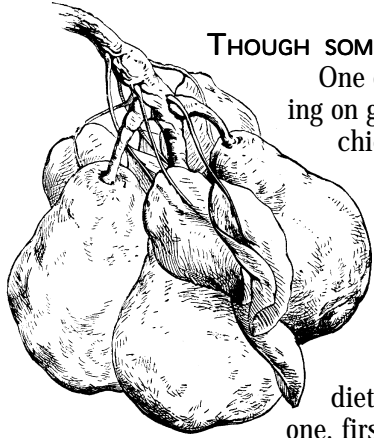


NOT EVERYONE MAKES THE SHIFT TO A PLANT-BASED DIET OVERNIGHT...



THOUGH SOME PEOPLE DO.

One day they're subsisting on greasy burgers, chicken wings and cheese sauces, and the next it's cholesterol-free veggie burgers, baked potatoes and red beans and rice.

For others, the dietary shift is a gradual one, first pushing meat from the center to the side of the plate, and then off the menu entirely. Whatever pace you choose, these guidelines can help make the transition a smooth one.

Currently, each of us is somewhere on a food continuum. On one end, there's the meat-centered, Standard American Diet (appropriately referred to as SAD). On the other is the purely plant-based diet, containing no animal products whatsoever. Wherever you find yourself on the continuum, that is your point of departure.

Step One: Start with Favorite Familiar Meals

Make a list of favorite meals and snacks (including those from restaurants where you eat often). Identify meals that are vegetarian or that can be made meatless with a few small changes. If a favorite dinner is spaghetti with meat sauce, choose meatless spaghetti sauce the next time you make it—and give it some pizzazz with the addition of sautéed mushrooms or chopped sun-dried tomatoes. The next time you make split pea soup, omit the ham and season it with fresh herbs. If your usual Chinese take out meal is moo shu pork, ask for a meatless version of the same dish. You'll be surprised at how easily you can turn your favorite meals into healthier plant-based choices and you'll find yourself eating more vegetarian meals in a short time.

Step Two: Experiment with Substitutes

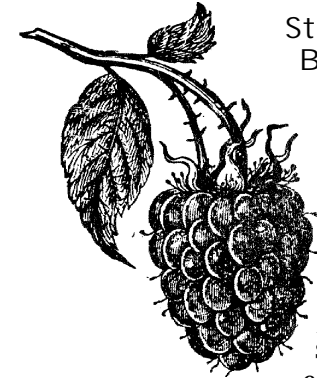
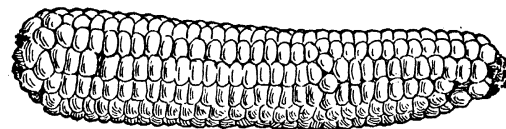
There is a stunning variety of soy and vegetable based meat substitutes on the market that make the transition to meatless fare easier than ever. TVP (texturized vegetable protein; look for it in the bulk food section of natural foods stores) has the texture of cooked ground beef and is a perfect substitute in tacos, sloppy joes and chili. You'll also find a variety of veggie burgers, meatless hot dogs, meatless deli meats and other meat replacers in natural foods stores and even in many regular supermarkets.

Step Three: Broaden Your Horizons

Explore the cuisine of cultures that have perfected plant-based cuisine and add some new foods to your meals. Try grains such as whole couscous—a Moroccan staple—and quinoa—a South American favorite. They both cook more quickly than other whole grains. Enjoy baby limas cooked Mediterranean style or south of the border black beans with salsa.

Step Four: Keep it Simple

Stock your pantry with vegetarian convenience foods such as canned soups, instant soups in a cup, canned vegetarian baked beans, spaghetti sauce, instant refried beans and black beans, frozen vegetables, texturized vegetable protein, frozen vegetarian dinners, and veggie burgers. They make it easy to prepare hearty dinners in minutes. You can simplify things by updating your definition of "balanced meal," too. Not every meal requires a meat substitute at its center. A bowl of vegetable soup and a baked potato is a fast, filling and balanced meal. So is a bowl of baked beans with whole grain bread and a salad.



Step Five: Look Beyond Dairy

Vegetarian substitutes help here, too. Look for soy cheese, soy yogurt, and milks made from soy, grains or nuts. Substitute these in recipes where dairy is called for. Check out some of our recommended cookbooks for delicious

ideas on how to replace both dairy and meat in meals (once you've tasted pasta shells stuffed with tofu ricotta, we guarantee you won't go back!). And don't be afraid to ask for what you want. Most pizzerias will happily load your pie with fresh veggies and skip the fatty cheese. Chinese restaurants will keep the eggs out of you fried rice if you ask.

Step Six: Keep up the good work

Although a diet based on plant foods may seem foreign right now, by the time you've started exploring substitutes, rethinking meals and experimenting with new foods, you'll find yourself discovering lots of new ideas—tacos made with TVP or bulgar, for example, or tempeh fajitas. Once you've enjoyed scrambled tofu with mushrooms and toasted almonds, you won't find yourself missing scrambled eggs. You won't miss hamburgers at your next picnic if you are enjoying the savory "steaks" of grilled portabello mushrooms. It may take some time to make the transition towards completely plant-based menus, but you'll find your efforts are more fun and creative than you ever imagined.

You'll find plenty of cookbooks to help you make your transition to a plant-based diet easy and fun. The following are some especially good choices for those just beginning to explore this new way of eating.

Helpful Hints

- *Vegetarian Favorites* by the Michigan Bean Commission. This booklet is a great deal for \$2.00. It offers basic cooking directions with simple and delicious recipes. Send \$2.00 to the MBC at 1031 South US 27, St. Johns, MI 48879.
- *Simply Heaven* by Abbot George Burke. More than 1,400 recipes from a vegetarian monastery. This is a wonderful resource for those who want All-American cuisine without meat and dairy.
- *The Uncheese Cookbook* by Joanne Stepaniak. A collection of recipes that imitate a wide variety of cheese-based dishes—but without any dairy.
- *Meatless Meals for Working People* by Debra Wasserman and Charles Stahler. A collection of super simple recipes and ideas for convenience foods that will make your transition easy.
- *Lorna Sass' Great Vegetarian Recipes* by Lorna Sass. A wonderful guide to cooking with a wide variety of grains' beans and vegetables. This is a great way to become familiar with new foods in very tasty recipes.



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The Power To Make A Difference Is On Your Plate

Take Action

By enjoying a more plant-based diet, you can dramatically improve your chance of living a long and healthy life, help restore the planet's tender ecological balance and support a sustainable economy.

Be Persistent

The cumulative effect of your actions will make a difference.

Join EarthSave To Stay Informed and To Educate Others

EarthSave's greatly needed programs are actively helping people reclaim their health and restore our imperiled planet. By joining EarthSave, you learn how your food choices help protect and improve your quality of life, and you become an active player in healing the environment that we all ultimately depend on. For membership or information, call (800) 362-3648.

EarthSave educates, inspires and empowers people to shift toward a diet centered around fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes - food choices that are healthy for people and the planet.



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Transition

Making the Transition to Healthy Food Choices

Now that you've decided to shift toward a more plant-based diet, you're probably wondering exactly how to begin.



EarthSave International's
Educational Series