

**BLACK GIRLS**  
gone **VEGAN!**<sup>®</sup>



# DEDICATION

*"Love is patient, love is kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

I would like to dedicate this book to my five children: Dwight, Leah, Chenale, Rob, and Lana.

You all are the epitome of family and the reason I have always wanted a large family of my own. For me, it was never about the size of my family, but the love and bond that we create as a family. There is not enough space here or enough words that I can use to explain how much I truly love, adore, respect, and appreciate each and every one of you. Of all the blessings I have received, the fact that none of you have strayed away in the wrong direction in life, which we know is easy to do, is one of my most cherished blessings. One thing I instilled in you all is my favorite saying, "Trouble is easy to get into, but hard as hell to get out of!"

We all live by this mantra to make sure we walk in the right direction!

I am so proud of each of your successes as an adult. If I need a reality check or the answer to any question in the world, I have my genius thesaurus, Dwight. If I need a fashion guru to style me in the latest fashions-I have a personal stylist, Leah. If I need a therapy session from a smart and educated beauty-I have a personal teacher, Chenale. If I need a viral snapshot of this HOT BAWDY on the 'Gram-I have a personal photographer, Robert. If I need someone to keep me on track with my healthy lifestyle, exercise with me, and keep our business afloat-I have a personal business partner, Lana.

It truly feels good to know that I can trust and depend on each one of you to support me in all of my endeavors. I have truly been blessed and I am grateful for my blessings. The talent and dreams you each have can move mountains! You all know how to take a risk and if it fails you know how to get back up and try again. Each one of you have made me proud to acknowledge you in the presence of the world.

My Sons. My Daughters. I am so proud of each of you. Being in contact with you all through our group text keeps me motivated to do more. Our conversations inspire me. As the saying goes, laughter is good for the soul and I know from our conversations that my soul is GOOD! I appreciate our holiday get-togethers as we share recipes and have competitive cook-offs with our favorite dishes. Oh, I cannot forget our family trips with Auntie Junie-man are they priceless! I must admit that the way we pray for each other is why we stay together and why we will continue to fulfill God's purpose.

Last and certainly not the least, my grandchildren are my world! The grandchildren you all have blessed my life with make me get up every morning with a smile on my face because their love is unconditional!

You do not have to go far to search for love, because love can be found in your own backyard! In my backyard there is plenty of it! I Love You ALL! ~ Mommy



## FOREWORD by NIECY NASH



BEFORE



AFTER

Bloated. Tired. Unbalanced. Mentally exhausted. Overwhelmed.

I recall my extreme frustration on how to begin, where to begin and who to turn to for assistance. I knew I had reached my limit. A total body wellness journey is what I desperately needed to embark upon.

I remember venting to my photographer friend, Robert Ector. He listened to me and understood my extreme exhaustion from explaining all the things I tried to do to be physically and emotionally fit. Before our conversation ended, he said, "Call my Mom. She can help you."

I was hesitant and a bit skeptical about calling her, because nothing had worked prior. I decided to look her up online in hopes of seeing something different and starting something new.

Let me tell you how this woman made a believer out of me at my first sight! Talk about judging a book by its cover! My goodness! Here was this beautiful, strong, African American woman looking fine as wine! Then I found out her age—she was indeed 60 years old! At that moment, my exact thoughts were, "I. WANT. WHAT. SHE. HAS!"

In my mind, she was the *epitome* of aging gracefully!

Although I was still a bit reluctant, I gave into my fear of doubt and phoned Ms. Ellen. Instantly, I could tell that she was open-minded, informative, patient, and an expertise in physical health. She thoroughly explained to me the importance of Black women and fitness and the various workouts and meal plan programs that they, (including her daughter Lana,) offered at their gym, Gymnastics Fitness in Atlanta, GA.

Because my work schedule is always so demanding, I was excited to learn that one of the programs offered is a 30 day in-person intensive training program---*The Bodi-Guard Program*. With this program, Ms. Ellen would move into my home, go to work with me, grocery shop for me and even prepare my meals for me every day! Yes! She would basically guard my body. Although the concept of that was mind blowing to me, I felt that *The Bodi-Guard Program* was best for me because I knew having an accountability partner would really make me get it together!

Without hesitation, Ms. Ellen packed her bags and flew to Los Angeles to "Snatch Me Back!" For thirty days straight we worked out twice a day AND she prepared all of my meals. Talk about a blessing. Whew! She was indeed the real deal. Each meal she prepared and cooked was delicious, healthy and flavorful.

I followed her fitness and meal plan *extensively*.

As time progressed between workouts and eating, our relationship evolved from professional to personal. I started off as a client and we transitioned into friends. And then we became family. Ms. Ellen fostered my potential and changed my life by challenging me beyond what I thought were my limits. When my 30-days were up, all I could do was reflect on the old me by looking at the new me in the mirror! I looked damn good and felt even better than ever! Mentally and physically, I was feeling ME!

Ms. Ellen and Lana have made the Vegan blueprint easy. Try it! What do you have to lose?! Weight, that's for certain! What do you have to gain?! Self-Love, mental wellness, physical wellness, and the comfort of knowing you are being kind to animals and our planet which are some of the most loving things you can do for yourself.

