

The Vegan Food

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Most people are choosing vegan diets for various reasons, often encompassing health, ethical, environmental, and cultural motivations:

1. Health Benefits

Nutritional Benefits:

A well-planned vegan diet can provide all essential nutrients, and it is often rich in fibre, vitamins, and antioxidants.

Reduced Risk of Chronic Diseases: Studies have shown that vegan diets can lower the risk of heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.

Weight Management:

Vegan diets can help maintain a healthy weight and prevent obesity.

2. Ethical Considerations

Animal Love:

Many people choose veganism out of love with animals and to avoid contributing to the exploitation and suffering of animals in the meat, dairy, and egg industries.

Opposition to Animal Cruelty:

Veganism rejects the use of animals for food, clothing, and other purposes, promoting a more compassionate lifestyle without any religious reason or any sort of force by any community.

3. Environmental Impact

Reduced carbon footprint:

Animal agriculture is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Vegan diets tend to have a lower environmental impact.

Conservation of Resources:

Producing plant-based foods generally requires less water, land, and energy compared to animal-based foods.

Biodiversity Preservation:

Reducing demand for animal products can help decrease deforestation and habitat destruction.

4. Cultural and social factors

Religious and spiritual beliefs:

Some religions and spiritual practices advocate for plant-based diets, promoting non-violence and compassion towards all living beings.

Social Influences:

Increasing awareness and social movements advocating for veganism can influence individuals to adopt vegan lifestyles.

5. Personal Preferences and Taste

Disliking Meat and Animal Products:

Some people simply do not enjoy the taste or texture of meat and animal products.

Exploration of New Foods:

Veganism can encourage culinary creativity and the discovery of diverse and flavorful plant-based foods.

6. Global Food Security

Efficient Food Production:

Plant-based diets can contribute to more efficient use of agricultural resources, potentially aiding in addressing global food security issues.

These diverse motivations collectively drive the growing trend towards veganism around the world

Can we prepare tasty food using only vegan ingredients?

Absolutely, we can prepare delicious and satisfying meals using only vegan ingredients. Here are a few tips and examples of tasty vegan dishes that highlight the richness and diversity of plant-based cuisine:

Duties of chefs and cooks when preparing vegan food.

When preparing and cooking vegan recipes, chefs and cooks should adhere to certain duties and precautions to ensure the food is truly vegan, safe, and delicious. Here are key considerations:

1. Ingredient Verification

Read Labels Ensure all ingredients are vegan by carefully reading product labels and verifying there are no animal-derived components.

Source trustworthy suppliers: Use suppliers known for their vegan products to avoid contamination and ensure quality.

2. Preventing Cross-Contamination

Separate Cooking Utensils: Use dedicated cutting boards, knives, and utensils for vegan cooking.

Clean Surfaces Thoroughly: Ensure all cooking surfaces, pots, and pans are thoroughly cleaned before use.

Separate Storage: Store vegan ingredients separately from non-vegan items to prevent accidental contamination.

3. Understanding Vegan Substitutes

Dairy Alternatives Use plant-based milks, yoghurts, and cheeses.

Egg Replacements: Utilise flaxseeds, chia seeds, applesauce, or commercial egg replacers in recipes requiring eggs.

Meat Alternatives Incorporate tofu, tempeh, seitan, or legumes as protein sources.

4. Nutritional Considerations

Balanced Meals: Ensure dishes are nutritionally balanced, providing adequate protein, vitamins, and minerals.

Fortified Foods Use fortified plant-based milks and nutritional yeast to provide essential nutrients like B12 and calcium.

5. Culinary Techniques

Flavor Enhancement Use herbs, spices, and condiments to enhance flavours.

Texture Variety: Combine different textures to make dishes more interesting (e.g., crunchy nuts, creamy sauces).

6. Customer Communication

Transparency: Clearly label vegan dishes on menus and inform customers about ingredients.

Accommodate Requests: Be willing to customise dishes to meet vegan dietary needs if possible.

Precautions to Follow

1. Avoid Hidden Animal Products

Check for Additives: Be aware of additives like gelatin, casein, and certain food colorings that are animal-derived.

