

ALL
AMERICAN
VEGAN



JENNIFER & NATHAN WINOGRA



ALL AMERICAN VEGAN **Veganism for the Rest of Us**

Jennifer and Nathan Winograd

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First Edition

Cover and original interior illustrations:
Kirk Waterman, watermancreations.com

All other interior illustrations:
iStockphoto.com

Cover design:
Judith Arisman, arismandesign.com

Interior design:
Almaden Books, almadenbooks.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011900332
ISBN: 9780979074332

Printed in the United States of America on recycled paper.



To our great-grandchildren.
May you inherit the world of which we only dream.

v e g a n

A vegan [vee-gun] diet is one free of all animal ingredients, including meat, fish, eggs, dairy, and honey. In other words, a vegan can eat any food not made from animals or containing animal ingredients.

ALL AMERICAN VEGAN



A Love Story 8



One Week Menu Planner 60



The Art of Vegan Substitution 22



A Vegan Thanksgiving 150



Recipes

Menu 66

Breakfast 69

Lunch and Dinner 83

Sides 101

Desserts 127

Important Moments in Vegan History 52



About the Authors 189

Index 190

Let Them Eat Cake 160



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A Love Story

Say the words “animal rights activist” to most people today, and they will conjure up an image of a person protesting, carrying signs, chanting slogans, or throwing paint. We’ve become a stereotype, and an angry one at that. But who are we really? And what are we so mad about?

Most people who describe themselves as “animal rights activists” also describe themselves as “animal lovers.” For such people, becoming acquainted with the scope and magnitude of animal suffering and killing in our culture can be a shock. With most of it hidden from sight and cloaked in euphemisms, it is heartbreaking to become fully aware of how poorly humanity actually treats its fellow earthlings, killing billions of them every year for food, clothing, entertainment, vivisection, and even in our nation’s animal “shelters.” To love animals and suddenly find evidence of their abuse everywhere you turn—from what you eat to the shoes you wear, from the toothpaste you brush your teeth with to the pillow you lay your head on at night—makes it difficult to have faith in your fellow humans. The sheer magnitude of the abuse and killing is astonishing and just knowing about it can lead to feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and, not surprisingly, anger.

The resulting estrangement from our culture is often exacerbated by the lifestyle changes a respect for animals demands. Being an animal rights activist requires personal sacrifice, a reevaluation of daily choices most people take for granted. Adopting new values and changing what you eat, wear, and consider “entertainment” can strain your relationships with family, friends, and coworkers. And it can shape the way you view the world, yourself, and everyone in it.

Both of us began working in the animal rights movement over twenty years ago, and for many years thereafter we struggled with these emotions. While trying to make the world a better place for animals was gratifying, being immersed in jobs designed to combat animal abuse meant that we were also reminded of it constantly. We became bitter, believing that most people didn’t care about animals or their suffering. Our indignation was fueled by the daily doses of bad news we received. After all, we worked at the very agencies people called whenever something bad happened to an animal.

Living in the trenches, we became myopic. We focused primarily on the bad things people did to animals, and we became blind to the good. Most regrettably, we lost the ability to perceive how most people really feel about



22-year-old Jennifer. She was mad as hell, and not going to take it anymore.

animals, and with that, an accurate sense of the animal rights movement’s potential for success.

Then something happened that changed us, and has—as you will see—influenced the content of this cookbook. It started when we began to primarily devote our advocacy efforts to the No Kill movement, a field of animal rights that seeks to end the systematic killing of companion animals in our nation’s pounds and humane societies. Through this work, we regularly encountered people who challenged our beliefs and perceptions. Over time these experiences eroded our prejudices and helped us see a more positive, hopeful, and, we now believe, accurate measure of humanity. Optimism replaced despair, not just about our fellow humans but about the great potential that *already exists* for building a more humane world for animals.

To explain exactly how this happened, we have to introduce this cookbook in a most unusual way: with a love story. It is not a story about a romance, a friendship between two people, or how one human feels about another. It is about how 100 million individuals of one species—humans—feel about 165 million individuals from others. But it is a love story nonetheless. And it began in San Francisco over thirty years ago.

Lessons From the No Kill Movement

For most of its 140-year history, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in San Francisco killed tens of thousands of animals every year. By the late 1970s, over 20,000 dogs and cats were being im-

pounded annually, the vast majority of whom were put to death. Tragically, at that time, the San Francisco SPCA was typical of most “shelters” in the country in terms of both the appalling number of animals they killed and the excuses they offered for doing so. Leadership at the organization blamed the public, saying the problem stemmed from there being too many animals and not enough homes for them. They asserted that people were irresponsible—indeed, there was an epidemic of uncaring—which made killing the only option for most animals entering the “shelter.” This mentality—and the brutal repercussions for the animals—defined the San Francisco SPCA throughout its history, until new leadership from outside the animal sheltering field took over in the late 1970s.

From the beginning, this new leadership was different. Optimistic and visionary, they did not believe that killing animals was inevitable. They also did not believe that the public was to blame for the killing. In total opposition to the conventional wisdom of the animal shelter industry and the animal protection movement, the new team believed that most people *did* care about dogs and cats and that if the SPCA harnessed their compassion, it could save rather than kill the animals entering the shelter.