There is not a one-way sign that reads: "Self-Love". There are multiple roads, highways, and bridges that one may take to "Self-Love". If you have identified that Veganism is something you want to embark upon as a new journey or a new healthy lifestyle, then this book is for YOU! Ms. Ellen and Lana are two of the most credible and loving souls I know and together they have made being healthy and fit EASY. Check out my before and after photos...pictures don't lie!

Humbly I say, "Thank You" to Ms. Ellen and Lana for helping me manifest a better, healthier, me!

Love You Always XOXO,  
Niecy Nash

## **OUR CURRENT WORLD AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

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We can remember the first time we ever heard of Covid-19 or as most people call it, Coronavirus.

It was February 2020 and our world as we knew it would change forever. Our gyms would have to be temporarily closed, children were no longer allowed in schools and traveling like we knew it would never be the same.

We are definitely in the time of the unknown.

There were so many theories that came out about the origin and spread of Covid-19. The most popular being because of the consuming of animals.

So, although by the time this book is released, there will still be so many case studies and investigations to fully conclude the origin of this deadly disease, many medical experts believe there is major truth to this theory.

We believe that with this Pandemic, one thing was made clear to the entire World;

Eating animals does not only affect you, but it can also affect the livelihood of every single human being you interact with on a day to day bases.

Imagine that.

But this book is not about COVID-19. It's about how the consumption of animal products have lead to many diseases. These diseases which have contributed to so much sickness and so many deaths in our community. But most importantly, this book is about building fitness, knowledge and health in our families.

Join us on our newest journey as we explore delicious custom recipes and learn how to use food to make our mind and body goals a reality.

# **BLACK GIRLS gone VEGAN!®**

**WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!**



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# generational health

by LANA, LARC & ELLEN ECTOR

*Have you ever seen a cow run? Have you ever seen a chicken sit still? Most importantly, why do we have to kill innocent animals just to have an unhealthy meal to eat?*

These are a few questions we have asked ourselves and our answer is, Hell No!

Since we were all able to answer the questions with the same response, we decided to embark upon the journey to become Plant-Based and Vegan together. Not only did we make this life altering decision, but Larc, Lana's daughter, also made the decision to join us.

We took the plunge all together, but it was not without major side-eye. Our family and friends thought we were crazy to give up meat, fish, eggs, cheese, and everything that contained animal products and fats. What really sealed the deal for us in finalizing our decision was a food documentary we viewed on television. After viewing the documentary on television, this was a journey we had to embark upon, and we vowed to be successful at it and take it one day at time.

From that day forward, we jotted down all the information we learned and mentally digested hoping to share it with you, our *#BlackGirlsGoneVegan* Community! Knowing that heart disease is the current leading cause of death among African American women globally, it was our confirmation that we had to make a change. This change would not only be for us, but for every African American woman who has ever contemplated transitioning over to a vegan lifestyle.

When we thought of writing a book for novice vegans, we wanted it to be more than just a collection of recipes. We envisioned it to be fun, stylish, sisterly, and truthful! It must motivate, excite, and make YOU want to at least attempt this new lifestyle.

Changing over our third Ector, Larc, was not as hard as we initially thought. I knew as a parent and as a fitness instructor that my daughter was gaining weight. Honestly, I did not know how to take away her favorite snacks or tell her to slow down on the snacking without hurting her feelings or making her self-conscious about her weight. That's one thing I learned from my mother. No matter what body insecurities I would go through as a child, she would never force anything on me. Instead she would always compliment me and offer suggestions or things we could do together to become healthier. This is something I've always done with my daughter as well.

Of course, I wanted Larc to be a kid, but this was bigger than that. This was also about my parenting. I realized how I had to take time to pre plan her meals. Going through the nearest fast food line after school could no longer be an option. I knew that the food in these meals contained extreme amounts of sodium and unhealthy fats.

I had to get into the kitchen.

Growing up my mother always jokingly said, "If you take the "s" out of "fast" as in *fast foods*, what word do you now have?! *FAT!*"

I knew that Larc would eat whatever I prepared because she did not have a choice. It was imperative for me to take control. After viewing the documentary as a family, we set out and made a pact to go vegan for a month. The pact that we thought would last only one month, transitioned our lives into a Vegan lifestyle for the past three years.

Now, let's be real! You won't wake up tomorrow and "ta dahhhh" you are Vegan! No, it is not that easy, but honestly, it is not that hard either! Some will have a strong mind set and will switch over right away and others will

gradually make the switch by simply including more fruits and vegetables into their daily meals. Like any other lifestyle change, going Vegan not only takes getting used to but it takes time to determine what will work best for your body.

What many of us do not realize is that most of the foods in the grocery stores are actually more harmful than good. Our favorite trick has always been to shop on the OUTSIDE area of the store. We figured if food did not require some type of refrigeration, then it was processed. If it did not deserve a place in the refrigerator at the grocery store, why does it deserve a place in your body??

Processed foods A.K.A, poison, is a big NO-NO with the ECTOR trio!

This may come as a surprise, but with this book you will learn exactly how to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy foods. This book includes actionable information on how you can effectively cleanse your body and gut from a lifetime of toxin build-up. Together, we will do this by using plant medicines which include fruits, vegetables, sprouted bread and superfoods.

