

## Why I Am a Vegetarian

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I have lived a vegan lifestyle since the early 1990's. It wasn't something I intentionally set out to do—it just sort of evolved! I was in my early thirties with two young daughters, was of healthy weight, exercised regularly by running after the kids, slept well, but still had absolutely no energy. I was tired and frumpy all the time, and couldn't figure out why!

One day a friend suggested I read the book, *Fit for Life*, by Harvey Diamond. It literally changed my life! Over the next few months I embraced the vegan lifestyle and reaped its benefits. I soon found I:

- ✚ had lots of energy throughout the day
- ✚ wasn't sluggish after meals (especially Thanksgiving!), and surprisingly
- ✚ lost 20 pounds without trying (and which wasn't a goal of mine).

Another totally surprising thing that happened to me after several months of not eating meat, eggs, or dairy products was I subconsciously became more compassionate toward animals. I had no clue this would happen! Something inside of me shifted. I started seeing animals in a completely different light. No longer were they sentient beings to dominate or kill. They are my equals who share this planet with us. Animals help us grow and experience the lessons we chose for this lifetime. I find they are very wise souls who have much to teach us if we just listen!

I didn't inflict my vegan lifestyle on my family; I just didn't cook meat inside the house because I soon found after several months that the smell of meat going from raw to cooked was really nauseating—especially ground beef and chicken. My husband would cook meat outside on the grill if he or the girls wanted any. He'd usually make enough for several meals or to freeze for later. Usually though, he'd just wait and get his "meat-fix" whenever we went to restaurants! I don't mind sitting at a table with people eating meat—it doesn't bother me at all. I just don't want to eat, touch, prepare or cook it!

Most recipes are very easy to adapt to vegan by using almond milk, vegetable broth, nutritional yeast, maple syrup, and egg replacements like flaxseed. I don't have to alter recipes much anymore because the internet has an abundance of great food blogs with outstanding recipes! One of my favorites is called, "Oh She Glows" at [www.ohsheglows.com](http://www.ohsheglows.com). All of the recipes are amazing!

It's much easier to be vegan now than it was quite a few years ago—even in restaurants! There's always something I can find to eat almost anywhere I go. If not, I ask the waiter to have them make me something vegan and I usually always end up with the nicest, prettiest meal at the table! I find most restaurants are very accommodating.

Two years ago I was taking quite a few medications. I therefore decided to experiment for a year and further tweaked my plant-based lifestyle to:

- ✚ exclude chemicals and processed food,
- ✚ buy only whole, unprocessed, and organic foods to eat and cook at home,
- ✚ diligently read labels and
- ✚ purchase products containing no more than three or four ingredients,
- ✚ not buy foods having ingredients I can't pronounce so we're not ingesting a bunch of preservatives and chemicals.

After only six months of "clean" eating, my health drastically improved. Throughout the year, I gradually no longer needed any of the medications I had been taking for five years.

Not surprisingly after these wonderful results, I continue to eat whole, unprocessed, organic foods at home. I don't obsess over eating organic while at a restaurant or anyplace other than my house—it is strictly a life-change for home. To this day, I remain medicine-free and have an abundance of energy. I challenge you to try this lifestyle change for six months to see how much your health and well-being improve!