

LET THEM EAT MEAT

ABOUT



An ex-vegan on veganism. By Rhys Southan

lettheteatmeat [at] gmail [dot] [com].

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The History of My Diet

One possible criticism of this blog is that I did veganism wrong; veganism didn't fail me — I failed it. Now that I have no reason to keep this blog anonymous, I can talk about myself a little more. So here's a history of my diet up until now.

Childhood. One Sunday night at a family meeting, my mom tells my brother and I to choose a meal for every day of the week. Whatever we choose would then be repeated week after week after week. Since the next day was Monday, we decide Mondays would be pizza night. I think we might have made Thursdays pork chop night (pushing it toward the back of the week since neither of us liked pork chops), but I don't remember any of the others because pizza night was the only one that stuck.

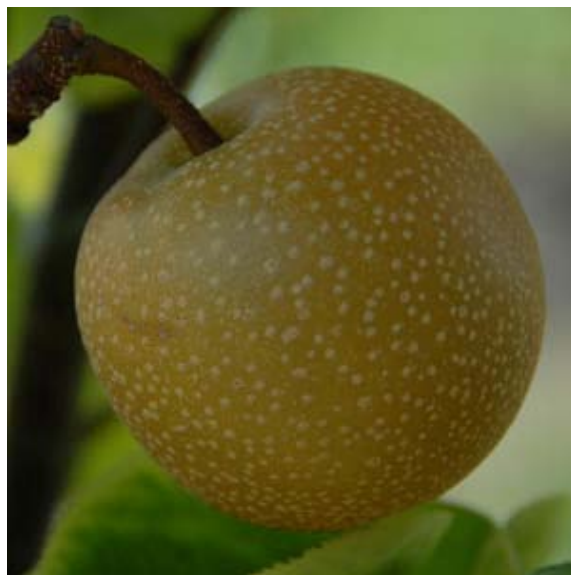


5th Grade. My parents divorce. When my dad gets us on the weekends, he takes us to movies and out to eat, usually for fast food.

6th Grade. I get eczema on my feet and am prescribed a steroid lotion that controls it but also thins my skin.

9th Grade. My Physical Science teacher mentions in passing that you should only get your sugar from fruit. I've never cared much about nutrition before, but I immediately quit drinking soda. I don't give up all desserts until a year later, on a trip to Wales with my dad, who was born there. The first dessert I turn down as an anti-sugar absolutist is a Welsh cake, the only Welsh food anyone in my family seems to care about. I obviously mean business.

Evolutionary Psychiatry
Gary L. Francione
Green is the New Red
H.E.A.L.T.H.
The Humane Hominid
Hunt.Gather.Love
The Locavore Hunter
Jack Norris RD
Mark's Daily Apple
Paleosister's Blog
Pythagorean Crank
Speciesist Vegan
QuasiVegan
The Vegan RD
Vegansaurus!
Vegan Soapbox
Whole Health Source



10th Grade. I've been getting weekly migraines for as long as I can remember. A diabetic friend suggests I might be hypoglycemic. I do some research and learn that I should be eating fewer carbs and more protein. I experiment with this by avoiding the nan bread at Indian restaurants.

A friend of mine who is already skeptical of my anti-sugar thing really doesn't like my new anti-nan thing. He tells me it's a sign that my personality had become regimented and "very German." Worried about being too self-controlling, I still avoid desserts but I go back to eating bread.



11th Grade. I become friends with [Cory Kilduff](#), a vegan. I play [defensive omnivore bingo](#) with him and his vegetarian friends, trying to find contradictions and flaws in what I fear is their morally superior lifestyle. Is his hair dye tested on animals? Nope. Where does he get his protein? I forget, but I'm sure he had an answer.

Later as a vegan, I look back at those defensive omnivore cliches that came out almost automatically and find it significant that even future vegans stammer dumb, reactionary things upon encountering vegans.

12th Grade. I take a nutrition class. One day the teacher says that a vegan diet is the healthiest possible diet. "Interesting," I think. But when I graduate from high school in the Spring of 1997, I still eat everything except for desserts.

Summer of 1997 – Summer of 1998. With my mind freed from the thought-crushing, conformity enforcing prison called high school, I start to question my meat eating. Eating meat makes me feel guilty now, but I don't quit the moment the guilt hits. I go through a brief period as a guilt-ridden omnivore. "Meat is murder," I mumble before reluctantly

eating a pork chop (pork chops are pretty much the only food I remember my mom making for us).

There's only so long one can dwell in such morally ambiguous territory and by the end of '97, I am officially a lacto-ovo vegetarian.

My mom rebels, cooking my rice in chicken broth and demanding that I eat it, but finally accepts me for who I think I am. She brings me takeout from a new Chinese restaurant called Suma Veggie Cafe. "It's all vegetarian," she tells me after I open a Styrofoam container and see what appears to be chicken and broccoli. "Are you sure?" I ask repeatedly before finally trying it. It tastes like meat yet I don't feel guilty.



In the Summer of '98, after about six months of vegetarianism, I get a small part in a play at the local theatre center. I get a reputation for sleeping whenever I'm not on stage. As an inside joke, they change the script so that the first time we see my character, he's asleep. Why am I suddenly so sleepy all the time?

Toward the end of the Summer, my brother grows concerned about the fat content of cheese. Pizza night is discontinued.

Fall of 1998 – Early Winter of 1998 (V). I move to Austin and go to The University of Texas. I major in film and work at the student newspaper, The Daily Texan, as an opinion columnist and movie reviewer. I'm used to not eating pizza now, and even though the dorm cafeterias offer it, I restrain myself. Since cheese was the main animal product I still ate, and since pizza was my main source of it, I start to think that maybe going vegan wouldn't be so hard.

I become a quasi vegan who will still eat something that might have animal products in it, as long as the animal products are hidden. For instance, I eat bran muffins that I think have eggs in them. I explain this version of veganism to one of the editors at The Daily Texan and she laughs at me.

Before the year ends, I go vegan for real.

Late Winter of 1998 – Summer of 2000. My first two years of veganism are the worst from a health perspective. I didn't go vegan for health reasons, and even if I had, the dorm food is terrible for vegans. The cafeterias offer two kinds of veggie burgers, but one of them has cheese, so only one veggie burger is possible for me, a disgusting TVP

patty. My meals consist primarily of those, iceberg lettuce from the salad bar with peanut butter on top and cheerios (dry or with orange juice, since there is no soy milk). Sometimes there will be a daily special that I can eat.



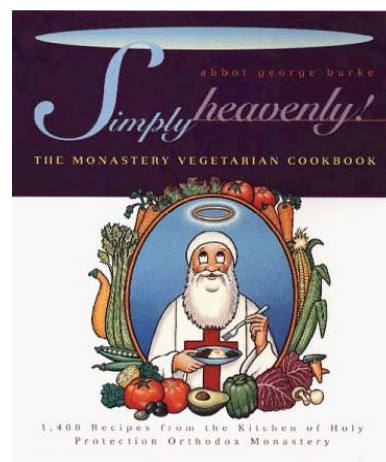
I start getting spontaneous nosebleeds that won't stop and have to make multiple visits to the school clinic. I think this might have something to do with my diet, but I don't see any solutions (I already believe in veganism too much to quit it, so that's out). I send emails to the person in charge of meals at the dorms, asking for more vegan options; eventually they promise to add a vegetarian section in one of the cafeterias, but this will only come after I leave the dorms.