Ladies, let's do something that most of us think may be impossible! Being that we are the most educated group in America, let's start eating smart, too! African Americans living in the United States have one of the highest incidences in the world of heart disease. Stroke and/or heart disease is the number one killer amongst Black women. Therefore, let's not drop the pounds to only fit into that birthday dress we have been dying to get into or those too tight jeans from a few seasons ago. Let's finally eat to live better, but most importantly, feel better!

We owe it to the next generation to change the perception of Black women and healthy eating. Over the next 30 days, we will only fill our living bodies up with LIVING foods.

I always tell my friends and clients; just try it for 30 days and you will quickly realize THIS is the way your body is supposed to run. I tell them some of the benefits that we have experienced amongst ourselves is reduced spending at the grocery store, clearer skin, frequent bowel movements (which equals a smaller waistline...HINT, HINT), lower numbers during doctor's visits and more compassion towards the life of animals. All of this can be easily attained by simply following this one rule: "*If it doesn't GROW, it's a NO!*"

Unfortunately, even if it says "vegan", it may not be inherently healthy. Stay as close to Plant-Based as possible. Remember the cardinal rule: *anything HEAVILY processed is not healthy for you.* Try to keep it simple in your diet!

Eat TO LIVE instead of living to EAT!

Before we focus on the steps to becoming vegan and the recipes, let's understand what a Vegan/Plant-based diet involves and the benefits of living this lifestyle to the fullest.

First and foremost, a vegan/plant-based lifestyle eliminates the consumption of anything from an animal. This diet excludes animal products including fish, honey, dairy, eggs, and gelatin. Yes, that means absolutely NO meat or fish! This diet is highly nutritious when planned properly.

Since the Vegan diet is an animal-free diet, it is low in saturated fat. Animal-based foods are proven to increase heart disease. "*If it doesn't GROW, it's a NO!*"

A Vegan lifestyle also offers protection from certain cancers and Type 2 Diabetes. *Can you believe that close to one-third of all cancers may be prevented by simply controlling your diet?* Eating vegetables and fruits regularly reduces the risk of certain cancers within the body and lowers the risk of dying from cancer as well. Do you know what this means? It means that Vegans usually eat more fruits and vegetables, so they in turn have lower risks of

developing or dying from certain cancers.

Developing diabetes is at an extremely high rate for Black women. Diabetes affects 1 in 4 African American women 55 years of age and older. Diabetes is also the 4th leading cause of death for all age groups. Sadly, it is yet another disease that occurs more in Black women than any other race. BUT GUESS WHAT? Going Vegan may also benefit people with Type 2 Diabetes. This is why Vegans typically have lower blood sugar levels which reduces the risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. In addition to lowering blood sugar levels, a diabetic following a Vegan diet may also minimize their medication dosage.

An issue a lot of our clients have is maintaining a healthy weight. If you are struggling with your weight, then focusing on your diet is a MAJOR factor. Meats contain a high amount of fats which equates to an increased calorie intake. Following a Vegan diet will promote weight loss through increased amounts of fruits and vegetables. We also loved that as a Vegan, we are able to enjoy MORE food since the food consumptions are lower in calories.

Thus far, we have covered a few major health issues that affect Black women more than any other race. We could go on and on about the benefits of becoming Vegan, but let's focus on a few more interesting benefits that we have discovered.

We know that eating more vegetable seeds or plants is good for the environment, BUT did you know it helps to create a healthier environment for conception? If you are struggling with fertility or having infertility issues, a more nutritious diet may help improve fertility. For example, the diet will include more vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and vegetable oils. Who would have known that a Vegan diet could also help increase a woman's fertility??

Black women are also faced with infertility because of noncancerous fibroid tumors. As a Black woman, you probably have fibroids or know someone who has or had fibroids. Several of our friends and clients have battled serious issues dealing with fibroids. About 80% of African American women will develop fibroids before they reach their 50s. Most Black women are seeking medical help with this draining issue. Black women are also offered hysterectomies more than any other race without being informed of other medical or lifestyle options. Eating Vegan can relieve fibroid symptoms such as: heavy menstrual bleeding, pelvic pain, extreme cramping and prolonged periods.

Plant-based meals can also help your gut flora. If your main focus is on gut health, you should eat super probiotics like kombucha, chlorella, sauerkraut and tempeh. Probiotics such as bananas, raw garlic, dandelion and superfoods such as alfalfa and goji berries are beneficial.

Additional Vegan benefits that are proven to assist in healthcare are increased levels of energy, healthier skin, nails and hair, pH balance, less intense menstrual cycle symptoms, alleviation of allergy symptoms, decrease bad breath and life longevity. As you will see, **BLACK GIRLS GONE VEGAN!** can improve your overall health as a woman.

With this transition, it's very important to understand that your family and friends may become a hindrance when trying to carry out this new lifestyle. Invite them to try it with you and we promise you that they will not regret it. Spend some time together as a family thinking about why you want to change your eating habits and the challenging obstacles you may have faced in the past. Know that every day begins a new chapter of your life and there is no better gift that you could give to a loved one, than giving the gift of health.

**This WILL be a ride.  
But buckle up, because You got This!!!**





The number 11 has always held a strong meaning in our family.