And so they began to innovate, to develop new and revolutionary programs, many of them dependent on the goodwill and support of the citizens of San Francisco. These included comprehensive programs to maximize adoptions, provide alternatives to killing for unsocialized cats, offer low-cost neutering, and create volunteer opportunities. Members of the public walked



dogs, socialized cats, staffed offsite adoption venues, and cared for sick, injured, unweaned, and traumatized animals who needed extra TLC before they were ready for adoption. In short, the SPCA asked the people in the community, the very people their predecessors had blamed for the killing, to help save the lives of animals. And they did.

The results were nothing short of astounding. Cat deaths plummeted by over 70%, kitten deaths by over 80%, and dog deaths by over 65%. Of greater national significance, what the nation's largest animal protection organizations and virtually every "shelter" in the United States said was impossible—ending the killing of all healthy dogs and cats—became a reality for the fourth-largest city in the country's most populous state.

In the late 1990s, Nathan was working in a variety of leadership positions at the San Francisco SPCA, culminating in Director of Operations. Tragically, a new president began to dismantle the nuts-and-bolts programs that made No Kill possible. The organization abandoned its former goal of saving all the animals in San Francisco who could possibly be saved, including those suffering from treatable conditions. Having witnessed firsthand the incredible lifesaving made possible by simply changing the way a shelter operated, we believed in the model that the San Francisco SPCA had created. And we dedicated ourselves to proving that this innovative method held the key to ending the systematic killing of the millions of dogs, cats, and other animals entering our nation's pounds every year.

In order to do this, we wanted to disprove the many criticisms leveled against the San Francisco SPCA by those who felt threatened by its tremendous success, starting with the primary excuse they offered: lifesaving may have proved possible in an affluent urban area with a highly educated population such as San Francisco, but it could not be replicated in rural communities where, we were told, people are poor and have antiquated views of animals. We wanted to prove that what mattered was not where the shelter was located, but *who* was running it and how dedicated that person was to harnessing the public's compassion through programs and services, pioneered in San Francisco, that made a life-and-death difference for animals.

What the nation's largest animal protection organizations and virtually every "shelter" in the United States said was impossible—ending the killing of all healthy dogs and cats entering a city's shelters—became a reality for the fourth largest city in the country's most populous state.

After fighting a losing battle to keep the San Francisco SPCA focused on its mission of saving lives, we moved to a rural community in upstate New York, where Nathan took over as the Executive Director of the Tompkins County SPCA, the animal control agency serving all ten towns and municipalities in the county.

Before we arrived, the SPCA in Tompkins County was typical of most shelters in the country: it had a poor public image; it killed a lot of animals; and it blamed the community for doing so. Once there, however, Nathan publicly announced his lifesaving goal and asked the community for help. Just as it was in San Francisco, the response was overwhelming. People from all walks of life volunteered, inspired by the goal. Many people adopted animals. Veterinarians offered their services at reduced rates or free of charge. Business owners offered free products as incentives to adopt. Nathan was not timid about asking for help, and most people were incredibly generous and eager to assist.

The goal of ending the killing of animals in the shelter became a community-wide effort. The people of Tompkins

County opened their hearts, homes, and wallets like never before. And overnight, by harnessing that compassion and changing the way the shelter operated, Tompkins County, New York, became the first No Kill community in U.S. history, saving not only healthy animals but all treatable sick and injured animals as well. It didn't matter whether they were "cute and cuddly" or "old and ugly," blind, deaf, or missing limbs. They were all guaranteed a home, and they all found one.

The most amazing thing was that Nathan didn't have to convince anyone that this was a good idea or a worthy goal. The people of Tompkins County were ready and willing to make it a reality as soon as we got there. They just needed someone to tell them it was possible and to show them how to do it. And the achievement became a source of community pride, with bumper stickers throughout the county proclaiming "The Safest Community for Homeless Animals in the U.S."

We lived in Tompkins County for three years and then returned to California to start the No Kill Advocacy Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to spreading this new model of sheltering—what has since become known as the No Kill Equation—to shelters



And the conclusion became inescapable: the animal protection movement had gotten it wrong. Our experience in Tompkins County proved that the story of the eight million animals entering “shelters” in this nation does not have to be a tragedy. Shelters *can* respond humanely and compassionately

nationwide. And it *is* spreading, to every part of the country.* In some communities, shelter leadership has led the charge. In others, grassroots activists have forced the replacement of regressive leadership, hostile to their calls for reform, with new leaders who are passionate about No Kill and dedicated to making it a reality. But everywhere it is succeeding, it is succeeding because people in these communities have come forward to help. Why? Because Americans truly *love* dogs and cats.

As you might imagine, these positive experiences made us question our long-held assumption that we were in the minority regarding our concern for animals. We realized, thankfully, that we weren’t so unique after all. And once the blinders were off, we saw evidence of the American public’s love of dogs and cats everywhere we looked:

- The people who cross our paths on their morning dog walks;
- The stories, care, and embraces at our veterinarian’s office (the waiting rooms never devoid of people, the faces of scared people wondering what is wrong with their animal companions, and the tears as they emerge from the exam room after saying good-bye for the last time);
- The bestselling books about animals that are written in ever increasing numbers because they touch people very deeply and very personally;
- The widespread popularity of movies about animals;
- The increase in specialty stores and services for animal companions;
- The steady increase in spending on our animals, even as other economic sectors may decline; and,
- The millions of dollars we give annually to humane societies and animal protection groups, making animal causes the fastest-growing segment in American philanthropy.

without resorting to killing. These shelters can be temporary way stations for animals, providing good care and plenty of comfort until they find loving homes. We also came to realize that the old excuse of rampant human uncaring and irresponsibility toward dogs and cats was simply not true. Because in order to make that case, one had to ignore the bigger, more optimistic picture of the 165 million animals in homes across the country cared for by people who go to great lengths to ensure their happiness and well-being. In short, we learned that there was enough love and compassion for animals in every community to overcome the irresponsibility of the few. And our hearts swelled.