I begin to notice that I get a cold almost every month. I attribute this to my new eczema medication, which is an immunosuppressant.

Along with being my unhealthiest period, this is also my most strident. In November of '99, I host a Thanksgiving special on the student radio station to talk about the horrors of turkey production. And for the paper, I write a column in favor of the consumption of aborted animal fetuses, proposing it as a compromise for animal eating pro-lifers and pro-choice vegans. Of course my real point is that people should be vegan.

On the other hand, I give a negative review to Ingrid Newkirk's *You Can Save the Animals: 251 Simple Ways to Stop Thoughtless Cruelty*. Even then I thought activism like putting stickers that say "Warning: Decomposing Corpse Inside" on chicken packages was in bad taste.

My roommate's girlfriend gives me a vegan cookbook called *Simply Heavenly! The Monastery Vegetarian Cookbook*. I can't use it, though, because we don't have a kitchen in our dorm.



Fall of 2000 – Spring of 2001. I move into Royal Co-op, a vegetarian cooperative house. Food costs are included in rent, and though the vegetarians easily outnumber the vegans (there's only me and one other vegan at first), there's plenty for me to eat. No more nosebleeds.

Plus, it's a terrific community. I'll have a connection to that house for the rest of my time in Austin and it's the main reason that alienation wasn't a bigger part of my vegan experience. In fact, by making me want to move into a co-op house, veganism forced me to become more social.

Everyone in the house has to do "labor" to keep the house running. I sign up to cook and grocery shop every week, even though I don't have experience with either.



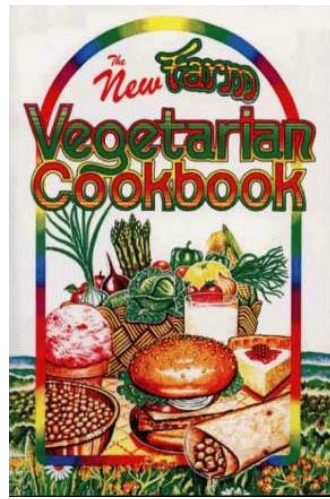
Now that I need to learn how to cook, I crack open *Simply Heavenly!* Abbot George Burke and the rest of his vegan monks are not fans of TVP, which they say is chemically produced, but they love wheat gluten, tofu, nutritional yeast cheese and even MSG. Weird that TVP is too chemical for them, but MSG is one of God's gifts.

Still, that doesn't deter me from consulting them on my early cooking attempts. At this point in my veganism, partially due to *Simply Heavenly!*'s influence, I am big on mock meats. Vegetables too, of course. One of the rules of cooking for the house is to make a balanced meal.



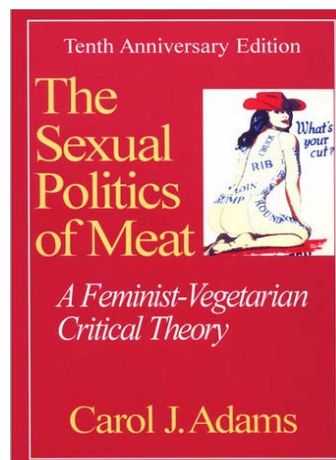
Figure 33 Fr. George Burke & his associates with Cross hanging from their neck

The other cookbook I use a lot is *The New Farm Vegetarian Cookbook*. It was originally published in the 1970s, which explains all the recipes with whole soy beans, none of which turn out well.



The colds decrease. I start to believe that vegans don't get colds. But every time I consciously think "vegans don't get colds," I get a cold. I get superstitious about that phrase and try to never think it. I certainly never say it aloud.

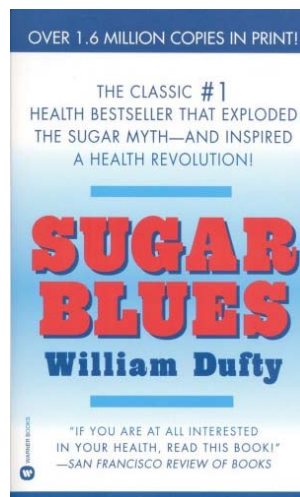
I try to get into animal rights lit. *The Case for Animal Rights*, *Animal Liberation*, [A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes](#) and *The Sexual Politics of Meat* are all books I attempt to read, though I don't get far into any of them before losing interest. The vivid descriptions of animal torture do at least help remind me why I'm vegan.



My housemate Joe and I start writing an animal rights book of our own, called *No Why: The Case Against Caseinate*. Unfortunately for the animals, we only finish a couple of chapters.

I go to the dentist and am shocked to learn that I have eight cavities. I blame genetics. Also surely genetic is my propensity to fall asleep at the wheel as I'm driving between Austin and my mom's house in Richardson, even in the middle of the afternoon. Just about every trip between the two cities I have to pull over and take a nap. I just figure I'm a sleepy person.

Summer of 2001. I have an internship in Los Angeles. My boss is a former macrobiotic and recommends *Sugar Blues*, a semi-macrobiotic manifesto with a vendetta against sugar. I buy a copy.



The author, William Dufty, grew up on a diet of almost pure sugar and suffered health problems as a result ([unlike Paul Rudnick](#)). Dufty vengefully blames every conceivable physical and sociological ill on sugar, but strangely ends the book by saying it's okay to eat ice cream as long as it's made with honey.

Though I realize the book is ridiculous, I become terrified of refined products. Not eating desserts is no longer enough. I quit white flour and white rice (and white potatoes for good measure).

This summer is the first time since sixth grade that my eczema goes away on its own and I can stop the lotion. I figure there's something magical about L.A.

At the end of the summer I write a screenplay about someone who is raised vegan but then rebels against his upbringing. It's called "Animal Liberation," but unlike in Peter Singer's opus, the animal being liberated is a human escaping from veganism. Not that I'm thinking I would ever want to do that.

Fall of 2001 – Spring of 2002. I'm back at Royal Co-op. Joe's mom, once an editor at Vegetarian Times, gives him *You Are All Sanpaku*, perhaps the most important (and certainly the most ludicrous) book about macrobiotics. Though macrobiotics allows fish, George Ohsawa makes it clear that the ideal is no animal products. This veganism business isn't just about sparing ol' Bessie — we're also saving ourselves.

There's something compelling about the confidence and consistency of Ohsawa's outrageous claims and we prepare ourselves for a more macrobiotic diet by eating nothing but brown rice for two weeks. I notice more hair falling out than usual while on the brown rice fast and my eczema comes back, but at least I'm pure and ready for some yin/yang balancing action.



Macrobiotics seems overly strict, even for “German” me. But I follow the basic concepts by eating whole grains instead of refined grains and mostly avoiding nightshades (white potatoes, tomatoes and peppers; I like Baba Ghanoush too much to give up eggplant).

Sorry Popeye, but I eat kale and collards instead of spinach now. And Casa de Luz, Austin’s vegan macrobiotic “community center,” becomes my favorite restaurant. At the same time I grow more lenient when it comes to desserts — sometimes I’ll have one if it seems reasonably healthyish.

Summer of 2002. I have an internship in Manhattan. Paranoid of running out of money, I eat a lot of peanut butter, Ultimate Meal and nutritional yeast. Not that I don’t eat I eat real food too, but my diet definitely degrades for these months. I can’t even call myself semi-macrobiotic this summer. That being said, my roommate for the summer, who is also a vegan, often compliments me on my healthy diet.