*Angel number 11 represents inspiration and enlightenment. Your angels want you to know that you can now act on the things that make you happy and fulfilled and achieve that sense of purpose in your life.*

*It tells you to connect with your higher self, get to know your soul's mission and live your life's purpose. The number 11 is also a call to be an inspiration and bring light to others.*

**BGGV 11** will assist you in transitioning to become Vegan and/or Plant-based. Remember, you are committing to this new lifestyle one day at a time and it is **IMPERATIVE** to live by these mantras to make sure your transition leads to results.

**Say with confidence out loud:** *"May I become the best version of myself and continue to strive for greatness through my belief, my faith, my confidence, and my love for self! Today, I will have the willpower to make better choices for myself."*

## BGGV 11

### 1. Powerless

I admit that I am POWERLESS over eating anything that involves the killing of animals! This includes red meat, chicken, fish, dairy, eggs and cheese. Once I begin eating animal products again, my body will be triggered to go back to eating this unhealthy way.

### 2. Fellowship

I believe in and will seek fellowship from other Vegans. I will find a friend or family member(s) that is ready to live the Vegan lifestyle with me. This will help you to have someone to discuss in depth your transition. And if you feel like giving up, you will have a shoulder to lean on for support and encouragement.

### 3. Energy is never destroyed, only transferred.

Although being a carnivore may have been the way I was raised, today I no longer want to eat this way. This is no longer my way of nourishing my body. I am a Vegan/Plant based individual. I will take it one day at a time. I do not want to eat from an animal that has been killed, tortured or maimed. I must have mercy for animals starting today. I am against the cruelty of animals!

### 4. Living my BEST LIFE!

My physical, spiritual and emotional well-being is a must for me to live my BEST life. I believe with my Vegan/Plant Based diet, I will begin to see daily improvements in my everyday life routines. This new life is about making myself a priority and the start to believing in me. Loving myself is my way of taking care of me!

### 5. Know Your SH!T

This is for MY health. I will learn and research as much as I can about becoming Vegan. I will keep track of all of my body numbers, including weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar level and body mass index. I will only spread the news to others about my new eating habits in a POSITIVE way.

### 6. The Transition

I believe in a higher power and through prayer and meditation this transition will be at times difficult, but I WILL succeed.

### 7. Accountability

I will hold myself accountable! If I mess up, I will promptly admit it. Like life, there is no shame in my game. I will not be afraid to admit to my short comings. I know this can be a challenge; however, I WILL hold myself accountable. I am here to win. I am a WINNER!

### 8. Train Your Brain!

Each day is a new day and I must continue to be the best version of myself. I will remain positive and TRAIN MY BRAIN. I know that cravings will come with this new lifestyle, but I will stay strong by drinking more water throughout the day, meditating, working out and getting more sleep to nourish my body the right way.

### 9. The AWAKENING

The desire to stop eating anything that contains animal products is the only thing required to become a member of *Black Girls Gone Vegan* (BGGV). I will take care of my health by exercising and eating fruits, veggies, nuts, seeds, beans, legumes, drinking water daily, and setting positive goals throughout the year. This will not only be a physical awakening, but a spiritual awakening as well.

### 10. Risk it ALL!

I will dream big and live a purposeful lifestyle. I will find out what I love to do and take the risk through faith. I will get rid of negative people in my life so I can accomplish my goals. I will not tolerate any form of abuse from anyone. I will not drink my problems away with alcohol, drugs or cigarettes even if I have to seek outside help.

### 11. Tell Yourself, "I'm Sorry!"

Sometimes, we don't realize how important it is to apologize to ourselves. We often wrap our brains around others' feelings while neglecting our own. The way I treated my body in the past included physical, spiritual and emotional neglect, and for this, Self, I am truly SORRY!

Now repeat after me! 1, 2, 3...My name is\_\_\_\_\_ and I am a Black Girl Gone Vegan!

Now hug yourself!



## SHOP LIKE A VEGAN!

by LARC & ELLEN ECTOR



# BOOTCAMP YOUR KITCHEN!

We want you to decide you are going to embrace your vegan diet to the fullest. So let's get ready to BOOT CAMP your kitchen into shape! Remember, you can donate the food to any charity kitchen such as a local food bank. They will gladly accept your items!

Grab a large trash bag and head to your kitchen and pantry. We are going to assist you with getting rid of all the foods that will tempt you in any way of not accomplishing your *Black Girls Gone Vegan* journey with us. You will finally get rid of all the foods in your kitchen that are unhealthy, contain animal products, fish, dairy, gelatin, and cheese. Anything that is not vegan friendly will be happily taken away in order for you to enjoy a new you! Believe us, you will thank us later as you progress with obtaining healthier looking skin, body transformation and off-setting certain cardiovascular diseases and hypertension.

The first step in becoming a Vegan is to start with cleaning out your refrigerator and pantry. We will start by getting rid of all junk food that contains large amounts of calories and fat in your diet.

Grab the cookies, chips, candy, cheese and anything else that is stopping you from becoming a vegan. Yes, let's toss those away!

These foods have no nutritional value. This is the junk food that is keeping you with low energy along with preventing your weight loss and silently harming your family slowly. Junk food also causes you major health problems in the long run. Sugar increases your blood sugar levels and this can lead to diabetes and heart disease.

I will show you in sets and reps how to BOOT CAMP your kitchen into helping you become a healthier, more energetic, glowing and happier you!