But still we wondered: what about other animals? We were surrounded by the overwhelming evidence of people’s love of dogs and cats, the animals many people regard as cherished family members, but how do they feel about animals with whom they do not have a personal relationship or bond? And an issue very dear to our hearts and why we have both been vegan for the last 20 years, *how do they feel about animals raised to be eaten?*

In our early animal rights days both of us would have scoffed at such a question. The question, we would have asserted, was an oxymoron given the fact that people were eating animals. “I like pigs” and “I like to eat pigs” are mutually exclusive propositions, are they not? We once thought so, but there are several reasons why the answer to that question is not so straight-forward for us anymore.

Unfortunately, how people *feel* about issues and what people *do* about them aren’t always in sync, especially when aligning the two is inconvenient. Most Americans say they care about the environment, and maybe they do, but they are not riding their bicycles to work or driving electric cars. As a society we do not always make it easy to align beliefs with actions, and this cer-

*There are now No Kill communities all over the United States: in urban and rural areas, in the North and South, in the Western, Midwest, and Eastern parts of the country, and in both conservative and liberal states. It is also succeeding internationally too, as communities abroad embrace the No Kill Equation.

tainly could not be truer in food choices, as we discuss more fully in a subsequent chapter.

Second, there was the dramatic result of the November 4, 2008 election. Yes, we elected the first non-white President in our nation's history, but it was the passage of a proposition in California that made it historic for our purposes. That election not only answered the question, *how do people feel about animals raised to be eaten?* It also changed our understanding of what the animal rights movement can achieve on behalf of animals, how quickly we can effect change, and, perhaps most important of all, how we can most effectively do so at this time in history.

The Animal Movement's Own Bradley Effect*

Before 2008's historic election, even with candidate Barack Obama leading in the polls, Democrats secretly (and not so secretly) worried about what "white America" would do in the privacy of the polling booth. What they did is no longer a mystery.

New York Times columnist Frank Rich noted that "almost every assumption about America that was taken as a given by our political culture on [election] morning was proved wrong by [election] night." According to Rich,

The most conspicuous clichés to fall, of course, were the twin suppositions that a decisive number of white Americans wouldn't vote for a black presidential candidate—and that they were lying to pollsters about their rampant racism. But the polls were accurate. There was no "Bradley Effect."

In California, an equally revealing vote on November 4, 2008 shattered another myth we hold about the public. The animal movement has been living with its own "Bradley Effect," the notion that Americans don't really care about animals. Thanks to Californians' response to Proposition 2, that notion has also been proven wrong.

Proposition 2 makes it illegal for animals (mostly chickens, pigs, and baby cows) on farms to be confined "in a manner that prevents such animal from: (a) Lying down, standing up, and fully extending his or her limbs; and (b) Turning around freely." It is a simple law but its reach is

extensive, affecting about 90% of chicken farms in the country's largest agricultural state.

Within the animal movement itself this legislation was somewhat controversial. Some said that such laws would actually harm rather than help animals by creating the illusion of "happy" eggs and meat, thereby making the choice to consume such products easier for people who might otherwise feel guilty about doing so. On the other side were activists who argued that it was unrealistic to place the bar so high—that so long as people eat eggs and meat, we should work to reform the most deplorable practices associated with their production so that we could lessen the animals' suffering.

It's an important debate, and one we address at the end of this book, but at the moment we want to share what this initiative—and its resulting success—taught us. In spite of internal debate about these issues within the animal movement, word of this controversy did not



*Wikipedia defines the "Bradley Effect" as "a theory proposed to explain observed discrepancies between voter opinion polls and election outcomes in some U.S. government elections where a white candidate and a non-white candidate run against each other... [T]he theory proposes that some voters tend to tell pollsters that they are undecided or likely to vote for a black candidate, and yet, on election day, vote for his white opponent. It was named after Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, an African-American who lost the 1982 California governor's race despite being ahead in voter polls going into the elections."



reach the general public. After seeing photographs of hens crammed together into spaces the size of a desk drawer and being asked to outlaw the practice, the public widely regarded Proposition 2 as pro-animal legislation. Its level of support can therefore be considered as a good indication of where people come down on the issue of protecting animals in general—even animals they unfortunately regard as “food.”

In other words, Proposition 2 is a bellwether of just how enormous the political capital of animals has become. The vote to outlaw intensive confinement for pigs, chickens, and other animals had as its focus the protection of animals from some of the worst abuses of the factory-farming system. But the measure’s resounding success at the polls had a far greater significance for *all* animals, because by all indications, Proposition 2 should have been defeated.

The opposition to Proposition 2, which outspent proponents by a three-to-one margin, argued that its passage would make California economically uncompetitive, would drive people out of business (or out of the

state), and would increase the cost of eggs and other “groceries.” They also argued that it would make “food” less safe.