I get so sleepy every single day at the internship that instead of taking lunch breaks, I eat lunch at my desk and then take hour-long naps on a piece of cardboard in the basement. I assume the sleepiness is because offices bore me.

I go on the master cleanse for six days with my Brooklyn roommate. Supposedly my tongue turning white has something to do with purifying.

While eating a salad, I bite on my fork and chip a tooth. I blame the fork and try to use only spoons and chopsticks after that.

I go to a sushi restaurant with acquaintances. Looking at their sushi is the first time I see an animal product since going vegan and think, “Well, that doesn’t look *too* evil.” Of course I don’t have any.

Fall of 2002 – Spring of 2004. I don’t live in Royal Co-op anymore, but I “board” there, which means I eat there once a day.

I volunteer at Casa de Luz; I get free meals out of it and a shot at a job there, which would give me access to all the free macrobiotic food I need.

Some nights I can’t sleep because my legs are so uncomfortable, I have to constantly move them. I’m not aware that this is an actual medical condition. My solution on nights I can’t sleep is to do push-ups and sit-ups until I’m so worn out that my legs don’t bother me anymore. Then I see a magazine article about [Restless Legs Syndrome](#) — oh, so that’s what I have. I do some internet research and figure out that I should take B12, calcium and SAM-e. The restless legs go away immediately and never come back.

I become obsessed with “superfoods” and begin almost every day with a bowl of oats mixed with alleged nutraceuticals. Here’s an excerpt from [a blog entry I wrote at the time](#):

Oats by themselves do not a physics-flaunting meal make. So I add a dash of superfoods to make sure I get every single nutrient that the body expects over a lifetime, all in one bowl. These include, but are not limited to:

Wheat germ, spirulina, kelp powder, alfalfa powder, wheat grass powder, soy protein powder, raw almonds, raw pumpkin seeds, raw sunflower seeds, MSM, ascorbic acid, stevia, insolitol, bee pollen, nutritional yeast, and freshly ground flax seed... all mixed into one mushy green blob with unsweetened soymilk.

And actually, I stopped putting oats in my bowl of oats, after I learned that oats block calcium absorption.

I’m pretty sure I was joking about removing the oats, but no doubt my breakfast routine was eccentric. It had to be healthier than starting off the day with a bowl of [Puffins](#), though, right?



Summer of 2004 – Winter of 2004. I work at Casa de Luz now, giving me all the macrobiotic food I need. We serve tofu at the restaurant, but my co-workers convince me that unfermented soy is bad. I quit eating tofu, soymilk and soy protein powder and amp up my tempeh and miso consumption.

The meals at Casa de Luz are systematic. This is macrobiotics, after all. Every plate comes with grains (usually brown rice because the customers complain when it deviates), beans, salad, greens, sauce for the greens, and vegetables. There is seaweed twice a week and my co-workers soon learn that the most dangerous place in the world is between me and a tray of hijiki.



I believe that I have just about the perfect diet now, so it's really confusing to me that my eczema keeps getting worse. Whereas before it was only on my feet, now I have conspicuous breakouts on both my arms. It makes it embarrassing to pass out plates, since our short-sleeved work T-shirts reveal all.

The eczema is so intolerable that I go to a "natural" type doctor that a friend recommends. He suggests I take fish oil. I wrestle with my conscience, but I'm so desperate that I agree. The pills don't seem to do much, though. If anything, my eczema gets worse, probably to punish me for my sin.

Winter of 2005 – Spring of 2005. I move to Prague.



I always get paranoid about running out of money when I'm in a strange city and for the first couple of weeks, I eat almost nothing but plain oats. I lose my sex drive completely, but that's actually convenient because I'm now in a long distance relationship.

Then I realize that I'm not totally broke (Prague's cheap!) and I splurge on food. I try to

do most of my shopping at Country Life, a vegetarian grocery store and restaurant. It's here that I discover quinoa milk, which I never see anywhere else ever again. It's on sale and I buy so much of it that I am unable to finish it all before I leave. I also discover natto, though I can't say I fall in love with it.



I eat out a few times, but mostly I just cook for myself. The dish I make most during my time in Prague is tempeh mixed with tahini and beets. My sex drive returns right on time.



Interestingly, Prague is about as good for my eczema as L.A. was. It goes away on my feet and my arms. That makes me think that rubbing my arms against the Casa de Luz apron as I worked caused the arm outbreak.

Summer of 2005. I move to New York. Don't worry, it's not back to peanut butter and Ultimate Meal for me, since I get a job at a vegan restaurant, Angelica Kitchen. It's all about whom you know — the daughter of one of the managers at Casa de Luz is a manager at Angelica Kitchen.

For the next nine months that I'm working there, I hardly eat any food that isn't leftovers from Angelica Kitchen. I get to eat seaweed pretty much every day now, which has to make me basically the healthiest man in the world.



Winter of 2005 – Spring of 2006. Now that my long distance relationship has fallen apart, I date an Angelica Kitchen customer. Despite her attraction to me, she's concerned about my appearance. She tells me I "look yellow," and that I probably have jaundice. I assume she's just thrown off by the eczema that's been attacking my eyelids lately. The eczema on my feet has gotten bad too; I ruin all my socks by bleeding in them and I have to wrap bandages around the wounds. Worse, wearing gloves in the kitchen has led to an eczema outbreak on my hands.

A friend of mine gets me a part-time job at pure food & wine, a fancy raw food restaurant. I like the idea of supplementing my macro staples with some upscale raw food dishes, but am surprised to find that I don't like the food very much. As much as I enjoy young coconut, it gets old when just about every menu item has a coconut aftertaste.

There's way too much pressure in the kitchen anyway — I just can't layer the zucchini, pesto and macadamia cream lasagna fast enough and the manager is prone to unjustified tirades.

I quit pure food & wine after two weeks and I throw out all my leftovers. [Note: I went to pure food & wine again a couple of years later and liked it a lot more.]



Four months later, in April of 2006, I quit Angelica Kitchen.

Summer of 2006. My girlfriend's parents fly me and my girlfriend to Israel. Her mom has a friend who works for El Al and we get special treatment on the flight — first class food in coach. Unfortunately for me, that means lox.

I try to figure out how to dispose of the fish without offending anyone, but my girlfriend is adamant that I at least try it. I give in (what happens a mile high stays a mile

high, ? כך ? (האינ זה כך), making this the first time since becoming vegan that I will intentionally eat an animal product. I scrape the creamy sauce off and have two small bites. I feel sick to my stomach and get a terrible headache. See what happens when you violate your ethics?

After Israel, we travel Europe. [I write a blog entry during the trip](#) about our culinary adventures — mostly cheeseless pizza while in Switzerland, Paris and Italy. But in Poland I ingest a few more animal products, mainly accidentally, though I do purposely eat sheep's milk cheese. I like it more than I care to admit and claim to be unimpressed in my blog entry. Still, my vegan faith stays strong.

My girlfriend, her Polish friend and I order pizza in Krakow. As I pick off little bits of cheese that slipped onto my supposedly cheeseless pizza, the Polish guy tells me, "Rhys, you're the most religious person I know."

Amen, brother.



Fall of 2006 – Summer of 2007. Though I no longer work at Angelica Kitchen, I have a steady supply of high-quality vegan food. My girlfriend takes me out to eat at vegan restaurants, her housekeeper cooks for me and I become a member of the Park Slope Food Co-op, which has good produce and vegan products for cheap. I drink a lot of kombucha now that it's reasonably priced.