Beware of Processed Foods**: Verify that processed foods like bread, sauces, and snacks do not contain hidden animal products.

2. Cross-Contamination Precautions

Dedicated Cooking Areas If possible, have a dedicated area in the kitchen for vegan food preparation.

Separate Fryers: Use separate fryers for vegan foods to avoid contamination with animal products.

3. Proper Labelling and Storage

Clearly Label: Label all vegan ingredients and finished dishes clearly to prevent mix-ups.

Store Separately: Keep vegan ingredients and foods separate from non-vegan items in storage areas.

4. Staff Training

Educate Staff: Train all kitchen staff on vegan dietary requirements, ingredient identification, and the importance of avoiding cross-contamination.

Regular Updates: Keep the team updated on new vegan products and practices.

5. **Sanitation and Hygiene**

****Regular Cleaning****: Ensure all equipment and surfaces are cleaned regularly and thoroughly.

Personal Hygiene: Encourage good personal hygiene practices among staff, including regular hand washing and wearing clean uniforms.

By adhering to these duties and precautions, chefs and cooks can ensure they are providing high-quality, safe, and delicious vegan meals that meet the dietary requirements and expectations of their customers.

Tips for Tasty Vegan Cooking

1. **Use fresh ingredients**: fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs can make a big difference in flavour.
2. ****Experiment with Spices and Herbs****: Indian cuisine, in particular, offers a wide array of spices that can elevate any dish. Commonly used spices include cumin, coriander, turmeric, garam masala, and chilli powder.
3. ****Incorporate Different Textures****: Combine crunchy, creamy, and chewy elements to make your meals more interesting.
4. **Explore Global Cuisines**: Draw inspiration from various cuisines known for their vegetarian and vegan dishes, such as Indian, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Asian cuisines.
5. ****Use Healthy Fats****: Add richness and depth with healthy fats like coconut milk, avocado, nuts, and seeds.
6. **Balance Flavours**: Ensure your dishes have a good balance of sweet, salty, sour, and spicy flavours.

Examples of Tasty Vegan Dishes

1. **Chana Masala**: A hearty chickpea curry cooked with tomatoes, onions, and a blend of spices like cumin, coriander, and garam masala.
2. ****Aloo Gobi****: A flavorful dish of potatoes and cauliflower cooked with turmeric, cumin, and ginger.
3. ****Palak Tofu****: A vegan spin on palak paneer, using tofu instead of paneer, cooked in a creamy spinach gravy.

4. Dal Tadka: lentils cooked with tomatoes, onions, and spices and finished with a tempering of mustard seeds, cumin seeds, and garlic.
5. Baingan Bharta: roasted eggplant mashed and cooked with tomatoes, onions, and spices.
6. ****Vegan Biryani****: A fragrant rice dish made with mixed vegetables, spices, and sometimes tofu or tempeh.
7. ****Vegetable Samosas****: Crispy pastries filled with spiced potatoes and peas.
8. Mango Coconut Chia Pudding: A refreshing dessert made with coconut milk, chia seeds, and fresh mango.
9. ****Vegan Raita****: A plant-based yoghurt dish mixed with cucumbers, tomatoes, and spices.
10. Coconut Curry: A rich and creamy curry made with coconut milk, vegetables, and spices like curry leaves, mustard seeds, and turmeric.

A vegan recipe as sample:

Vegan Chana Masala



****Ingredients**:**

1 cup dried chickpeas (or 1 can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed)

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 tomatoes, chopped

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 inch of minced ginger

1 green chilli, finely chopped

1 tsp. cumin seeds

1 teaspoon coriander powder

1 tsp. turmeric powder

1 tsp. garam masala

1 tsp. chilli powder

2 tbsp. oil

Salt to taste

Fresh cilantro, chopped for garnish

****Instructions**:**

1. ****Cook the Chickpeas**:** If using dried chickpeas, soak them overnight and then cook until tender. If using canned, skip this step.
2. Prepare the base: heat oil in a pan. Add cumin seeds and let them splutter. Add onions and sauté until golden brown. Add garlic, ginger, and green chilli, and sauté for a few more minutes.
3. ****Add Tomatoes and Spices**:** Add chopped tomatoes and cook until they soften. Add turmeric, coriander powder, chilli powder, and salt. Cook until the oil separates from the masala.
4. ****Add Chickpeas**:** Add cooked chickpeas to the pan. Mix well, and add a little water if needed. Simmer for 10–15 minutes to allow the flavours to meld.
5. Finish with Garam Masala: Stir in garam masala and cook for another minute.
6. Garnish and Serve: Garnish with fresh cilantro and serve hot with rice or flatbread.