**Set 1: Grab a large trash bag and head to the kitchen area. You can grab someone in your home to assist you.**

1st rep: Go in the pantry and start looking for all the junk food you have accumulated.

2nd rep: Ditch the cookies and don't you dare eat one!

3rd rep: Look around at the top of the pantry or cabinets and toss all the cereal away that contains sugar. No more Captain Crunch for you! If your child is assisting you in the kitchen this is a good time to explain to your child that the cereal will be replaced with healthier cereal. Explain that the cereal will be topped with fresh fruits and toppings that taste so good and are much healthier for the whole family. These cereals are full of artificial flavors that could potentially rot your children's teeth out in no time.

Don't let your child receive a bad report from the dentist due eating these sugary addictive foods.

4th rep: *Bet you can't eat just one?* Yes, it was one of the cleverest slogans ever created. But also one of the most true. We have to get rid of the chips. This is what we call "trigger foods". If you eat one, you will eat the entire bag until it is all gone! Most time, you are not even hungry, but I bet you eat that whole bag. Chips be gone! (Don't forget about those Doritos in the corner.)

5th rep: Those. Processed. Foods. They come in all sorts of containers. So, BEWARE! I blame this food on our Nation's high rate of obesity. Most of this food is low in fiber so it sits right on our bellies and keeps us constipated. For example, boxed macaroni and cheese, any chemically processed foods, microwave foods and convenient foods all contributes to illness all around the world. You got to go!

**Set 2: Head over to that fridge. You may need 2 trash bags to reconstruct and revamp your icebox. Ready! Set! Go!**

1st rep: Open the fridge and take a look around. Take everything out and wipe down the fridge. Then get rid of all the meats, fish, milk, cheese and anything that contains animal products. All of these have to be discarded. Starting off may be a little difficult, but remember, becoming vegan is your new lifestyle and you will embrace it in time.

2nd rep: Don't forget about the mayo. You can replace it with a vegan mayo and you will not notice the difference in taste. One of my favorites is a brand called Vegenaise. It is dairy free and most grocery stores keep it in stock.

3rd rep: Get rid of all the sugary drinks. Sodas, fruit punch, sweetened tea, and milk. Drinking sodas raises bad cholesterol in your body. The sugar in it overtime damages your liver. Soda is the most consumed drink. Over 44.7 gallons a year is consumed per person. Can you imagine how many calories you consume by drinking sodas daily? You are throwing out all the terrible food, so don't worry, you will be headed to the grocery store and you will stop sabotaging yourself on a daily basis.

Be courageous! Anything you can do, you can do Vegan!

# VEGAN SHOPPING LIST

**Congratulations!!** You are here because you have decided to alter your lifestyle and supply your body with the best nutrients to increase your energy. Remember, although you may be a beginner, becoming vegan is a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual cleanse. You have decided to literally live your best life!

Ladies, we will share with you our weekly #BlackGirlsGoneVegan (#BGGV) shopping list. We use this list in an effort to not detour from our vegan lifestyle. Being on this new journey, just like you, we knew we had to stick to our grocery list, because as you know, walking into the grocery store without a list can be a big mistake. A mistake so big that without a list you are definitely setting yourself up for failure. We had to take on the responsibility and put our trust into always creating a list in order to remain on our new lifestyle journey.

Creating our Black Girls Gone Vegan Shopping List was made to assist you in having a well-structured and organized transition into your new healthy lifestyle. In addition, we want to aid in saving you money. The Vegan lifestyle is less expensive. It has been proven in our spending budget that we have saved more money as a vegan than those who are not vegan. If we are successful at saving money while grocery shopping, we believe these tips will also help you become successful by saving on your grocery trip and spending less time shopping.

Your new shopping experience will not compare to your old shopping experiences beginning with appearance. We shop at a grocery stores whereas you enter through the doors you see an array of colorful rainbow displays of produce rather than a bunch of sodas stocked to the ceiling looking similar to a warehouse. We also buy organic vegetables which are homegrown in our state. We recommend that you wash your vegetables before preparing them to eat and cook.

Now, I know we are in a technology driven world; however, I am old school at heart! I still use pen and paper to write out my grocery list and strike off my items as I go. On the other hand, Lana is tech savvy therefore, she uses a grocery shopping app on her cell phone. Boy oh boy! How the times have changed!

To all my #BGGV Ladies, let's grab your sustainable grocery bag, your pen and paper, or your cell phone and start your list. We are going shopping for Vegan friendly food!

\*Here's a question for you: What kind of cookies do vegans not eat? HA! You guessed it, Animal Crackers!

\*After you write your list and grocery shop, post a picture of your grocery cart on Instagram with the hashtag #blackgirlsgonevegan.

