutes). Season with salt and pepper and serve hot.

#### Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes

2 lbs. Yukon Gold potatoes,  
peeled and cut into quarters  
½ c. vegetable stock  
4 T. olive oil  
3 T. chives, finely chopped  
2 heads of roasted garlic  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Potato cooking liquid as needed

**To roast garlic:** Cut the top third off the top of each bulb. Drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Place in a small baking dish and cover with foil. Bake at 350° F for 35–45 minutes or until garlic is soft and golden brown. When cool, squeeze out garlic from the skins.

Cover potatoes with water, add 1 t. salt, bring to a boil and cook until tender. Drain in a colander, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Place in a bowl or back in the pot.

Add the stock, olive oil and the roasted garlic. Mash with a potato masher, adding some of the cooking liquid as necessary.

Season to taste with sea salt and freshly cracked pepper.

#### Maple Vanilla Pudding with Fresh Fruit

1 package Mori-Nu Silken Tofu  
2 t. vanilla extract  
1 t. fresh orange zest  
4–6 T. maple syrup  
3 cups of your favorite fresh, seasonal fruit,  
sliced into bite-size pieces  
Powdered sugar and fresh mint for garnishing

Combine tofu, vanilla, orange zest and maple syrup and mix until very smooth. Adjust flavorings to your desire. Chill well before serving.

Spoon about two spoonfuls of the tofu into the bottoms of four dessert bowls. Divide fruit evenly between the bowls and add a dollop of tofu on top of the fruit. Dust with powdered sugar and garnish with a mint sprig. Serve immediately.