This is when I become aware of having chronic [brain fog](#). I'm always tired and sluggish, my thinking isn't as sharp as it used to be, and I'm generally depressed. To fight this, I overcome my fear of caffeine and get into coffee, which my roommate assures me is healthy as long as it's black. It helps. I try not to drink it too much, but whenever I don't, brain fog.



End of Summer 2007. My girlfriend and I go to Tokyo for a month to shoot videos with my vegan friend. When we go out to eat, it's usually for Indian food and Ethiopian, since those are the most vegan friendly. We also find a few macrobiotic restaurants, which at least gives us some semblance of Japanese food.

I notice that my vegan friend is tired all of the time; he has to interrupt the shoots in the middle of the afternoon to take naps. I'm tired too, and his experience combined with mine is making me question the health miracle that is an animal-free diet.

On my very last day in Tokyo, I try real sushi. It's easily the best food of the entire trip. I feel like a fool for not having Japanese food in Japan earlier.



Fall of 2007 – Winter of 2007 (NV). *Fall* of 2007 is right. My brain is foggy as ever, my eczema is on a rampage and I've grown severely depressed. Though I'm not suicidal (that would require having energy), I am indifferent to my life. I become preoccupied with how little it would matter if I died. But there's an upside to this pessimism. "If my life doesn't matter," I think, "an animal's life *definitely* doesn't matter."

My roommate (Joe from the co-op house), raised vegetarian and now an ex-vegan, has been following the ["evolutionary fitness" model](#) (a version of the Paleolithic diet). He looks healthier than I've ever seen him, which is hard for me to ignore while I'm feeling worse than ever. He's been talking up meat and bashing starch for a while now, and his

arguments coupled with how awful I feel start to make sense.

One day as I'm cooking brown rice and red lentils, I feel a shudder of dread. I realize that I don't want to eat brown rice and red lentils anymore. So what *do* I want? My mind turns fondly to that last day in Tokyo.

The problem is, I still believe in the ethics of veganism. Though my depression has made me mostly indifferent to life, I'm still not sure that it's okay to take an animal's life for my own selfish benefit. To appease my uppity conscience and my miserable body, I try to be more "evolutionary" within the bounds of veganism.

I stop eating grains and eat more vegetables, fruits and nuts. Basically the vegan diet that Dr. Joel Fuhrman recommends. I don't notice much of a difference, though. I fear that I'm either going to have to go against my morals or feel groggy forever.

One night I see *The Omnivore's Dilemma* on my roommates' bookshelf. I know nothing about the book but the title sure resonates. I skip to the chapter where Michael Pollan goes vegetarian, feels unhealthy as a result, goes back to meat and then explains why that's okay. It's something to do with humans raising animals being mutually beneficial. I don't even know if that makes any sense but at this point I'll accept any logic that allows me to eat animal products again.

I fly to Dallas and have a vegan Thanksgiving with my family. I cook a wheat gluten roast like I always do, but don't have any myself. Then I fly back to New York for Thanksgiving with my girlfriend's family. I eat turkey. It tastes exactly as I remember it. My girlfriend's family welcomes me back to humanity. I'm happy to be back.



Beginning of 2008 – Now. My diet has consisted of meat, vegetables, fruits, nuts, eggs (and now some dairy) ever since leaving veganism. In other words, the Paleo/primal/evolutionary/caveman diet.

Is it a sign of a dogmatic personality that when I leave one food-related ideology I have to blanket myself in another? I guess I'm not psychologically cut out for culinary

anarchy, but at least I feel healthy while following my new rules. The brain fog is gone, I'm not depressed anymore, I rarely get headaches, my muscles have come back (true, I did slack on working out before the end of my veganism) and my eczema rarely shows its itchy red scales around these parts anymore.

I suppose it's silly to try to eat like a caveman, but I'd rather be silly than near-suicidally miserable.

Final notes. While I was vegan, no vegan ever told me that I was doing veganism incorrectly. It was enough that I was vegan, and being quasi-macrobiotic made me seem even more health-aware. In fact, I was often complimented as a healthier vegan than most because of how I shunned sugary desserts and refined foods. But when I quit veganism, suddenly vegans felt compelled to pick apart my former diet to pinpoint where I'd gone wrong.

It would be fair to call me a situational junk food vegan for my first two years, but that changed as soon as I got out of the dorms. Were my TVP and peanut butter years so damaging that they undermined the next seven years of my veganism? If so, why did the fallout from my dorm diet end once I became an omnivore again?

For the majority of my veganism, I did what I thought was healthiest. Still, many vegans will say that if only I had done it differently, I might still be vegan today.

Was quasi-macrobiotics to blame? George Ohsawa was a nut and the yin/yang rules of food are baseless, yet few vegans will insist that a diet composed mostly of whole grains, beans, vegetables, nuts and fruits is unhealthy, and that's what my diet was for at least the last five of my nine vegan years.

An anti-anti-vegan who found this blog [assumed that I must have been a raw foodist](#) to have run out of vegan steam. Raw foodists apparently have a growing reputation for vegan failure, which is one reason the site Beyond Vegetarianism has [such a big raw foodism focus](#), even though most vegans aren't raw. At least I was never afraid of cooked foods.

The main things I did avoid in addition to animal products — sweets and refined foods — don't really have any defenders. As for nightshades, the only one I strictly avoided consistently was white potatoes. Vegans are fond of saying that there is no magical nutrient in meat that you're missing by going vegan. What were the magical nutrients in white potatoes, refined flours and unfermented soy that I was missing by going quasi-macro?

Did I not supplement enough? After I got restless legs syndrome, I started taking calcium, B12 and SAM-e with some amount of regularity, as well as B-complex and vegan multivitamins now and again. But I didn't take any of these supplements every day.

The importance of B12 supplementation for vegans is well known (though raw foodists often claim it's unnecessary and vegans often try to convince themselves they can get B12 by not washing their vegetables or by eating fermented food), so was I slacking by not being more systematic about my B12 pills?

Nah. Even if I couldn't tell you how many pills I took a week, I did take B12. I also ate nutritional yeast, which is supplemented with B12, and when I cut out soy milk, I drank B12-supplemented rice milk and almond milk. [What's that you say, Dr. John McDougall? Even with zero supplementation my odds of B12 deficiency were one in a million? Not sure I buy it, but works for me!](#)

What about Omega-3s? Because of my eczema, getting Omega-3s was one of my biggest concerns. I had seaweed, flax oil and ground flaxseed at least a few days every week, and I regularly ate walnuts, pumpkin seeds and hemp seeds too. But as soon as I quit veganism, a vegan pointed out to me that all that stuff doesn't work and I should have been taking vegan DHA in the form of seaweed extract.



I thought I'd been King Omega III, but I'd never heard of that supplement before. Apparently all vegans are savvy enough to take this now, though I'd be curious to see what polls on vegan message boards would say about that.

My retort upon learning about vegan DHA was that even if it had been the way to save my veganism, I couldn't believe in a diet that required a pricey industrial seaweed extract in order to work. If I'd known it then, I could also have pointed out that [vegan DHA from seaweed extract has only been around since 2006](#). If vegans are destined for failure without these pills, veganism has only been truly possible for the past four years.

Nevertheless, I didn't quit veganism until a year and a half after these pills were invented. If I'd heard about them before the Thanksgiving 2007 execution of my beliefs, could I have regained my clear thinking and energy while maintaining my ethics?

I doubt it.

