

The Rules of Being a Vegetarian

Becoming a vegetarian is not like joining a club or enlisting in an army. There is a lot of freedom and leverage to how "deep" you go into the vegetarian lifestyle and how intense and limiting you make your diet. So while there really are no "rules" for becoming a vegetarian, there are some scales of severity to be aware of so you know where you wish to enter the vegetarian world and how much you want to limit your diet. And there are some guidelines for how to be successful in your quest for a healthier and more ethical way of life.

The first thing to be aware of is that the extremes of vegetarian diets have a lot of variety to them. You can considered a vegetarian by eliminating only beef, chicken and animal meats from your diet. This approach to vegetarianism is the easiest place to start because you can still get your protein from eating fish, cheese, eggs and other dairy products so you don't feel so deprived at first. Then if you are successful in eliminating animal meats, you can then consider going further into the vegetarian lifestyle.

Its good to be educated about the varieties of vegetarianism because you may be talking to an enthusiast in the lifestyle that is of a "camp" that is not right for you. The cultures or genres of vegetarianism include...

. Lacto vegetarianism - this is a nice next step from just eliminating animal meats from your diet because you add eggs and dairy to your list of things to avoid. Many people who are interested in vegetarianism for ethical reasons because of their desire not to cause suffering to animals like this approach because eating eggs and dairy encourages those industries to continue to victimize chickens and cows.

. Lacto-ovo vegetarianism is the formal name for the very basic kind of vegetarianism we started our discussion with where you can continue to enjoy dairy and egg products. Most vegetarians can be comfortable with this approach because you get many of the health benefits from eliminating animal meat from your diet and you are doing something to help the animal rights cause without going extreme

. Ovo-vegetarianism is another variety of vegetarians that eliminates meat and dairy but allows you to have eggs as a staple of your diet to continue to get protein from your morning omelet. Its another compromise but a nice step to a next step if you want to move on to more restrictive diets as you get used to each step along the way

. Veganism is not a religion but it is the most restrictive form of vegetarianism because you eliminate meat, all dairy and even honey and become a pure vegetarian. For many this is too extreme or maybe a goal for the future.

If you were to attend a class on "how to become a vegetarian", the rules for

being successful would be the same most of the time. Those rules call for you to resist the urge to get radical about your diet and to start day one at the Vegan level after eating meat for most of your life. The impact on your body can be extreme and you do not give yourself time to learn how to eat in a healthy way to replace the nutrients and vitamins in meat with natural vegetarian substitutes.

It is highly advised you take it slow and ease into your vegetarian program. If you are too extreme, vitamin deficiencies can leave you open to disease. And if you get sick from a too aggressive approach to vegetarianism, you may give up and miss out on the many benefits the vegetarian lifestyle has for you. And that would be a tremendous tragedy.

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