With the right ingredients and techniques, vegan food can be incredibly tasty and satisfying!

Here is a list of vegan food ingredients commonly used in Indian cuisine:

Grains and flowers

1. Rice (Basmati, Jasmine, Brown, etc.)
2. Whole Wheat Flour (Atta)
3. Chickpea Flour (Besan)
4. Millet (Bajra, Ragi)
5. Semolina (Sooji)

Legumes and pulses

1. Lentils (Masoor Dal, Moong Dal, Toor Dal, and Urad Dal)
2. Chickpeas (Kabuli Chana, Kala Chana)
3. Green Peas (Matar)
4. Pigeon Peas (Arhar Dal)

5. Mung Beans (Whole Moong)

Vegetables

1. Potatoes (Aloo)
2. Tomatoes (Tamatar)
3. Onions (Pyaz)
4. Eggplant (Baingan)
5. Spinach (Palak)
6. Cauliflower (Gobi)
7. Carrots (Gajar)
8. Okra (Bhindi)
9. Bitter Gourd (Karela)
10. Green Beans (Fansi)

Fruits

1. Mango (Aam)
2. Banana (Kela)
3. Coconut
4. Pomegranate (Anaar)
5. Lemon (Nimbu)

Spices and herbs

1. Cumin Seeds (Jeera)
2. Coriander Seeds (Dhania)
3. Mustard Seeds (Rai)
4. Turmeric (Haldi)
5. Red Chilli Powder (Lal Mirch)
6. Garam Masala (which you may prepare as per your choice of spices)
7. Curry Leaves (Kadi Patta)
8. Asafoetida (Hing)
9. Fenugreek Seeds (Methi)
10. Cardamom (Elaichi)
11. Cloves (Laung)

12. Cinnamon (Dalchini)
13. Bay Leaves (Tej Patta)

Oils and fats

1. Coconut Oil
2. Mustard Oil
3. Sunflower Oil
4. Sesame Oil (Til Ka Tel)

Nuts and seeds

1. Cashews (Kaju)
2. Almonds (Badam)
3. Peanuts (Moongphali)
4. Sesame Seeds (Til)
5. Flaxseeds (Aisi)

Other Ingredients

1. Coconut Milk
2. Tamarind (Imli)
3. Jaggery (Gur)
4. Soy sauce (for certain Indo-Chinese dishes)
5. Tofu
6. Plant-based yoghurt (coconut, almond, or soy)

These ingredients can be used to create a wide variety of traditional and contemporary Indian vegan dishes.

What not to eat;

For a vegan diet, it is important to avoid the following ingredients, commonly found in Indian cuisine, that are derived from animals:

All dairy products

1. Milk (Doodh)
2. Ghee (clarified butter)
3. Paneer (Indian Cottage Cheese)
4. Yoghurt (Dahi)
5. Butter (Makkhan)
6. Cream (Malai)
7. Condensed Milk
8. Buttermilk (Chaas)

All animal products

1. Meat (chicken, mutton, beef, pork, fish, etc.)
2. Eggs (Anda)
3. Gelatin (used in some sweets and desserts)

Honey

Certain baked goods

Check for milk, butter, eggs, or whey powder.

Processed Foods

Watch out for dairy-derived ingredients such as casein, whey, and lactose.

Traditional Sweets

1. Gulab Jamun (contains milk solids)
2. Rasgulla (made from paneer)
3. Barfi (often made with milk and ghee)
4. Kulfi (Indian ice cream, made with milk and cream)

Sauces and condiments

Some chutneys and pickles may contain yoghurt or ghee.

Certain commercially available sauces may contain dairy or honey.

When dining out or buying packaged foods, always check the ingredient list to ensure they do not contain animal-derived products.

Happy Reading!