I felt better as soon as I started eating meat again, and that was mostly turkey, not fish — at Thanksgiving, and then with the turkey loaves my girlfriend's housekeeper would cook. I felt better before my Omega-3 levels would supposedly have balanced out. [Not to mention that McDougall has my back. I was eating vegetables as a vegan, which is good enough for him!](#)

Vitamin D. When I was vegan, nobody thought Vitamin D supplementation was all that important. Calcium was what vegans had to worry about and I took a calcium supplement (irregularly) and ate plenty of leafy greens. Apparently now Vitamin D is the thing and if I'd been supplementing with the fourth vitamin of the alphabet, maybe I wouldn't have turned so pale and sickly.

Vitamin D initiated its comeback in March of 2005, [when science proclaimed that we needed to spend time in the sun without sunscreen](#). But it was only at the end of 2005 that [research showed the sun was not enough and supplementation was necessary](#). No doubt it took longer for these findings to become accepted as standard nutritional wisdom, and still longer for vegan authorities to glom onto Vitamin D supplementation as a vegan must. The [Vegan Health page on Vitamin D](#) sites "recent research" as evidence of the need to supplement D, and that research is from 2007, the year I quit

veganism.

That same page says that Vitamin D deficiency is no greater problem for vegans and vegetarians than it is for omnivores. I didn't start supplementing with Vitamin D once I quit veganism, yet I still felt better. If Vitamin D was the issue, why would not supplementing with D make me fail at veganism but not at omnivorism?

What Vitamin D shows is that we don't know as much about nutrition as we'd like to think we do. As late as last year, [American Medical News](#) was discussing Vitamin D as if it was a new trend. For the most part, the necessity of supplementing with Vitamin D (and certainly the need for vegans in particular to supplement with Vitamin D) was unknown while I was a vegan. This slippery hormone dodged our nutritional radar. But now all you vegans gotta D-up. Jack Norris says so.

Good to know, but what don't we know now that we'll only find out once the next generation of vegans craps out? Again, I can't trust a diet that has you skirting so close to disaster if you don't take all the right supplements, especially since we never know what all those right supplements are. On top of that:

[Should Healthy People Take \[Vitamin D\] Supplements? No, otherwise healthy people who can expose themselves to life-giving sunshine should not bother with supplements.](#)

Sing it, McDougall!

But this reminds me, I do keep meaning to buy some Vitamin D.

Protein, then? I did quit tofu, after all, and that's a major vegan source of protein. I also didn't eat wheat gluten regularly, and almost never TVP, though I did eat plenty of nuts, tempeh, beans and seaweed, which I thought had me covered. Plus, there are vegans with soy, nut and gluten allergies. No vegan would tell them to face facts and give up, but I certainly got more protein than those star-crossed vegans do.

Personally I do think I wasn't getting enough protein as a vegan, but the consensus among vegan nutritionists is that it's almost impossible to not get enough protein. Unless I was anorexic or eating only junk food or fruit, I should have been fine. Some vegans would even say that just fruit is enough.

Here's [Jack Norris RD of Vegan Health](#):

Vegans might not meet their protein needs, resulting in a loss of muscle mass and/or reduced immunity, if:

* Food intake does not meet energy needs such as in cases of anorexia nervosa, depression, poverty, lack of appetite due to illness,³ or dieting.

*Higher-protein plant foods are not included in sufficient amounts. This can happen when:

*Most foods eaten are low-protein, junk food such as French fries, potato chips, and soda.

* Protein is believed to be unimportant and/or higher protein foods are avoided (such as in some fruitarian or raw food diets).

* Legumes are avoided. ³ (Other high-protein foods should be used.)

I did lose muscle mass, despite Norris' assurances that vegans are fine as long as they

aren't restricting calories (even though I was depressed, I didn't eat any less), but part of the blame lies with my non-existent workout routine during my last two vegan years.

By the way, is there any question that McDougall thinks I got enough protein?

["It is impossible to make up a diet deficient in protein or individual amino acids from any unrefined starches \(rice, potatoes\) and vegetables. ... The only real problems with protein come from eating too much."](#)

I think I was protein deprived as a vegan, but vegans aren't allowed to agree. It would undercut too many of their arguments. And if an individual vegan goes against the vegan consensus to say that I can't have got enough protein as a vegan without tofu, that vegan has become the thing that they most hate — a "Where do you get your protein?" demon.

Sorry veganism, but *you* failed *me*.

It would've been nice, though, if I'd done blood work as a vegan and figured out for sure what was wrong with me. I never thought to get my nutrient levels tested, partially because I was so convinced of veganism's healthfulness. When I first started to feel bad consistently, I thought it was something naturally wrong with me, not with my diet.

But if I had gone to doctors the second my brain got cloudy, maybe they could have pinpointed exactly what nutrients my body was struggling to operate without.

Then again, I just read a message board thread started by a vegan who hoped to find something wrong with his nutrient levels to explain why he feels unhealthy. [But his results came back fine](#):

"i actually sort of hope there's SOMETHING that's off. so i could have an idea of why i don't feel 100% and i can have a solid plan of attack." ... "Got my results! This little vegan's B12 level is higher than the normal range. I guess... I guess human beings CAN sustain on such a foolhardy, unnatural, hippie fad of a diet."

Or maybe there's a nutritional je ne sais quois to animal products that our bodies eventually miss. OR... seaweed extract solves everything. Either way, it's not too big a tragedy that I didn't get my blood tested as a vegan. I'm not the only vegan to ever experience cloudy thinking, so if it's a single lacking nutrient that's the culprit, it shouldn't be too hard for science to narrow it down.

If I did veganism wrong, it wasn't for lack of trying. We have more nutritional knowledge today than when I gave up animal products, but can vegans realistically say that they've finally got a lock on the right way to be vegan?

The only reliable vegan source of Omega-3s will have its fourth birthday in March. And that's about as long as vegans have known to take their Vitamin D. Is there some other slippery nutrient that vegans aren't getting enough of that we don't know about yet? Or are we finally set now with vegan DHA and Vitamin D?

For the sake of vegans, I hope we never fully crack the mystery of nutrition.

I'm actually glad that I was a vegan when less was known and it was easier to fail. If I'd figured out how to be a healthy vegan indefinitely, I might never have gotten out. That's why I worry about the vegans of the future. If science ever discovers the most nutritionally optimal animal-product-free diet possible, that's one less deus ex machina to set vegans free.

--Tagged under: [When I Was Vegan](#)--

--Tagged under: [Health](#)--

--Tagged under: [Purity](#)--

--Tagged under: [Vegan Cult](#)--

--Tagged under: [Self-Denial](#)--

29 Comments



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meagain

With all the other uniformed bs vegans have to deal with from defensive omnis, now omnis will use this blog as evidence that being vegan causes eczema. Of course, by your timetable the eczema started after your parents' divorce, while you were still a meat eater, so obviously being vegan didn't cause it and meat eating did not cure it. Eczema is caused by allergies and emotional problems (stress). If you want to eat meat, fine, but realize you have simply discovered yet another temporary palliative. It won't be long before you're back here blogging that your symptoms have come back so you're trying [insert new fad], when what you actually need is therapy. There's no shame in that. I do hope if you're going to continue your meat eating you will at least find local humanely farmed meat as a compromise, otherwise it does really seem like you're "all or nothing" in your mentality and now believe that cruelty is totally fine as long as you feel healthier.