In addition to industry groups, which spent nine million dollars in their campaign, most newspapers around the state also opposed the measure. The *San Francisco Chronicle*, one of the state’s most liberal newspapers, urged readers to vote against Proposition 2, parroting industry arguments about its economic impact.

Moreover, political heavyweights in California and beyond came out in opposition, including the California Farm Bureau, California Small Business Association, and the Mexican American Political Association. Even the U.S. Department of Agriculture weighed in, spending taxpayer money on a campaign to defeat the legislation until a court ordered it to stop, finding that the agency’s actions were an illegal use of its regulatory power.

And in an argument reeking of racism, some opponents went so far as to claim that ratification of Proposition 2 would result in an influx of cheap, unhealthy, and possibly tainted eggs from Mexico—an onslaught of “undesirable” egg immigration from South of the border.

With polls showing that the economy and particularly loss of jobs was the foremost concern during that election on a wide range of issues, including the selection of our next President, and with the mainstream press arguing that Proposition 2 would result in loss of jobs and higher prices, conventional wisdom made the prospects for the initiative’s approval appear grim. Why would voters risk these results in an economy already in a downward spiral to give animals a little more room on a factory farm?

Unfortunately, how people feel about issues and what people do about them aren’t always in sync, especially when aligning the two is inconvenient.

But Proposition 2 passed. And it didn’t *barely* pass. It passed by one of the widest margins of any proposition on the ballot, right up there with providing housing assistance to veterans. Roughly 80% of all counties in California approved the measure. It was nothing short of a landslide.

On the eve of November 4, 2008, we were unsure as to Proposition 2’s prospects. The next day, we were dumbstruck by its resounding success. What we thought would be incredibly controversial turned out to be a “no-brainer” for most Californians. Regarding the idea of ending some of the most egregious cruelties of factory farming, the general public was well within its

comfort zone. *How long had it been like this?* we wondered. *And what else might the animal rights movement accomplish?*

In fact, during the same election Massachusetts voters ended greyhound racing. In 2007 Oregon voters followed Florida's lead and banned gestation crates for pigs. And in 2006 Arizona voters passed a farm-animal protection statute banning veal crates, while Michigan voters defeated a measure to expand hunting. All of these victories proved the accuracy of polling which show that the vast majority of Americans think we should have strong laws to protect animals from abuse and that 96%—almost every single person—believe animals should receive some protection by law. Surveys also show that nine out of ten people believe we have a moral obligation to protect animals and over half have changed their lifestyle in some way to protect animals and the environment.

The conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that Americans don't just care about dogs and cats; they even care about animals with whom they do not have personal relationships. Most people are already concerned about animal welfare. Most people do not want animals to suffer. In short, despite those things that separate us as Americans, people from all walks of life want to build a better world for animals.

Of course, most Americans are not vegan. It is equally true that while Proposition 2 may have limited some of the cruelty, it did not abolish it or the killing, which makes an animal-based diet unacceptable. Although no ethical justification can excuse this complicity, we have struggled to understand the cause of this apparent contradiction, in order to grasp how we can most effectively overcome it, and thus bring peo-

ple's actions which affect animals more in line with how they actually feel about them.

After Proposition 2 passed we no longer regarded the overwhelming abundance of animal-based foods in our culture as clear evidence that people don't care about animals and that changing their minds, hearts, and diets would be a nearly impossible effort. If we were going to succeed, we had to approach the situation in a new way. But how? We found our answer one day when a series of serendipitous events made us suddenly able to read the writing on the wall, which in this case was actually scribbled on a backpack.

Lessons from a Tween Girl's Backpack

Like all seasoned vegans, we planned ahead when we took our kids to the amusement park. Having never been there, we weren't sure what vegan options to expect, so we packed a bag of food to take with us: sandwiches, cookies, and some fruit. But the best-laid plans...



At the entrance gate, we were informed that we couldn't bring in food and had to enter empty-handed. When we began to get hungry a few hours later, we scanned the menu boards of various snack bars. What we found was what you would expect at such a place: mostly pizza and fried food made from animals. After half an hour of searching for vegan options, we settled on a bag of potato chips and a banana for each of us, and walked to a nearby picnic table to eat our meager lunch. That's when we saw it and another piece of the puzzle fell into place.

On the ground next to our chairs was the

If everyone who ever tried being vegan succeeded, our numbers would increase dramatically. How can we make that happen?



backpack belonging to a young girl seated near us, a backpack covered with writing and doodles intended to proclaim her burgeoning identity. Along with the scribbled names of bands and various celebrities, written in big, black letters was the word VEGAN, crossed out and replaced with the word VEGETARIAN. Here, no doubt, was a member of that blessed group that has always been the demographic most likely to embrace veganism—adolescent girls. Motivated by a love of animals, a growing appreciation of the larger world, and a desire for independence typical of her age, she had no doubt become aware of the suffering inherent in an animal-based diet and boldly proclaimed to her friends and family her intent to be vegan. And then, tragically, she

experienced one too many times situations analogous to our frustrating walk around the amusement park looking for something vegan to eat, and her determination apparently eroded. How many good intentions have gone awry because it wasn't as easy as it should have been for well-intentioned people to make ethical choices?