\*Please read all labels for hidden ingredients that you do not want to consume such as:

- Casein or Milk
- Beeswax & Honey
- Confectioner's Glaze
- Gelatin Products
- L. Cysteine in Bread Products
- Whey products in Bread and Sweets

FRESH FRUITS	FRESH VEGETABLES	MISCELLANEOUS
Apples	Arugula	Cucumber
Bananas	Asparagus	Eggplant
Blueberries	Avocado	Garlic
Cantaloupe	Bell Peppers	Kale
Grapefruits	Broccoli	Mushrooms
Grapes	Brussels Sprout	Onions
Honeydew Melons	Cabbage	Spinach
Mangoes	Carrots	Squash
Peaches	Cauliflower	Sweet Potatoes
Pears	Celery	Tomatoes
Pineapple	Collards	Turnips
Plums		Zucchini
Strawberries		
Watermelons		
*Frozen Fruits and Vegetables are chilled right after harvest. This seals in the freshness.		
FROZEN FRUITS	NUTS AND SEEDS (eat in moderation)	
Blueberries	Almonds	Beyond Burgers
Mango	Pecans	Bran Cereal
Mixed Fruits	Pistachios	Brown rice
Strawberries	Sunflower Seeds	Dried Fruits
	Walnuts	Dried lentil beans
		Dried Raisins
FROZEN VEGETABLES	CANNED FOOD	
Corn	Beets	Grits
Green Peas	Black beans (low sodium)	Hummus
	Black eyed peas	Pasta noodles
	Pinto Beans	Peanut Butter
NON DAIRY PRODUCTS		Quinoa
Almond Butter		Steel Oatmeal
Almond Milk		Tofu Firm
Coconut Milk		
Vegan Butter		
Vegan Cheese		
BREAD		
	Ezekiel	
	Rye Bread	
*You are allowed to add any other vegan products to your grocery list. Avoid processed foods as much as possible		
<i>*Please Note: This Vegan List is our personal list. If you are allergic to any foods listed DO NOT buy, nor try any food items.*</i>		



# the garden of youth

by ELLEN ECTOR

*"The best way to look at aging is to see it as an opportunity to leave what didn't work behind and step boldly into a brand-new future." ~Oprah Winfrey*

As a senior living adult, I pondered on the thought of transitioning into a plant-based lifestyle, because I was uncertain if it would be a wise decision. I knew I had my annual physical exam scheduled and on this particular visit I decided to seek advice from my educated and very well-informed doctor. I shared with her my heart's desire to transition into a vegan lifestyle. Without hesitation, she thought it was a great idea! In speaking with her, my doctor shared with me that she had been a vegan for over nineteen years. This was not a surprise to me, because my doctor has always looked amazing. She carries a clean glow that surrounded her spirit every time I visit her office. Her youthfulness, lean body and athletic build is always so admirable. My doctor's confirmation reassured me that I was on the right track. Therefore, I highly recommend you check with your physician first to get approval to transition into a Vegan before you start your journey with us.

Although the idea of giving up meat was always in the back of my mind, one setback for me was that my family was raised on food, fellowship and large family gatherings. Cookouts are definitely in our culture, but weekly cookouts were a part of my family and all types of meat was definitely on the menu. A good ole' trash talking card game, drinks and a plethora of soul food was the norm for my family on any given day. *Talk about family love!* Man do I miss those happy loving days of fellowship! Even though we were always eating lavish soul food meals, my Grandma was physically fit! Momma, as we called her, was known for her immense backyard vegetable garden. It was organized and visually resembled a rainbow. She had ruby red tomatoes, leafy green collards, bright yellow squash and sphere-shaped cabbage in her yard. Her garden in September was so picturesque that it could have been a front cover feature on Home & Garden magazine! Momma's garden was a way of life and how our family survived. To this day, I am amazed at how neat and artistic she was.

During the winter, Momma would harvest her vegetables all by herself. She definitely had a certified green thumb out of this world! She prepared the best collard and turnip greens, cabbage and hot water cornbread meals. That cornbread would have just enough crunch when you bit into it. The most amazing part of it all was that it didn't even need any butter! It was so simple to make. I could eat that cornbread every day of the week along with a plate of her good ole' collard greens mixed with cabbage! I also could never forget the juice dripping from the greens. We called this pot liquor. This would be all of the flavorful juice left behind after Momma would boil her greens and beans. I would later come to realize that this pot liquor was full of calcium, minerals, and plenty of nutrients. Even now, I still dip my hot water cornbread in pot liquor to savor that soul food taste.

Although we had plenty to feast on, Momma insisted on cooking mainly vegetables every day for my Grandfather. Daddy is what we all called him. He was tall, lean and handsome! He lived a very long loving life. I always credit his good health and old age to Momma's backyard garden because chemicals and pesticides were not used on the vegetables. The fruits of her labor paid off tremendously.

Unfortunately, a lot of Black families did not pick up on these same habits. For example, although my Mother was an awesome chef and even better mom, she often cooked foods heavy in lard and high in saturated fat. This was a way of life. My siblings and I loved this. I can remember as a child, my favorite night was Friday night. Every Friday we knew our parents would go out to the local bar. This also meant that they would be stopping by Whitmore's, Cleveland most admired soul food spot back in the day and bringing everyone home shoulder sandwiches, fried chicken and polish boys. As a child, this was amazing. It was a way we showed love to each other. It was a family ritual. It was also a way we developed bad eating habits like nighttime eating, skipping breakfast and emotional eating. This caused several of my siblings, including myself to battle with weight issues. My baby brother Alto, at the early age of 33, suffered a major stroke which left him paralyzed. I hated that this happened to him and often wondered why.

A few years later in 1992 my mother would succumb to cancer. I remember reading her medical records. I was shocked and almost offended that the doctor labeled my mother, in big letters, OBESE, AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN / CANCER. This hurt me because it was so bold but to the point. After 62 long years, how could the doctor use these horrible unflattering words to sum up my mother's beautiful life?