5 months ago 5 Likes

Like Reply



Divine

I'm happy that you found something that works for you. I have been a vegan raw foodist for 45 years now and I have never experienced any fogginess or ever felt tired or sick. I look very young for my age and have sufficient levels of B12 and all other vitamins in my body. And I have never met any unhealthy vegans :). So I guess it's a question of perception.

8 months ago 8 Likes

Like Reply



meagain

Did you ever consider that maybe you have some kind of food allergy (such as gluten intolerance) and you accidentally stopped eating so much of whatever was bothering you?

5 months ago 4 Likes

Like Reply



John Mooter

It is interesting to read some of these posts. I have not eaten meat since 1971, have been vegan the past 8 or so years, am now almost 63 and feel fine. My diet is a mix; some cooked, some raw. I take no drugs. My cholesterol levels are great, blood pressure normal. I am the same height I was in high school (6 feet 2 inches). My weight is around 195, so I have no problem with being too thin. My cardio fitness level is good. I bike or walk daily, and when younger ran several miles a day. Now I usually walk 3 to 6 miles most days, and do light weights. I feel better when I avoid processed foods, and mainly eat whole grains, steamed and raw vegetables (dark greens daily) beans, nuts, seeds, seasonal fruits, salads, soups, sea veggies. I rarely eat meat analogues. My B12 levels are above normal. My blood work is all good. I exercise daily, for around an hour or more. I recently added some raw hemp seeds in the morning, and am avoiding a lot of oil. The seeds seem to give me more energy, and some believe they are the most balanced source of Omega 3's and 6's. I know vegans in their 80s that still run marathons. I also know vegan body-builders. Elephants and rhinos are vegans. They seem to get enough protein! Most of the people that I associate with that are my age are on meds, not as healthy as I am. I attribute it to whole foods, mainly. Recently I added a multiple vitamin, and take calcium-magnesium at night for sleep, but no other pills. I believe that the most successful vegans are not dogmatic, strict raw, Macrobiotic, whatever. I know a vegan who is 85 and looks about 50. Of course, I know unhealthy vegans who smoke, drink, etc, who are into animal rights but are not concerned about their health. I believe to have optimal health we need to give up most junk food, as well as dead animals and their secretions. In my opinion, anybody can be healthy on a vegan diet, with minimal supplementation, if it is planned well. Healthy vegans- Ruth Heindrich (tri athlete), Neal Barnard, MD, John McDougall MD, Caldwell Esselstain MD, John McDougall MD, Dr. T. Colin Campbell. All of these vegans are older, except Neal. I have met all of them, and can assure you that they are vibrant and alive.

7 months ago 5 Likes

Like Reply



Laura

Four months ago, after suffering from occasional acid reflux, I became a vegan. I did not tell anyone about this because I was a vegan for health reasons, and not the animal rights reason. I knew that vegans had an issue with this for reasons I was not sure of. I am of the mindset, if people are eating less animals, wouldn't that be a win for the vegans? After the first two months of being a vegan for health reasons, I felt great. I did not have acid-reflux, I had lost six pounds and I had lots of energy. Then the third month started, and I had a raging headache every day, my legs would tingle at night, and I would be irrational and cranky quite often. I also had a hard time concentrating at work. I could not imagine what it could be, certainly not my new vegan diet that was the healthiest thing you

could do. I Googled some websites and learned that I had to supplement with B12 vitamins. I did that, but nothing changed. I started taking all the supplements, and I started to think, it takes a lot of "supplies" to be a vegan. How is this going green, and how is this better for me? I put my thoughts aside, because all I read was the terrific benefits of the vegan diet. After I took all those damn supplements, I still felt the same. One night, while my legs were tingling and my head was hurting, I Googled my symptoms and it brought me to your website. I read it for hours, I was amazed how quickly I had the same symptoms even though I had been a meat eater all my life. I was fascinated with everyone's stories that were similar to what I was feeling. I started incorporating some lean meats to my diet, but I mostly follow the vegan diet. My legs stopped tingling and my headaches have stopped. Thank you for having the guts to write this blog. It helped me understand what I was doing wrong.

2 months ago 1 Like

Like Reply



VeganThug

placebo effect; placebo effect; placebo effect; placebo effect; placebo effect; placebo effect.

i also suspect that there was some sort of placebo effect going on.

this just in: placebo effect.

no attempt at a quantitative analysis of your health/nutrient intake whatsoever. just a bunch of "i feel" this and "i feel" that. are you sure you don't have a clitoris?

look, i get it. you feel betrayed because your vegan buddies told you that being vegan is the best ever and you tried to be a good vegan by blindly taking their bad advice. nobody rational becomes a vegan for health reasons. the vast majority of vegans have no clue what their talking about, not because they're vegans but because the vast majority of people have no clue what they're talking about.

1 year ago 9 Likes

Like Reply



miniegg

I'm as rational as a person who claims to be rational can be. I became a vegan for long-term health and sustainability reasons. It doesn't mean I think it's the panacea but it is perhaps a reminder that a sweeping statement can often be an act of daftness :).

I have a clue what I'm talking about. Soon I will give up and they'll have to tell me the answer.

1 week ago in reply to VeganThug

Like Reply



nicolesau

I don't understand how you could just jump from veganism back into omnivorism when you claim to have the ethics you did. if protein and nutrients truly were an issue, you could have solved them by going lacto-ovo. there is absolutely NOTHING you can't get from this diet. And although

it does have ethical inconsistencies since the dairy industry is cruel, at least you'd be continually making an effort against factory farmed meat, the depletion of the oceans, and the scourge upon the environment caused by mass meat production. That is certainly worth the effort. Protein and omega 3s can be found in organic, cage free eggs. occasional cheese would give you fats and protein as well. as an informed vegan, im sure you've crossed this info.

it seems to me like you just stopped caring. while that's your own decision, i dont think it's fair to berate a minority of people who are trying their hardest to make a positive change on this planet. vegans and vegetarians hear it enough from omnis about how "ridiculous" we are. you should know this as well as anyone else. so instead of spreading that negative sentiment even further, perhaps you should just admit that your experience was unique, not by any means the common experience (many people THRIVE on veganism, plain and simple), and that reducing animal consumption is a good thing. for humans, for the animals, and most importantly, for the planet that we all share.

1 year ago 9 Likes

Like Reply



Will Potter

I don't know who you were hanging around who thought there was nothing wrong with only eating oats (or any of the other unhealthy choices you were making), but it's irrelevant because they are only a straw man in this.

The final paragraphs of this really make that abundantly clear. Your nutritionally sob-story is used to not only shirk responsibility for your own very poor decisions, but to justify actions you know are still cruel, still immoral, still environmentally destructive.

If you stopped being vegan because you wanted meat, say that. If you stopped being vegan because you no longer cared, or didn't want to be "difficult" around non-vegans, or felt it wasn't worth the effort, or craved the taste, then say that.

But don't write hundreds of words blaming veganism for your health problems when, by any dietary standards, you were making some incredibly poor decisions (including not even getting blood work done?). You've pointed out and mocked "vegan guilt" in other posts on this blog, but I think it's clear from this lengthy personal justification that you haven't eased your own.

1 year ago 8 Likes

Like Reply



Kaleigh

Yeah, Let Them Eat Meat. You dummy. Just admit you like steak!!!! ADMIT IT DAMMIT!!!!!!

You're the guiltiest ex-vegan in the whole fucking world.

You don't even care about ANYTHING!!! Not even ANYTHING!!!!