Every vegan can attest that there are three general responses when you first tell someone you are vegan. The first question concerns where you get your protein. The second is, "What about plants?"* The third, and most popular, is the confession that he or she once tried being vegan too but had to give it up for "health" reasons. This last response is paradoxical: read any book on the negative effects of an animal-based diet and you'll see it is akin to admitting that you had to start smoking again for your health. The fact that it is a common retort, however, actually bodes well for veganism. It shows how many people have made the calculation that being vegan would be a good idea. And it shows that people want to identify themselves with veganism. Being vegan is cool! But when confronted with someone who has succeeded, many people who have tried veganism and given up on it feel they need to offer a "defensible" reason or "political cover" for why they failed. For every vegetarian, there are three failed vegetarians. For vegans, the numbers who have fallen off the wagon is even more pronounced. The conclusion? We are a nation teeming with wanna-be vegans. So why aren't there more of us?

Of course, all the statistics regarding vegetarians and vegans are encouraging: our numbers *are* increasing every year. But if everyone who ever thought being vegan was a good idea, if everyone who ever tried being vegan actually succeeded, our numbers would increase dramatically. How can we make that happen?

A Recipe for Success

These days, it is totally feasible to be vegan—especially after you have taken the time to learn where to shop, what to shop for, how to substitute vegan for non-vegan ingredients when cooking, and when traveling or dining out, how to plan ahead. Mission: *totally* possible. But, truth be told, it is not always convenient. More than any other single factor, that simple fact accounts for why there are not more vegans. Nonetheless, the results of the No Kill movement, Proposition 2, and the

*Yes, *what about plants?* Because most crops are grown to feed animals raised for human consumption, following a vegan diet reduces the number of plants killed significantly. A vegan diet is therefore not only the most animal-friendly but also the most plant-friendly.

lessons from a tween girl's backpack suggest that the possibility of widespread veganism is great.

While in the past we would have written off the average person's professed concern for animals as disingenuous in light of the paradox "I love animals, but I also eat animals," we now recognize the importance of understanding what causes this unlikely juxtaposition, especially the roles played by inconvenience, custom, and how society has sanitized the brutal reality behind our "food" choices. For while most people's definition of what "loving" animals means may be radically different from that of most animal rights activists, there is much genuine concern for animals already there for us to take advantage of. And an accurate sense of the public's concern for animals is a barometer by which we should be measuring our potential for success and, at this time in history, how high we should be reaching on their behalf.

When asked about their vote in support of Proposition 2, most people claimed that they were unaware of the cruelties associated with factory farming. Once they were educated, most people were horrified to learn how animals are treated in these facilities and were eager and willing to bring such practices to an end. When the animal protection movement makes it easy for people to make choices that help animals, the public is likely to embrace them. Yes, some people may be uncaring, but most are concerned about animals and will support efforts to improve their lives. In short, make it easy for people to do the right thing, and they will.

Most people eat animals because they have always eaten animals. It is everywhere in our culture—in virtually every dish in every restaurant, in virtually every product in every supermarket, in virtually every recipe in every cookbook. Most people eat animals not because they have made a conscious decision to do so after having carefully weighed their options, but because they accepted it as necessary and inevitable long before they were old enough to give it much thought or prevent it from becoming an entrenched habit. According to evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, small children accept without question what adults in their lives tell them or model as appropriate behavior. It is a survival mechanism born of evolution.

Hence, in our culture, eating animals is just something you do. The practice is so ingrained that it is essentially invisible. Most people cannot conceive of what there is to eat if they don't consume animals and their products. And in most contexts, if they were to look around

Some people may be uncaring, but most people are concerned about animals and will support efforts to improve their lives. Make it easy for people to do the right thing, and they will.

for an answer beyond fruits and vegetables, other options wouldn't be immediately obvious. Thus the statement every vegan hears from incredulous relatives: *You must eat a lot of vegetables.* And when the answer is "no" (as is typical in the U.S. for both vegans and non-vegans), they follow-up with the inevitable question: *Just what do you eat then?*

And it is not just Great Aunt Inez in rural Illinois who is confused by the vegan diet. Even world-renowned chefs are. When the chef at San Francisco's Cliff House tries his hand at a vegetarian offering, he's lost, as the *San Francisco Chronicle's* restaurant critic discovered on a recent visit:

The one dish that needs to be rethought is the vegetarian blue plate: a curried cauliflower custard that has the texture of pot de crème and an overwhelming roasted garlic flavor; a turmeric roasted half fennel bulb that needed brighter seasoning; and two roasted garnet yams... None of the flavors went together, and after a few bites my stomach flip-flopped and said stop.

Combine the fact that eating animals is deeply ingrained and pervasive in our culture, most people are removed from the sheer magnitude of suffering involved in the production of an animal-based diet and are rarely made to consider it, people are confused about how to eat vegan, and until recently there was a lack of appealing alternatives, and not only do you have an answer for the apparent contradiction, "I love animals but I eat animals," but you also have a solution.

We Hold These Truths To Be Self-Evident

Humans are capable of great change and great compassion. In just a few generations we ended monarchies and replaced them with democracies. In a short time historically, we went from the Pony Express to the Internet, and from a slave-based society to one that elected an African-American as our President. We outlawed child labor as well as segregation, we prohibited gender discrimination and are on the verge of granting marriage equality to all people regardless of sexual orientation. Once the path to a more compassionate future

was cleared for them, most people who did not have a vested interest in the status quo pursued it willingly, because they saw it as better, and that kinder, more enlightened view became the new norm.

