

Making Everything Easier!™

Living Vegetarian FOR DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Explore and adopt a vegetarian lifestyle
- Go vegetarian with a healthy and nutritionally balanced diet
- Be vegetarian and still shop in supermarkets and eat out at restaurants
- Cook easy and tasty vegetarian meals from the dozens of included recipes

Suzanne Havala Hobbs, DrPH

Registered and licensed dietitian

Foreword by Michael F. Jacobson, PhD

Executive Director, Center for Science in the Public Interest



Living Vegetarian For Dummies®

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Living Vegetarian For Dummies®

**by Suzanne Havala
Hobbs, DrPH, MS, RD**

**Foreword by Michael F.
Jacobson, PhD**



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About the Author

Suzanne Havala Hobbs, DrPH, MS, RD, is a registered, licensed dietitian and nationally recognized expert on food, nutrition, and dietary guidance policy. She holds a doctorate in health policy and administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she is a clinical associate professor in the Gillings School of Global Public Health, the nation's top public school of public health. There she directs the doctoral program in health leadership and serves on the faculty of the Department of Health Policy and Management and the Department of Nutrition.

Sue was the primary author of the American Dietetic Association's 1988 and 1993 position papers on

vegetarian diets and the founding chair of the association's Vegetarian Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group. She serves on the editorial board of Vegetarian Times magazine and advisory boards of the nonprofit Vegetarian Resource Group and the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

A vegan-leaning, lacto ovo vegetarian for 35 years, Sue explores topics related to food, nutrition, and policy issues in her popular newspaper column, On the Table. The column reaches more than 400,000 readers weekly in The News & Observer of Raleigh, North Carolina, and in The Charlotte Observer. An archive of On the Table columns, as well as Sue's blog, may be found at www.onthetable.net.

She has written 11 books, including Get the Trans Fat Out (Three Rivers Press), Vegetarian Cooking For Dummies (Wiley), The Natural Kitchen (Berkley), Good Foods, Bad Foods: What's Left to Eat? (Wiley), and Shopping for Health: A Nutritionist's Aisle-by-Aisle Guide to Smart, Low-Fat Choices at the Supermarket (Harper Perennial). She is a contributing writer for the "Bottom Line/Personal" newsletter and has been a regular writer for Vegetarian Times and SELF magazines and other national publications.

Sue is a member of the American Public Health Association, American Dietetic Association, Association of Health Care Journalists, Association of Food Journalists, and the American Society of Journalists and Authors. She served on the board of directors of the Association of Health Care Journalists and the Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism. She also serves on the board of trustees of the North Carolina Writers' Network.

She lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Her family includes her husband, Michael R. Hobbs; their children, Barbara and Henry; and dogs Kailani and Sperry and cat Kodak.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to people everywhere who strive to eat well to support their health and to protect the well-being of our environment and the other living things with whom we share our beautiful planet.

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Many of my colleagues in the U.S., in Canada, and around the world have dedicated their lives and careers to advancing knowledge in nutrition science, the links between diet and health, and the practice of diet and health policymaking. My work builds on theirs, and I salute the collective efforts of this community of scholars and practitioners.

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I am indebted, too, to readers of my newspaper column, *On the Table*. Their feedback and encouragement help me stay in touch with issues of primary concern to people trying to do their best to make wise food choices.

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Foreword

Simply put, this book may be the most important book you read this year . . . or this decade.

When I was in college, I certainly could have used a book like *Living Vegetarian For Dummies*. Somehow, I had heard that a vegetarian diet was healthful, or perhaps just cool, so I tried it. The first evening I ate a pound of broccoli. The next night I ate a pound of cauliflower. And so on. Actually, my first bout with vegetarianism may not have lasted more than those first two days.

I thought that “vegetarian” meant eating only vegetables. I only wish that Suzanne Havala Hobbs had been around to hold me by the hand (as this book will do for you) and show me that vegetarian diets are typically more varied, more healthful, and more delicious than the typical steak-and-potatoes (or burger-and-fries in my case) American diet.

Truth be told, I never became a full-fledged vegetarian, let alone a vegan, and most casual claimants to vegetarianism probably also cheat a bit. Flexitarian is what we say we are, which often means eating mostly vegetarian, but dining on fish, chicken, or even beef or pork occasionally. Such folks gain most of the health benefits of well-constructed vegetarian diets, but can't claim to be free of any responsibility for the maltreatment of farm animals (especially layer hens, dairy cows, and veal calves). At the other end of vegetarianism are vegans, who, notwithstanding all the temptations of daily life in North America, eschew even the lacto ovo foods

that regular vegetarians eat plenty of. Fortunately, Sue Hobbs provides sensible guidance for people at every point on the vegetarian spectrum.