1 year ago in reply to Will Potter

Like Reply

Caerlaenn



[Redacted name]

Thank you for sharing--I found your story very interesting, because I was also vegetarian and then vegan when I was young. I have a biological grass-based farm now, where my family and I raise our eggs, meat, vegetables, and dairy and it was an interesting transition for me as well. I will always remember how it felt to eat REAL food again.

I know quite a few vegans and vegetarians (and some recovering ex-vegans and vegetarians as well) and I always think it's funny when I hear them talking about how healthy they are or their children are....because as a farmer I have learned to look at an animal and see how healthy it is, and what sort of constitution it has. People have largely forgotten how to do this, and I think no one really knows what healthy is.

I've learned to see this with pigs or chickens or cows or goats, it is very similar. A healthy animal has a thickness and a shine to it's coat or feathers. You can see swirls in the coat which show the endocrine system is working. They have a bright, alertness in their eye and a vigor to their movements. They are strong and have deep chests and wide faces, giving them room for their heart and lungs and teeth and brain.

When I look at people I know who have been vegan or vegetarian for a number of years none of them look healthy. They are dried out and brittle and their children all have pale, pinched faces. They move differently than normal children.

By now I have hung out with enough ruminants to understand why people can't really get everything from plants. Because we don't have a rumen. We don't have the capacity to eat all day long and digest cellulose. We have hydrochloric acid in our stomachs, we need meat.

1 year ago 4 Likes

Like Reply



Br3TT (urtiss)

I don't think there is much on these comments that I could add to as far as your crazy history with diets and food avoidance, so I'm not going to add anymore.

But like you said, you did tried in the best way you knew how, which unfortunately was plagued with misinformation.

Although I myself am vegan, I do like this blog because you're honest in your approach, and you ask the hard questions. I don't like being associated with any hippie, or evangelical veganism, so I think this site (eventhough it tries to poke holes through veganism) is good at stripping down some of the fantasy some people impose on veganism, and bring it down to a real level. Luckily, there's still enough there to promote veganism (for me at least).

1 year ago 4 Likes

Like Reply



Christina Arasmo Beymer

Yes! Very well said. I like this blog, very thoughtful people. I have a

theory on why people betray their previous stands for or against anything and this site is really confirming that. I am a vegan too. I got that fogginess thing when I moved North and felt that since I used to get outside in Florida and here it is overcast and I'm inside more, I started taking D3 from lanolin and then it cleared up. I found a vegan source of D3 yesterday. I felt that it's better to be a partial vegan than a sleeping, dark circled sluggish vegan. I never went into vegetarianism and later veganism for health or ethics, I did for love of animals. I'm grateful for the supplementation. Many people with S.A.D. are not vegan and they need D too, so it's not a strictly vegan issue.

1 year ago in reply to Br3TT (urtiss) 2 Likes

Like Reply



greenmulberry

Thanks. I found this blog because as an ex vegan myself, this topic interests me. Although I was a vegan for 4 years, I spent over a decade as a vegetarian and was interested in making healthy food choices. Over time I developed anxiety and depression, which I certainly did not think had the slightest thing to do with my diet. I took meds for it. I tried and tried to get of the meds, because I hated the side effects, no luck. Eventually, I got more depressed and apathetic over the years, despite the meds, and after a particularly disheartening experience involving a truly terrible vegan Thanksgiving buffet that we spent our last 23 dollars on (and didn't even get to eat because it was just . so . bad) I just said screw it, tried some chicken, and gradually went back to omnivory.

So I didn't have the experience many ex vegans have of "I am so sick and every doctor says I must eat meat. . . " I just became so depressed and apathetic and just didn't care any more. I had no clue when I started eating meat that my diet had anything to do with me feeling like shit all the time. But you know what???? I started feeling so GOOD! I was actually able to go out and do something after work, rather than crashing out on the couch. I was able to stop taking my meds and the depression and anxiety went away.

I don't have anything against vegans, and will certainly prepare vegan food for my vegan guests, but I can never go back to that. I just feel so good, and HAPPY now.

1 year ago 2 Likes

Like Reply



Diana

I liked what soilman said!

If all the vegans you've met say that you didn't do the vegan diet right....it's probably because you didn't. How is it that I know people who've been vegan for 10, 20, 30 and even 40 years! And they don't seem to be bleeding out of their noses or have any of the symptoms you described. It is unfortunate that you had those experiences...and I truly feel for you, because I know being sick is depressing. But being "German" as you put it, with your diet was not in your favour. You need a balanced diet. And just because someone says your diet is healthy, doesn't mean it is. I lost weight due to sickness and people commented on how great I looked!!! Most people are clueless! You yo yo'd from one extreme diet to another, and at

any one point your body was experiencing with drawl from one or more food groups. You claim that sugar is not needed by your body? Really? You never mentioned you had a nutritionist degree. A body does require simple carbs, along with complex carbs, proteins etc...

In all cases, I still feel sorry for you, as you had to compromise your convictions for your health...and that's not easy to do. But I am confused as to why you so adamantly put down a vegan diet when doctors and nutritionists and health organizations claim it to be a healthier diet. Just because it didn't work for you, do you really think you were the mold for mankind and it won't work for anybody??

1 year ago 3 Likes

Like Reply



Maria

Thank you for your funny and interesting story about veganism and the search for a healthy diet. I think we're all trying to figure this out. Many of my friends are recovering vegans. They are eating a lot of raw milk, pastured meat, and saturated fats, and are much better now than they were as vegans. Still, we are all learning. I still haven't found the cure for petrochemical and heavy metal poisoning that I got 25 years ago from eating catfish from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta on a catfish tagging project for California Fish and Game. But at least I'm alive and getting better on a nourishing traditional diet. I wish you the best of luck and thank you for sharing this story about your journey!

1 year ago 2 Likes

Like Reply



John C Clements

Wow veganthug is such an awesome person – I mean, actually this website is. An awesome thing. I love it. Veganthug adds so much to the conversation, to life, to humanity, to everything.

1 year ago 2 Likes

Like Reply



evelsuive

I'm sorry to say i have read your post and i still aren't sure that you were exactly eating healthily. You seem incredibly interested in any fad diet that came your way and your style of eating reminds me of obese people who insist in drinking diet coke (believing that this will help).

The major thing that i noticed since becoming vegan is that i need to eat more (i.e. i get hungry more) i have not lost any energy, i can think clearer, all the damage to my teeth was done when i was an omnivore, i get a cold at roughly about the same times as when i was omni.

Really there have been changes to my body, but none i would consider endangering.

I'm not a nutritionist, but i don't understand why you got sick and every vegan i ever met is about as healthy (on average) as every omnivore (again on average).

P.S. Why the anti vegan rage? Why not just hate stupid people in general instead of stupid people who happen to be vegans?

1 year ago 2 Likes

Like Reply





soilman

Oh, for cry's sake, just read some basic scientific info on nutrition, from a source that doesn't care what you eat and has no axe to grind in regard to any particular diet. Like high-school biology text book. That is all you really need to know. There is no ONE diet that is better than the others. Macrobiotics is ridiculously unscientific and obviously fraudulent. You need some carbohydrates, some proteins, fats (omega 6 and omega 3) some micronutrients, some fiber, and some fruits and vegetables, fresh or frozen (canned is not as good). You don't really need to know a lot more. ANY way you can get these nutrients will keep you well. But you can't overdo on some and skimp on others. You've got to get a good balance. Animal flesh, dairy, and eggs (i'm lumping these together as one thing) in moderation is fine. But you could also get your proteins from legumes, nuts, leafy greens, and various seeds (it depends on the seed). And your fat from oilseed and nuts. Doesn't really make all that much difference.