We spend a lot of time in the animal rights movement trying to convince people to philosophically embrace veganism and animal rights. It is often the backbone of our activism. That's because, ultimately, eating animals is wrong, and the harm caused by the practice is so great that that fact alone *should* be enough motivation for everyone to embrace a more ethical diet. But, unfortunately, while there are plenty of people who would agree with the message that harming animals is wrong, becoming vegan requires adjustments that many people find challenging in our culture, dominated as it is by animal-based foods. As a result, too many people who try being vegan fall off the wagon. We may win their hearts, but taking on their stomachs is a much more difficult proposition. The mind is willing, but the flesh is weak.

To win over aspiring vegans and vegetarians, we need to lessen the temptation to revert to old ways by making sure there is a tasty, readily-available vegan alternative to every meat, egg, and dairy-based food there is. We need to make vegan foods as accessible as non-vegan foods. In short, we need to promote and expand vegan convenience foods.

Doing so will foster positive change in significant ways. It will help aspiring vegans achieve veganism, which in turn will result in more converts. As anyone who has ever turned vegan and then watched his or her friends and family members follow suit knows, veganism is contagious. The animal rights movement grows as one vegan inspires others and converts them to the cause, and then these, in turn, do the same.

In addition, by creating a culture in which tasty vegan options are abundant, we can have a positive influence on the diets of people who have never considered going vegan. Over time such exposure will open minds and erode dietary prejudices. Ultimately, people won't miss or fight for what they don't feel they need, and our struggle to ensure animals' rights will be that much easier to accomplish. Quite simply, we can more effectively persuade people to become vegan if vegan food



Exposure bred familiarity, neutralizing suspicion of the unfamiliar and with it, resistance.

becomes as familiar, widespread, and appealing as the competition. That goal, as much as philosophically promoting the rights of animals, should be a primary objective of the animal rights movement.

It's all about exposure.

All Hail The Soy Latte

If you Google the words "soymilk" and "sales" together, you will be directed to many different articles discussing the tremendous growth of the soymilk industry over the last decade. Indeed, the sale of soymilk, and now other non-dairy milks such as those made from nuts, rice, and oats, is growing at an astounding rate. One website that tracks trends in the natural foods market notes that "Sales of refrigerated soymilk continue to accelerate, and industry experts see nothing that will impede the rapid growth."

Various suggestions have been offered as to why in the mid-1990s soymilk sales shot through the roof. Among them are greater environmental consciousness, increased diagnoses of lactose intolerance, the FDA's announcement that soy protein lowers cholesterol, and companies' shift to packaging soymilk in containers that required refrigeration in the dairy case, thereby increasing the product's visibility to consumers. Being longtime soymilk drinkers ourselves, however, we have an altogether different explanation for why 15 years ago we could find soymilk only at the local natural food store whereas now it is everywhere you look. One word: Starbucks.

When we first started living together a couple of decades ago, one of our favorite rituals was a walk downtown to a local café to enjoy what at that time was a rare vegan luxury—a latte made with soymilk. Big deal, you say? Ha! We lived in Marin County, the community just north of San Francisco, a place teeming with cafés, but one and only one offered soymilk.

Imagine, then, our surprise when we found another café that carried soymilk. On a trip to visit relatives in a small town in rural Illinois, where vegan food was so scarce we had to bring our meals packed in our suitcases, we nearly dropped dead from shock when we popped inside a brand-new Starbucks to get a mere cup of black coffee and left with sweet, steaming soy lattes. A similar experience occurred at another Starbucks just a few months later in Bakersfield, California, not exactly a vegan Mecca. But Starbucks are everywhere, which meant that soymilk suddenly was too.

Before Starbucks began carrying soymilk, only hippies, vegans, and Americans of Asian descent ever drank the stuff. And then a curious

thing happened. Customers patiently waiting for the barista to prepare their drink overheard the person at the counter ordering a latte with soymilk. They glimpsed the frothy concoction handed over to the intrepid soul who ordered it and it piqued their curiosity.

The next time they visited Starbucks, they tried soymilk and guess what? They loved it! And they told their friends, and so on and so on and so on.

Pretty soon it wasn't just Starbucks that offered soymilk but every other café as well, because the question "Do you have soymilk?" became ubiquitous. We now live in a nation where half of all people have tried soymilk. It is widely available at grocery stores and cafés throughout the country.

Why? Exposure bred familiarity, neutralizing suspicion of the unfamiliar and with it, resistance. As a result, Americans quickly and enthusiastically developed a taste for what had so recently been either unheard of or regarded as the most unappetizing of drinks—a milk-like liquid made from beans.

Quite simply, we can more effectively persuade people to be vegan if vegan food becomes as familiar, widespread, and appealing as the competition.



There is no end to the amazing things the animal rights movement could be doing right now to make it easier for people to make humane choices. The animal rights movement should be working directly with restaurants, supermarkets, and food companies to offer all-vegan analogs of the typical American diet. And that brings us to the philosophy that underlies this book.

All American Vegan

We wanted to create a cookbook that made veganism as easy as possible for the average American—one that met most people on their own terms by appealing to the modern American palate and by recognizing that most Americans today prepare their meals using prepackaged convenience foods. We wanted to make veganism familiar by simply ve-

ganizing the conventional American diet using vegan alternatives to the most popular American foods such as pizza, pancakes, hamburgers, and ice cream.