Some people (including me) have moved toward vegetarian diets mostly for health reasons, and those reasons are ample. Vegetarians (and I don't mean people whose notion of vegetarianism is chowing down on soft drinks, cookies, quiches, and chocolate bars) have lower risks of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and cancer. (Because most studies include few vegans, it's unclear whether vegans fare even better than run-of-the-mill lacto ovo vegetarian.)

Probably more people are attracted to vegetarianism for moral reasons. Eating animal products inevitably means that one is contributing to the miserable circumstances in which most farm animals spend their lives. Raising cattle, pigs, and chickens on grass and grubs certainly reduces the misery, but most vegans end up vegans because they don't want to feel culpable for any part of the raising and killing of animals.

If better health for yourself and avoidance of cruelty to animals aren't reason enough to eat a more plant-based diet, consider the benefits to the environment. Raising animals means using more energy-intensive fertilizer, much of which ends up polluting waterways. It means using huge quantities of water to irrigate fields of feed grains. Questionably safe pesticides endanger farm workers and wildlife. And the animals themselves emit greenhouse gases in the form of manure (which may also pollute rivers and streams) and cows' belching of methane gas. Eating fewer animal products and more fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, and nuts will help protect our increasingly crowded and polluted planet.

But back to basics: your taste buds will thank you, day after day, for moving in a vegetarian direction. Enjoy!

Michael F. Jacobson, PhD

Executive Director

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Washington, DC

Introduction

Vegetarianism has come a long, long way.

As a child, I wore a button that said, “Real People Wear Fake Furs.” I’d picked it up at the Ann Arbor Street Art Fair when my older sister was in college at the University of Michigan. It was the late ’60s, and it wasn’t much longer before my mother announced to our family that from then on, she would be a vegetarian. She never said why, but for the next several years, the former Wisconsinite ate cheese omelets or cheddar-cheese-and-pickle sandwiches on whole-wheat toast for dinner while the rest of us ate the meat she prepared for us. That is, of course, until we kids followed her lead and, one by one and without fanfare, became vegetarians ourselves.

My dad worried we’d miss vital nutrients. He chided my mother for planting the idea. Mom, a registered nurse, was considered a bit odd by her hospital colleagues. By now, it was the early ’70s, and vegetarians lived on communes or wore Birkenstocks and long hair on college campuses. They weren’t kids and working, middle-aged moms.

A competitive swimmer in high school, I hoped that a vegetarian diet would boost my endurance and athletic performance, as Olympic gold medalist Murray Rose claimed it had for him. It didn’t help enough, but it did pique my interest in nutrition and set me on the path to a career in dietetics. It would be many years, however, before the scientific community came around to the idea that a diet of grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, seeds, and nuts can be adequate — never mind superior — to a diet centered on animal products.

In college, I learned about vegetarianism in a lesson on fad diets. At that time, in the early 1980s, a blood cholesterol level of 300 mg/dl was considered normal, and patients in the coronary care unit in the hospital got bacon and eggs and white toast for breakfast.

My grandmother worried that I wouldn't get enough iron if I didn't eat red meat. She thought that my slender body wasn't "healthy" enough in size as compared to her old-world, European standards. For baby boomers like me, this was the environment for vegetarians in North America 30 years ago.

Everything is different now.

In the last 20 years, the American Dietetic Association — long the conservative holdout on such matters — went from cautious at first, to later tentative at best, to now clearly stating in its position papers that vegetarian diets confer health advantages. U.S. government dietary recommendations now explicitly acknowledge the vegetarian alternative and advise all Americans to make fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes the foundation of a healthy diet. It's as close as the government can come to a stamp of approval for a plant-based diet as it balances science with the economic interests of the powerful meat and dairy industries.

As a practicing nutritionist and vegetarian, I've observed these changes taking place over decades. The scientific rationale for eating a plant-based diet is well-documented. The advantages for everyone and everything on our planet are compelling. The next task is helping people everywhere make the transition to an eating style that, at this time, is still outside the cultural norm in many countries. Accomplishing this requires

education and the political will to initiate and enforce policies to create an environment that makes it easier for you and me to sustain lifestyles that support health.

Living vegetarian is an excellent way to meet today's dietary recommendations for good health. This book is for everyone who wants to understand the future of preventive nutrition and get a head start on making the switch.

About This Book

This book is for vegetarians and prospective vegetarians, too — for anyone curious about what a vegan is, for those who still have questions about where vegetarians get their protein, for parents who are wringing their hands because Junior has “gone vegetarian,” and for Junior to give to Mom and Dad so that they won't worry.

This book is for vegetarians and nonvegetarians alike. Whether you want to control or prevent diseases such as diabetes and coronary artery disease, manage your weight, save money, or help keep the planet healthy and the animals happy, this book has what you need. That's because the secret to living well is eating well, and to eat well, you need to make plant foods the foundation of your diet.

It's the simple truth.

Don't feel you need to read the chapters in this book in order or read the book from cover to cover. It's designed to make sense and be helpful whether you surf it or read it in its entirety. Throughout the text, you'll find cross-