

The Lifestyle of a Vegetarian

One of the biggest injustices that the vegetarian movement has endured is that in popular culture, the image of a vegetarian is that of a fanatic hippy or cult member who is "off the deep end" and cannot think about anything else besides "saving a cow" and pushing vegetarianism on everyone he meets. The truth is that the lifestyle of a vegetarian is not that different than everyone else in the culture. In fact, the odds are that somewhere in your social circle at work, school, church or in your family and friends network, you already know several people who are quietly enjoying the lifestyle of a vegetarian. So to help us get over the negative stereotypes to understand how a vegetarian actually lives, lets examine what is different about a vegetarians life.

The most significant difference in how a vegetarian lives is obvious because it is in how he or she eats. You will not find any meat in a vegetarian's kitchen. Now this doesn't mean that a vegetarian cannot live in a family and be at peace with meat eaters. If the home has one vegetarian but others who are not, you will be able to tell from the presence of soy and perhaps more fruit and fresh vegetables in the refrigerator. But the idea that vegetarians cannot be around meat eaters is false. If anything vegetarians are peace loving and can live their lifestyle around others who are not of their belief system very well.

Grocery shopping with a vegetarian is an eye opening experience and one that is quite different in more ways than you would suspect. Being a vegetarian isn't just about what you don't eat in that you don't eat meat. It is also about a completely different approach to diet and foods. So you will not see a vegetarian buying food in the same way most people do. There will be much more time spent in the fresh produce section of the grocery store. The checkout basket of a vegetarian will give him or her away every time because it will be overflowing with fresh foods.

But shopping for food with a vegetarian means shopping in other places than the local grocery store. It means buying grains and beans in bulk at a warehouse store because that is one way that a vegetarian maintains health by replacing the protein and other nutrients that the rest of the world gets from meat and replacing it with proteins from beans and other natural foods. It also means shopping in farmer's markets and even shopping in a vegetarian specialty store for some high nutrition meat substitutes like tofu.

The vegetarian movement is in harmony with many of the earth first movements such as the organic movement and the green movement. So a vegetarian kitchen will have more organic foods on hand to reduce the presence of harmful pesticides and other substances in the diet. Also vegetarianism affects the

lifestyle beyond just the refrigerator and the pantry. You will not find leather clothing in a vegetarian's closet and you wont find fur there either. That is became for the most part vegetarians are sensitive to animal rights and they don't want to see the skin of animals used in their clothing.

The house of a vegetarian will also be a recycling house to do all that is possible to cut down on waste and to be earth friendly. Along with recycling bottles and cans as you might expect, a vegetarian recycles a lot right at home. A recycling home will often have a compost pile in the yard for food waste and it will also support a good sized garden to use that compost to grow at home organic foods to supplement a healthy diet.

For obvious reasons, a vegetarian will have vegetarian friends and belong to social groups and attend functions that support the vegetarian lifestyle. Eating out with a vegetarian will mean going to more ethnic food restaurants and you will see a lot of creativity in how to order foods in a restaurant. But contrary to popular opinion, vegetarian eating is more flavorful and diverse than the normal diet.

Just spending a day with a vegetarian will reveal to you a more harmonious lifestyle that is sensitive to the environment and at peace with itself. It is a healthy and happy lifestyle and one that should be attractive to all of us.

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