



## My Veggie Story

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I became a vegetarian when I was 18.

I was never a huge meat-eater, but I did love a good hamburger after a swim in the pool, my Grandma's Scottish mince pie, and as I was living in the Southwest, I loved beef tacos. We also had the usual cookout food, such as fried chicken.

I had started meditating a couple years before and I was increasingly aware of the large amount of hormones and chemicals added to meats (this was in the late 1960s). I had a few friends who had become vegetarians.

One evening at dinner having some fried chicken, I suddenly became aware that I was gnawing on a leg bone. Yuck! I put the chicken leg down and never had fried chicken again.

With encouragement from friends, I decided to go vegetarian for a year. Back then, there were no vegetarian restaurants and no menu items intentionally vegetarian. But I was lucky to be in Tucson, AZ where there were many international restaurants so I could always find something to eat if I wasn't eating at home.

After the year, I saw no reason to go back to eating meat. I have been a lacto-ovo vegetarian for nearly 45 years. I eat much less dairy now and have cut back on eggs. I can see a time when I will not eat eggs at all. I have never had health issues related to being vegetarian and had two children without any nutritional issues.

I am not a great cook – I tend to just fix salads, bean and rice dishes, veggie burgers, miso soup, and very simple things. I will have simple snacks

like apples and peanut butter; hummus and carrot sticks or crackers. I have only recently added tofu to my dishes at home. The key to vegetarian cooking at home is to have your ingredients on hand. Going to one of the natural food stores makes shopping veggie very easy while you are experimenting with a new diet. Today, there are hundreds of vegetarian cookbooks and it is very easy to go out to eat and be vegetarian.

Any steps you take toward having more vegetarian meals will be beneficial for yourself, animals and the planet. Just cutting down on the number of times you eat meat during the week can have a big impact. And, if you want to try going vegetarian, there is plenty of support out in the world and here at Buddha Mind Monastery.