Ready-made vegan foods are coming of age. There are vegan products right now that were unthinkable just a few short years ago. There are, for example, vegan cheeses that look like dairy-based cheese, that melt like dairy-based cheese, and that taste like dairy-based cheese—without the cruelty, hormones, and saturated fats. And thank goodness. There is a strange dichotomy relating to food in contemporary American culture. People are more obsessed with cooking than ever before. Cooking shows are among the most popular on television; cooking websites are experiencing unparalleled traffic; food-related books top the bestseller lists. In fact, since 2002 sales of cookbooks in the U.S. have increased a whopping 30%. At the same time, ironically, the rate at which Americans cook from scratch is at an all-time low. Only 58% of people who cook at home on any given night do so from “scratch,” as compared to 72% in the 1980s.

“Homemade dinners are dropping like a lead balloon,” says an industry watcher who tracked the eating habits of 5,000 Americans over the course of a year. Cooking, it seems, has become recreational, something people do for fun—when the time to cook and the desire to do so coalesce—rather than a necessity. As a result, most people rely heavily on ready-made convenience foods when making

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dinner, so that even the definition of what constitutes “cooking” has changed. Making a meal by boiling water for pasta and heating jarred spaghetti sauce is now regarded as “cooking from scratch.” And is it any wonder? It’s a cliché but bears repeating: Americans lead busy, hectic lives. In many American families both parents work, and time for cooking is limited, so food that can be made quickly and conveniently is popular.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, convenience foods now make up the bulk of the American diet, with the consumption of prepackaged foods increasing as much as 114% in some categories over the last two decades. Because that is how most Americans today eat, this cookbook is realistic and practical, introducing an abundance of ready-made vegan foods that imitate the meat, dairy, and egg-based staples of the American diet.

We also wanted to produce a cookbook that did not make veganism seem harder or less appealing than it actually is by confusing the “health” food

movement with the movement to promote veganism. Too often veganism gets tangled up with “health” food, which in many cases means the introduction of unfamiliar dishes that alienate rather than excite aspiring vegans who have grown up on hamburgers and pizza. Because vegan foods by definition do not contain cholesterol and are generally lower in saturated fat, a balanced vegan diet is healthier than one based on meat, milk, and eggs. In fact, vegans have a reduced chance of developing lifestyle disease states, such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.



The health aspects of veganism are undeniable and a wonderful selling point.

Nonetheless, to realize these benefits does not have to mean eating traditional “health” foods. In this cookbook we intentionally avoided telling aspiring vegans that they have to eat mostly vegetables, whole-grain bread, brown rice, or unfamiliar “healthy” foods like hemp kernels or adzuki beans. We wanted to appeal to Middle America, not just Beaujolais-sipping coastal liberals who would try exotic-sounding grains the Ancients used to eat even if we didn’t tell them to. Quinoa? Spelt? Kamut? *No thanks!* But tell most Americans how to make a vegan Jello salad or “tuna” melt, and now you’re talking!

To this end, our cookbook meets most Americans—you, the reader—where you already are. You love animals and are willing to embrace actions that spare them harm. You don't have three hours every night to cook. And you certainly do not believe that adopting cauliflower as a staple is a sustainable lifestyle change. We get it. Our goal is to make it easy for you to adopt a more humane diet. We don't want to replace your hamburgers with mung beans over a bed of alfalfa sprouts. We want to replace your hamburgers with hamburgers. To do that, we have veganized the American diet. The recipes will look familiar, will sound familiar, and for the most part will not require much preparation. Most importantly, they will be delicious. We believe that approaching dietary change this way will inspire you, and more people like you to become vegan and thus help build a better world and a brighter future for our animal friends.

Happy humane eating!





The Art of Vegan Substitution

The eating habits of Americans are hot topics these days. With a move to regulate high-fructose corn syrup, partially hydrogenated oils, and sodium content as well as a growing obesity epidemic, there is no end to the “solutions” being offered to reform and improve how Americans eat. But not all solutions are created equal, and some are downright counterproductive.

Not long ago we watched a reality TV show in which a supposed “health” expert set out to reform the unhealthy habits of a typical American family. In addition to putting the family on a strict exercise regimen, she threw out the entire contents of their pantry and refrigerator. Out went the liters of soda. Out went the bags of potato chips. Out went the processed cheese spread, the cupcakes, and the lunch meats. Out went the take-out menus and “free delivery” flyers. She then gave the family a grocery list and sent them to the supermarket. As the mother entered the store’s produce section, she turned to her children and said, “Kids, help me find the avocados. I think they’re green, but I’ve never seen one.”

Clearly here was a family with a diet in need of reform. But with a palate accustomed to traditional American fare—heavy on protein, salt, and sugar and light on plant-based foods—we wondered how the “expert” would set out to accomplish this formidable task. The answer was both tragic and hilarious.

