

## It's a Diet AND a Community

Becoming a vegetarian is about a lot more than just changing what you eat. That said, there is no question that making the transition to vegetarian eating is one of the most positive things you can do for your body from a diet perspective. It will take some adjustments to make sure your vegetarian diet includes items that provide replacements for the proteins and vitamins that will no longer be part of your food intake when you stop eating meat. But there is an abundance of help in the vegetarian community that can help you tailor your diet to meet all your vitamin and nutritional needs and taste good too.

The community aspect of the vegetarian lifestyle is one of the things that sets your decision to become a vegetarian apart from any other "diet" decision you could have made. That is because vegetarianism is about more than just diet, it is about community and it is about lifestyle. Its good for you to be aware that as you begin to explore your new life as a vegetarian, you are by far not alone and there is an entire subculture all around you that can be of help in what you are trying to do.

It is appropriate to call the community of vegetarians a subculture because, like any culture, there are various levels and "tribes" of vegetarians usually organized around the motivation for being a vegetarian in the first place. Naturally, we know that many people start living a vegetarian lifestyle because of the health benefits. But even without a lot of teaching or group activities to reinforce it, this one change to your diet is very likely going to change lots of aspects of your life that you might not ordinarily associate with diet.

There is a purity and a naturalness to the vegetarian way of life that generates health from the inside out. Not long after you have gone completely vegetarian and you no longer are eating meat of any kind you will notice your sleep is deeper, you are more alert during the day and your digestion and elimination systems are far more effective and untroublesome. It is well known that the physical body and that side of you known as the soul are linking so as you purify your body, you will find your ability to focus on spiritual or intellectual things more powerful as well.

When you find your life changing for the better in such unexpected ways, you will have joined millions who have discovered the "hidden benefits" of a vegetarian life. And that huge subculture is one of the most encouraging and nurturing cultures in the world. As you strive to perfect your vegetarian program, you don't have to work on it alone. By simply reaching out to the large vegetarian population locally, you will find encouragement, help, advice and support to help you "make it" through the transition from a life of eating

meat to the purer approach to diet that is what being a vegetarian is all about.

The vegetarian community and culture is a rich one where you can enhance your new lifestyle with an amazing library of reading material, with an constantly expanding supply of recipes and with a address book full of phone numbers of new friends and groups who meet regularly to be together in their quest for a better physical, mental and spiritual life through vegetarianism. It will be a natural thing to seek out new friendships in these communities. And you should feel free to explore and enjoy them fully. These cultures will help you, encourage you and make your commitment to a vegetarian diet a lifelong one.

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Word Count 624