When I think of how lucky we are to be able to live in an age where we can just simply google the answer to so many questions, I think of all the people who lost their lives because they simply didn't know the ramifications of their actions. Like my mother. She just didn't know better. Her generation didn't know better. She was such a smart woman and I know if she had the access to the knowledge that I have, she would have done everything in her power to live a long healthy life. This would have included giving up meat and anything else that would have taken her away from her children. She just didn't know. And this is OK.

After the death of my mother, I made it my life's priority to pass down the knowledge of health and fitness to my children and if God willing, my grandchildren. I strongly believe that spreading the word of health and fitness to your children is just as important as any other life lesson you can share with them. The knowledge of self care, healthy eating and exercise can and will go much further than any property or insurance policy you can leave behind to a child. Leave them the knowledge to take care of themselves. If they can master this, the beautiful gifts of life will always come easy.

I always like to tell friends how I equate it back to smoking cigarettes. At one time it was considered glamorous to smoke a cigarette. Huge companies ran national ad campaigns on television and in print with the most beautiful models and stunning sceneries promoting the use of cigarettes. There were commercials ran on television throughout the day promoting smoking tobacco. Ask yourself this. When is the last time you seen a commercial on television promoting an actual cigarette? It wasn't until decades later the U.S Government cracked down on policies and banned advertisements regarding tobacco and cigarettes.

And although cigarettes were invented in 1865, it wasn't until in 1969 that the Public Health Smoking Act of 1969 required all cigarette packaging to contain the following statement:

**WARNING: THE SURGEON GENERAL HAS DETERMINED THAT CIGARETTE SMOKING IS DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH.**

And it wasn't until 1970 that Congress banned cigarette ads from airing on television and radio.

At this time in our lives and in the world, we should know and be ready to admit that eating unhealthily is a slow walk down death drive. But unhealthy foods bring in way more money than cigarettes ever did, so don't expect any bans on fast food advertising or processed foods. This will never happen. No matter the statistics on heart disease or strokes, the food industry makes too much money to ever stop. This is why our Culture's need to change over to veganism is more important now than ever. We have to take control of this ourselves and turn an ear and mouth to the addictive killer foods that are forced fed to us and our children through media every single day.

Again, we must remember that African Americans are leading all other races in statistics on disease. We believe that most of this can be prevented with exercise and a plant-based diet. The global agriculture system is broken, and, in my opinion, I believe specialists are aware that the meat and dairy products are tainted and are killing us...silently. Due to the monetary benefits, they continue to withhold this information from the consumer.

One of my main concerns beginning this transition was losing a lot of muscle mass and not receiving enough protein each day. How would this affect my body after 60+ years of consuming meat? Would I miss out on nutrients needed for seniors to live active lifestyle? I also did not want to lose my "First Lady Michelle Obama Arms". After all

the hard work I invested into my favorite body part, even the idea of losing my toned, sculpted arms frightened me. These babies need to stay.

After a little research, I learned that a big part of this would be for me to keep up with my protein intake. I found simple things like plants, beans, fruits, legumes and seeds are your best source of protein. I even fell in love with foods like quinoa and vegan protein shakes. I also began to take a B-12 supplement to help me with red blood cell formations and bone health.

Even the simple things stand out so much to me now. I used to constantly battle with night sweats, and they were one of the first of many things I noticed disappear when I began eating vegan. After dealing with menopause and certain aspects of aging, I can't describe in words how good it feels to wake up with dry sheets on my bed.

If you meditate on the knowledge and work the knowledge that we provide to you in this book, you will be able to reflect on the changes you will have experienced throughout this 30-day journey. For example, your stress level will decrease. If you have high blood pressure, your numbers will likely decrease. In addition, your skin will glow with natural nutrients from the earth.

After over 25 years of running road races, I began to experience a very common bakers-cyst behind my knee that used to flare up often. If you have ever experienced any sort of fluid build-up, then you can relate. After becoming consistent within my plant-based diet the swelling dissolved and never resurfaced. A lot of my clients that I work with suffer from fluid retention and some have edema, especially around the ankle area. The first thing I would tell them to do is to go Vegan. In almost all cases, once they transitioned to a plant-based diet, these ailments improved drastically.

Our purpose is to foster your potential in living your best life and help you learn how to fuel your body with the best foods available. And let's be real. Transitioning into this plant-based life will be a new challenge for you. This will not be easy. But we know this. To wear the title of a Black Girls Gone Vegan, you must continue to be a role model and resonate positive vibes and great energy to all whom you encounter. Your inner beauty must shine throughout!

As I age, my goal has always been to be a *Super Ager* and have the physical and mental abilities of people decades younger than myself. I recently filmed an episode of The Rachel Ray Show in New York City and they took to the streets and asked numerous people to guess my age. I was shocked and flattered when so many responses were in their 30's and 40's.

I am a grandmother and have been blessed to still be very active in my grandchildren's life. I have grandchildren from the ages of 2-25 years old. I love seeing my grandchildren faces after I beat them in a race or in arm wrestling. That look on their face is priceless!

But the most important piece of it all is to get up and move that body every day. If you rest, you rust! I am not saying not to get your well needed rest; however, take an hour out of your day and exercise. A one-hour workout is only 4% of your day.