Their first cooking lesson was a dish of tofu with shredded vegetables. And not just any tofu, mind you, but *silken* tofu. Now, silken tofu has its place. In vegan cooking, its silky texture and neutral flavor mean that it is often blended with other ingredients as a thickener or to make a dish creamier without imparting a strong flavor. But as for serving it as a main dish, especially to a family on red alert about so-called “healthy” food, it was not a wise choice. Because as useful as it may be, we must concede that silken tofu is not visually appealing. It’s gelatinous and, quite frankly, looks a little slimy. If you fry it, it wiggles and jiggles and slowly falls to pieces. So as this dish of tofu and shredded vegetables was flipped repeatedly in the pan, the mixture began to clump together into a giant mass to which, inexplicably, no spices or flavorings were added.



Our increasing anxiety while watching the show was mirrored in the troubled eyes of the adolescent boy observing his mother cook the dish—a boy raised on hamburgers, hot dogs, and pizza who had cried when a bag of unopened chips was dumped into the trash. Scrutinizing the un-

familiar food his mother was preparing, he was no doubt conjuring in his mind the bleak and forbidding future of culinary deprivation that awaited him. When the dish was finally put before him and he was ordered to eat it despite his vehement protest, he took a bite, choked it down, gagged, and promptly regurgitated the food back out onto his plate.

Of course, it made for great television to watch a typical American kid choke down that much-maligned whipping boy of the health-food world—tofu. You couldn't help but laugh in spite of your pity. At the same time, we lamented what could have been. It was clear that the "expert" giving advice had not really done her homework. She equated healthy eating and vegetarianism with disgusting, unfamiliar food and Spartan deprivation. The alternatives that she offered were not only unpalatable, but also inedible, and therefore not helpful to the goal of teaching the family to make smart food choices in a way that would be sustainable. What a missed opportunity to educate not only the family, but the thousands of viewers about the amazing variety of vegan alternatives currently available to replace the worst health offenders in the American diet.

Had we been given the opportunity, we would have approached changing that family's eating habits in a very different way. We would have introduced them to the

wide array of vegan convenience foods now available that can replace the meat, eggs, and dairy products in their diet so that they could continue eating the foods they were accustomed to, but in healthier vegan versions. You can bet that we wouldn't have doomed that family with warmed-over unflavored tofu and vegetables. Instead, we would have fed them veggie burgers served on fluffy buns with grilled onions, ketchup, mustard, and pickles, or chickenless nuggets with a vegan Ranch dipping sauce, a pizza with veggie pepperoni, or even soy dogs with potato salad on the side. Would they have minded the changes? We seriously doubt it. And our cooking lessons would have included advice on how to use vegan substitutes for fat and cholesterol-laden animal products when following traditional recipes so that the change would be undetectable, which is how we have always approached cooking in our own home.

As any parent can tell you, kids are always hungry. Seldom does an hour go by when one of us doesn't hear the words, "I'm hungry," from either our son or daughter, if not both. With two hungry vegan mouths to feed in addition to our own, is it any wonder that an entire cabinet in our kitchen is filled with cookbooks? Dog-eared, soy sauce-stained, batter-encrusted cookbooks line our shelves, but one, more than any other, is our bible, the one we turn to time and again for inspiration and advice. Which is it? You'd never guess.

We believe that the easiest way to become vegan is to make the transition as familiar as possible—to "veganize" your favorite foods so that you can keep on eating them.



After forty years of combined veganism, the one we value most is a 1976 hand-me-down Betty Crocker cookbook. No joke. If you can get past the 1970s-era photographs which somehow manage to make even cupcakes look unappetizing, and the meat-cut diagrams of animals' bodies which inspire in vegans the same horror as slave-ship schematics, the book offers a treasure trove of inspiration. All it takes is a little ingenuity to transform the 1,000 plus recipes into vegan ones. Knowing how to substitute vegan alternatives for animal-based ingredients; in other words, knowing how to veganize Betty Crocker (or Rachel Ray, Emeril Lagasse, or Martha Stewart) frees the American diet from its inherent animal cruelty, replaces unhealthy ingredients with healthier ones, and permits vegans to enjoy the foods we grew up eating.



Making the Switch, American Style

We believe that the easiest way to become vegan is to make the transition as familiar as possible—to “veganize” your favorite foods so that you can keep on eating them. You are more likely to sustain the switch to a vegan diet over the long term if you don’t have to give up the patterns of eating, cooking, and meal planning to which you have become accustomed. And today, more than ever, a vegan can eat what is by and large a conventional American diet, the menu you might find at your local diner, but in a totally animal-free way.

It’s true! You can be vegan and still have pancakes for breakfast, a grilled cheese sandwich or a BLT for lunch, fried “chicken” with mashed potatoes and gravy for dinner, and chocolate cake with ice cream for dessert. Moreover, in spite of the great number of vegan cookbooks that want to introduce you to exotic grains you’ve never heard of with names you can’t pronounce, eating unfamiliar highfalutin’ sounding foods is not necessary in order to be vegan. So don’t be discouraged. This cookbook will keep it simple and familiar. We will show you how to keep on eating like most Americans, minus the harm to animals, the planet, and yourself.

By the same token, if you enjoy whiling away your time in the bulk aisle of your local natural food co-op scooping quinoa, amaranth, and spelt into plastic bags, or if spending five hours a day preparing a dinner that will be eaten in 20 minutes is your idea of time well spent, put down this cookbook immediately, you have beans that need soaking. But if you agree with us and Ronald Reagan that ketchup is a vegetable and that cooking from scratch means opening cans and heating up the contents, then this is the vegan cookbook for you.

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