

Why go Vegetarian?

Growing in popularity, vegetarianism has now gone mainstream. Polls show that there are now about eight million Americans following a vegetarian diet. Also growing in popularity are the dishes produced by the many new vegetarian food companies and restaurants. In fact, vegetarianism is America's trendiest cuisine, attracting the most gifted and creative chefs. Even the finest cooking schools now feature training in vegetarian cuisine.

But there's also a growing awareness of the many profound health advantages of a vegetarian diet. There's a reason that, on average, vegetarians live several years longer than non-vegetarians. As study after study shows, a health-promoting vegetarian diet not only helps prevent a wide range of diseases but also helps those already suffering from disease to get well again.

People who follow a vegetarian diet have much lower rates of many common diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, and diabetes, just to name a few. Advantages are seen at all ages and for all demographic groups. Vegetarian children have a much lower rate of childhood cancers; women have lower rates of disease such as osteoporosis; men have lower rates of prostate cancer; seniors have lower rates of Parkinson's disease and dementia. The list goes on and on.

We can make a real improvement in the quality of our own lives and those of our families by choosing a vegetarian diet.

How we can help you!

If you'd like to start making changes to your diet, we're here to help.

Vegetarians of Washington is an independent, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization made up of people from all walks of life who are interested in a vegetarian diet for a variety of reasons: health, environment, compassion for animals, spiritual, and more.

We support people making vegetarian choices while having fun. We encourage you to proceed at your own pace and do the best you can. You don't have to be a vegetarian to join.

Our Monthly Dining Event includes a multi-course buffet-style dinner catered by a different local restaurant or chef each month. All are welcome to attend. Members of Vegetarians of Washington receive a special discount price.

Free classes are offered on the many benefits of a vegetarian diet at various local venues throughout the region. These include practical information on shopping, cooking and nutrition.

Vegetarians of Washington members can obtain discounts from a wide range of restaurants, businesses, and services. Check our website for the latest listing.

Vegfest, the largest vegetarian food festival in the United States, is held at the Seattle Center in March of each year. It is a celebration of healthy vegetarian food including cooking demonstrations, speakers, many cookbooks, and a huge variety of free food samples to try.

Members receive a free subscription to Vegetarian Times, a popular magazine packed with nutritional advice, articles, and recipes.

**Become part of the fastest growing
community of vegetarians in the country.
Join Vegetarians of Washington today!**



Eating Green: How a Vegetarian Diet Can Heal the Environment

There are over 22 billion farm animals in the world today—over three times the human population. Farm animals require an enormous amount of feed, fresh water, medicine and fossil fuel. Over two-thirds of the crops we grow in the US are fed to farm animals. Raising livestock produces greenhouse gases, emits water pollutants from the wastes, and requires ever-more living space, resulting in ecological destruction.

A vegetarian diet promotes sustainable agricultural practices and can help heal the environment and preserve it for future generations.

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A vegetarian diet is a fundamental first step in solving the global environmental crisis.

FOSSIL FUELS AND MEAT

Agriculture uses 17 percent of all the fossil fuel in the U.S., with meat production responsible for the majority of that portion. To grow the crops required to feed all the farm animals, large quantities of fossil fuel are required to produce fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, to fuel irrigation pumps, and to run the farm machinery needed to apply the fertilizers and pesticides, plant and harvest the crops.

Once the crops are harvested, they are transported to where the animals are being raised. The animals are eventually trucked to slaughterhouses, and then their flesh is kept in refrigerators and freezers while being stored and transported to stores. All this takes even more fossil fuel.

Just as some people make their transportation choices with fossil fuel conservation in mind, many people are also making their food choices with fossil fuel conservation as a priority.

The fact is that getting protein from animals is very costly and inefficient. It takes much more oil to produce a unit of animal protein than it does to produce a comparable unit of plant protein. The same is true of calories: for instance, corn gives 60 times more food energy than beef per calorie of fossil fuel used in production.

ANIMAL WASTE TO GO

There are 9 billion farm animals in the U.S. and 22 billion worldwide, and each year they excrete 130 times more waste than humans do. In 1997, poultry, swine, beef, and dairy facilities produced a total of 291 billion pounds of animal feces and urine.

Much of this untreated waste ends up in rivers and streams; it is one of the largest sources of water pollution in the U.S. It often results in massive fish kills. Farm animal waste can also contaminate groundwater and raise nitrate levels, creating a serious public health threat—high nitrate levels near large farm animal operations have been linked to miscarriages and cancer.

Aquaculture, or fish farming, also generates a lot of waste. Fish waste and uneaten feed smothers the sea floor beneath these farms, generating bacteria that consume oxygen vital to bottom-dwelling species. Disease and parasites can run rampant in densely packed fish farms.

The many problems of animal waste are a natural consequence of raising so many animals for food. The volume produced is straining the environment and making future catastrophes inevitable.

 **Vegetarians**
OF WASHINGTON

GREENHOUSE GASAHOLICS

According to a recent report published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the livestock sector generates more greenhouse gas emissions, as measured in CO₂ equivalence, than all transportation activities. More powerful as a greenhouse gas than CO₂, methane is a byproduct of digestion and waste lagoons.

A switch to a vegetarian diet would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3,267 pounds per person per year.

Raising cattle is also the primary cause of soil erosion in the US, and the clearing of the Amazonian and Central American rainforests, further contributing to global warming and ecological destruction.

The material for this brochure was taken from *The Vegetarian Solution*, by Stewart Rose, Vice President of Vegetarians of Washington. This book contains further information and medical references for the many diseases helped by a vegetarian diet.

The Vegetarian Solution: Your answer to heart disease, cancer, global warming and more, by Stewart Rose. Summer 2007

Also by Vegetarians of Washington:

Veg-Feasting in the Pacific Northwest: Vegetarian Dining, Shopping and Living. 2004

The Veg-Feasting Cookbook, 2005