But the fad diets have little science to support them. And macrobiotics is positively ridiculous, with its "yin-yang" thing. Not a shred of evidence that there is even such a thing as yin or yang, much less a balance. It makes no effin difference whether your rice seeds are round or long, just as it makes no effin difference whether you eat round loaf of bread or a long skinny loaf of bread.

1 year ago 2 Likes

Like Reply



letthemeatmeat

You're acting very yang right now, Soilman.

1 year ago in reply to soilman

Like Reply



fanya

You are a little younger than I am, but I have to tell you if you were into nutrition at all you would have known about the Vitamin D aspect of diet long before Jack Norris. Your neuroticism is the through-line in this blog. Any diet, any good diet is about balance--take that out of the equation and you are left with nothing. Now that you have once again found the Holy Grail, will you attempt veganism, or even vegetarianism just from a diet standpoint? I will tell you this as well, I am not a vegan.

1 year ago 1 Like

Like Reply



Eating Healthy For Life

You made poor decisions. If you really felt ethical about eating animals you would still feel that way. If you are eating saturated fat again, you are probably now on your way to heart disease and one of the many diseases of civilization. If you get terrible sick and decide to follow a compassionate diet again, do some research and don't blame you poor health on your lousy eating choices.

1 year ago 1 Like

Like Reply



[Name]

[Text]



ranthia

Your story parallels mine so much! Except I'm so much older and did it longer (I have very few teeth left). I can't say I love eating beef, but I didn't always love the vegan/macro food I ate either. What I did love was the feeling of superiority – nobody ate as healthy as me! Nobody else could live like this! I sure feel better now eating meat. And I guess I can still feel superior by giving up carbs.

1 year ago 1 Like

Like Reply



billy

I reiterate my appreciation for this blog: Thanks.

I never made any connection between my spontaneous nosebleeds and diet, but it was a problem when I was a vegan; though not at all after switching to a non-vegan diet. Now I can pick out the occasional irritating bugger without fearing I'll have to grab my nose and run to the bathroom.

I didn't even know about "restless leg syndrome" until I read about it here. I thought I was just over-exerting my legs every day. For years and years it plagued me until almost immediately after I began eating meat again. Of course it's hard to say for sure, but I'd be inclined to think the diet change at least helped.

My vegan diet shifted endlessly within the definitional proscriptions of the vegan mindset; always searching for something to make myself feel better. Each time I felt I was finally "on the right track", I'd find the true cause of the improvement mere novelty. I didn't try everything, but I tried enough to satisfy every reasonable doubt that the vegan would not work for me.

1 year ago 1 Like

Like Reply



soilman

"My first two years of veganism are the worst from a health perspective. I didn't go vegan for health reasons, and even if I had, the dorm food is terrible for vegans. The cafeterias offer two kinds of veggie burgers, but one of them has cheese, so only one veggie burger is possible for me, a disgusting TVP patty. My meals consist primarily of those, iceberg lettuce from the salad bar with peanut butter on top and cheerios (dry or with orange juice, since there is no soy milk). Sometimes there will be a daily special that I can eat."

Well no wonder you weren't doing well as a vegan. You can't rely on what non-vegans think you need. There are close to no good commercially prepared foods for vegans. You pretty much have to make your own food, from scratch.

TVP is the chemically treated waste left over from the soybean oil pressing business. It was originally thought that only animals would eat it, then they found out that some silly vegetarians, who didn't know any better, would want to eat it.

You have to buy legumes, and soak and–or cook them yourself. Veggie burgers are just ridiculous. Chik peas, split peas, white beans (red beans have too much tannic acid), red lentils, brown lentils. Plus I've been looking around in Indian and Pakistani grocery stores, and found about 20 different legumes that I had never heard of before. There are 1000's of varieties of chik peas, alone, in many different sizes, shapes, and colors, but in most of the US, there is only 1 variety available.

Best if you can grow your own, and eat them before they dry out on the vine. That way they take 2 minutes to cook.

Also, all the commercial frozen edamame that i've seen, is total garbage. I grew my own for a few years, before I ever tasted the crop from taiwan, and the totally inedible crop from China. I hardly recognized them as the same vegetable.

1 year ago 1 Like

Like Reply



miniegg

I'm vegan. I don't for a minute pretend it's a natural diet but it CAN be a very varied and healthy one. Just like a meat eating diet can be a very varied and healthy one. Equally, concentrating on just a few foods can be detrimental in any diet. I think we all have to get over this 'I'm right because... and you're wrong because...' mentality. There are pros and cons with any choice including dietary choices. I have weighed up the options and I think that, based on the evidence I've seen so far, avoidance of dairy and meat has long term health benefits that outweigh the obvious vitamin deficiency concerns that having a vegan diet can bring. The important thing is to eat a varied diet and supplement where deficiencies have been identified. I know people can be equally healthy eating meat, but for me research suggests it can be beneficial to exclude and it has advantages for environmental sustainability. That doesn't mean that I agree with every utterance or vegan myth any more than I agree with the determined meat and dairy praisers. I'm wary of anyone who knows they're right. I'm also wary of people who treat veganism as a religion and pour scorn on those less righteous than them. So what if someone is 'mostly' vegan but has, on occasion eaten a cake that contained egg? Well done to them for reducing their impact most of the time. I'm English so maybe that's my cultural distrust of zealots. Each to their own I suppose.

I haven't had bad skin (psoriasis) in my case for years, certainly not since I was vegan but I probably will at some point. Diet can support health but it doesn't override our predispositions to things. I'm not so arrogant as to think I've cured minor health niggles but so far I'd say there's a lot of evidence that I am managing them well and my diet naturally plays a large part in that.

1 week ago

Like Reply



Nessie

As a former vegan I love this blog!

Every vegan who quits veganism has to hear the mantra "you did veganism wrong, you did veganism wrong" ad nauseum, you are not the only having to face this from vegans, believe me.

Veganism can't be done right, that's the problem and I am really thankful that people are coming out with the problems they faced on a vegan diet even though practicing vegans want to keep the health (and mental) problems a secret – it's still a fact that most vegans are sick and have some sort of depression. I lost my health with a vegan diet, like so many others and the road to recovery have been a long one. I am so angry sometimes that I wasted most of my youth on something like veganism and destroyed my health with it. The lies that surround vegan nutrition are so convincing and abundant.

I wish you all the best and again want to thank you for this blog.

1 year ago

Like Reply



Sustainalogic

"it's still a fact that most vegans are sick and have some sort of depression"

Oh please, there is no such 'fact'. Most vegans I know, myself included, have never felt better since cutting out dairy. In fact, I feel amazing every single day, I don't get lethargic and I haven't been ill in about a year and I'm sure it's down to my diet. I've also suffered with depression a number of times in the past but not at all since becoming vegan. Everyone's bodies are different and are perhaps just better suited to different diets. I for one, know that I will never, ever eat milk products again – for the sake of my health – and I know that that's the best decision for me. Rhys, I was very interested to read your story and about your health experiences and it sounds as though your choice to return to an omnivore diet was the right one for you.

1 year ago in reply to Nessie 9 Likes

Like Reply



letthemeatmeat

Thanks!

1 year ago in reply to Nessie

Like Reply

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