In only 30 short days this journey will change your life. This first week, especially, will be challenging because you have to train your brain to accomplish this goal. You must trust the process and believe in yourself.

Can I say I feel better since I've become plant-based?

Yes! I am a full pledge vegan at the age of 67 and feeling better than when I was in my thirties. And I haven't even touched on the improvement of my sex life yet. LOL!







# the beauty of it

by LANA ECTOR

*"Beauty is when you can appreciate yourself. When you love yourself, that's when you're most beautiful."* ~Zoe Kravitz

A feeling of struggle and insecurity from my skin problems surrounded me my entire life. I felt like it was a fight that I was constantly battling. I could remember at 12 years old getting my first pimple. I didn't want to go to school that day. And here I was almost 15 years later with adult acne. But instead of school, I was now ditching friends and dates. My beautiful melanin colored face was covered with so many painful cyst, blackheads and pimples.

I thought the dermatologist could solve my problem; however, visit after visit, doctor after doctor, I was still disappointed in the results. I was prescribed medicine that would work for 3 months. Once the 3-month prescription ended, my face was even worse than it was before I started. Therefore, I would return for a stronger dosage only for it not to work at all. Every prescription and non-prescribed medicine you can think of, I have tried it. For example, I used antibiotics, birth control, and a custom face wash that cost \$300. I also washed and changed my pillowcases every day. I only consumed water and even tried getting monthly facials!

When all else fails, you get back up and try again, except for me, I gave up.

I recall a visit to my dermatologist that left me emotionally drained. After speaking with the doctor and receiving such disappointing news, I broke out in tears. I felt like we had finally discovered a cure only for it to resurface. The doctor insisted that I was stressed. To a degree, the doctor was correct; however, the only thing that had me stressed was the way my skin looked. At this point, the acne was uncontrollable and broke me down emotionally.

To me, I felt as though the shape of my face changed completely. I was depressed. I no longer had an interest to go out in public or step in front of a camera. You know it is serious when you no longer post on social media! That was ME! I did not want to take photos at all when it was at its worst, so the photos you see here are actually from when my acne improved. The acne was a total confidence killer. The physical part of the acne also left me in excruciating pain. People would constantly provide suggestions on what I should do wherever I traveled. This included friends, clients and even strangers.

I remember praying, "God- now you've given me an amazing career, a beautiful family, and a bangin' body...but I'll trade it all in for "okay" skin."

It got that bad. I no longer cared for clear or perfect skin at this point. In my mind, it had to feel so good to wake up with "just okay" skin. I realized I was settling for the bare minimum, but that is how badly I wanted to see a difference in my skin.

At fitness consultations my new clients would express their struggles with weight loss and how they desperately wanted to change. Their emotional feelings registered with me instantly! I was able to connect to my clients in more ways than one. I would often let my clients in on to my struggle with acne. My fitness consultations became a personal therapy session for both my client and I. I left many consultations receiving just as much courage and motivation as the ladies who came in to see me to change their life. Here were women who were going through personal struggles that they wanted so urgently to change. This was our bond.

When I transitioned to a Vegan lifestyle, I initially did not think of the effects it would have

on my skin. I merely wanted to "shake things up" with a new lifestyle and provide a challenge for my clients at the gym. For the first 6 months I did not notice anything different. I did not notice my skin glowing or any acne problems improve at all. On the other hand, I did notice a change in my menstrual cramps, body odor and level of energy. These all improved.

Those few changes contributed heavily to my motivation to continue my transitional journey.

Every day grew better with time. I went from concealer and foundation to confidently not wearing makeup anymore. I also started to incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into my daily facial routine. Foods like lemons, garlic and coconuts had me seeing drastic improvements like never before. It began to click to me. What my skin needed was nutrients from the Earth. Not medications from a doctor.

During around the 8th month of Veganism, I noticed my skin changing. I began receiving compliments on how much younger I looked. My makeup artist was the first to notice the difference. We went from using damn near the whole tube of color corrector for my dark marks to just a pea size on both cheeks. I was feeling myself! Confidence was creeping back into my life.

Now as I look back on what I was doing and eating, I can honestly say it was definitely the milk and cheese. DAIRY! I truly believe many people are allergic to it but because it's such a big staple in our culture, we tend to overlook the dangers of it.

*Milk has an abundance of hormones (like really, growth hormones!) which causes insulin spikes, produces excess sebum oils and "glues together dead skin cells inside your pores" — all of which contribute to acne, according to [Clear Skin Forever](#).*

So, you can pretty much bet that the milk, dairy, cheese and gluten you are consuming are causing your adult acne, blemishes and dark spots. Therefore, you should reduce your intake or eliminate it from your diet completely because some of our bodies simply just can't break those foods down.

I am sure we are all involved with our own personal acne battles. A "cure" for me may not be a "cure" for you — as studies reveal that acne may be caused by our hormones, our genes, our skin care regimens and, yes, our diets. You may have to explore several solutions — like elimination diets, exercise plans or medicinal face cleaner — to finally find clear skin again. I encourage you to not give up. Try, try, and try again. Your acne cure is out there — you just have to trust the process and do what works best for you!

Let's get to that flawless skin, *holistically*.