

SUMA'S VEGAN TOOLKIT

Your guide to embracing a plant-based lifestyle for Veganuary and beyond.







Hi there, fellow Veganuary adventurer! So, you've decided to embark on the exciting journey of Veganuary; a month-long challenge where you'll ditch animal products and embrace a plant-based lifestyle. Well, buckle up, because you're in for an exciting and delicious experience!

The Veganuary challenge is an opportunity to explore the world of veganism, discover new flavours, and experience the positive impact of a diet centred around plants. Whether you're a seasoned vegetarian or a complete newbie, this handbook will serve as your guide, offering insights, tips and support throughout your journey.

Suma is and always has been a vegetarian company selling veggie and vegan food, household cleaning products, and hair and body care. The vast majority of the own brand products we sell are also vegan, with plans to increase our vegan range further. They're clearly labelled to make shopping easier. We're worker owned by our 200 plus members and have ethical and sustainable buying policies we review regularly. That means you can rely on us to do all the research behind every product so you don't have to worry.

Many of our workers are established and experienced vegans, making Suma well placed to advise and support you as you adopt and adapt to a new plant-based way of eating.

We hope you find this guide useful. Let us know how you get on during Veganuary and what your plans are for veganism.

   @SumaWholefoods

M E E T 
the T E A M



KATE

is our Suma brand team coordinator and mum to a small person. She did Veganuary a year ago and has never looked back.



LISA

works on our new customer desk and picks orders in the warehouse. She made the move from veggie to vegan over 30 years ago.



ALICE

a well-travelled vegan who works in our warehouse and helps train our workers.



ANDY

a board member and finance bod is a long-term vegan with two happy and healthy vegan kids.



CHRIS

a quality control team member who is a committed and passionate vegan with strong views to share.

Workers Marie, Sophie and Stephanie have some good tips to share, and warehouse team members Ben and Maurice are beyond wise and insightful when it comes to all things vegan.

We've gathered some of their best, most honest tips and shared them with you here.

And if there's anything we haven't covered just ask.

We're a very friendly bunch and always happy to help.

Ready? Good luck!
We've got you!

WHY VEGANUARY?

Veganuary isn't just about changing your diet; it's a movement for positive change. It's about making a conscious choice that extends far beyond your plate. By eliminating animal products from your lifestyle, you're taking a stand for animal welfare, environmental sustainability and your own well-being.

By choosing a plant-based diet, you're saying no to the cruel practices of factory farming, where animals are often subjected to cramped, unsanitary conditions and inhumane treatment. Veganism is a compassionate choice that aligns with our desire for a world where all living beings are treated with respect.



LISA

"I didn't think vegetarianism went far enough for me, too many grey areas with the suffering in the egg and dairy industry. I needed to be comfortable in my own skin. The environmental issues followed after that."

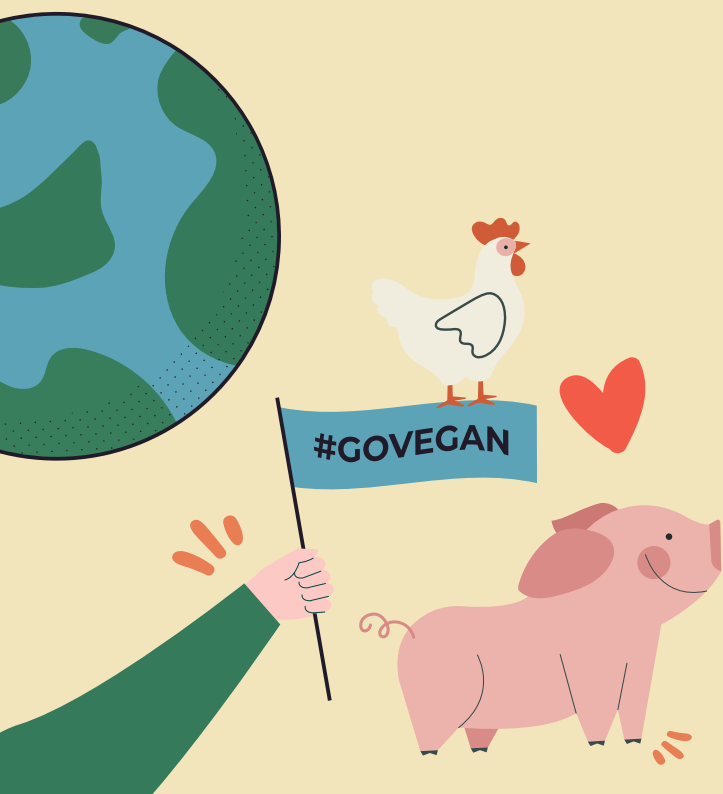


ANDY

"Animal products are responsible for a huge share of our environmental problems as one of the biggest causes of climate change, deforestation, air pollution, water pollution, and anti-microbial resistance. There might be a sustainable amount of animal products that we could each eat, but the biggest impact I can have at an individual level is to reject all animal products."

Animal agriculture is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation and water pollution. By adopting a vegan lifestyle, you're reducing your environmental footprint and helping protect our planet for future generations.

A well-planned vegan diet can be incredibly nutritious, offering an abundance of vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants. Plant-based diets have been linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer. How fab is that!



KATE

"My carbon foot print awareness is also a driver. I have an understanding of how the dairy and beef industries add to our planet's growing climate problems and I know that my diet choice contributes to driving change."

COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION: *FIND YOUR VEGAN TRIBE*

Going vegan doesn't have to be a solo adventure. Connect with other vegans and plant-based enthusiasts through online communities, local vegan groups, or even just by chatting with friends and family who share your interest.



ANDY

"Don't go through it alone! If someone you know is interested too go on the journey together. If not, try to meet some others who are. There are lots of vegan social groups about, and millions of people around the world participate in Veganuary each year. When I first went vegan, I had a network of people who were all going through it together, Veganuary style (though before that organisation existed!). We organised shared meals, film screenings, and other events to support each other, and by the end of the month habits and friendships had formed."



CHRIS

"The easiest thing I found about going vegan was changing what I ate, because thankfully my town had a totally vegan wholefood shop on the high street - Planetwise in Bridlington, which Suma still happily supplies. Not only did it help me in terms of food accessibility, but it also acted as a community hub, which introduced me to a whole host of people who taught me a lot about veganism, and more!"

INFO AND SUPPORT: A HELPING HAND



There's a wealth of resources available to support you on your vegan journey. Check out vegan blogs, social channels, cookbooks, and websites for recipes, tips, and inspiration. We asked Suma folk who they follow. The list was lo-o-ong but many names cropped up over and over.

Maurice recommends 'Vegan Savvy' by Azmina Govindji as a fantastic book for beginners. Andy said that when he first started getting a vegbox (around the same time he went vegan) he bought a 1970s vegetable cookbook. It was very useful for helping him identify celeriac, kohlrabi and other alien looking vegetables he'd never cooked with before. Unfortunately, it wasn't much use as a cookbook as its solution for pretty much any vegetable was to fry it with some finely chopped bacon! Sophie swears by 'Vegetables' or 'The Vegetable Bible' both by Sophie Grigson for the same reason, minus the bacon tips! You can pick up used copies on Ebay or in a secondhand book shop for under a fiver.

Of the many vegan cookbooks he's amassed over the last 14 years, the one that has probably impressed and surprised Andy the most has been "Vegan Ice Cream" by Jeff Rogers. The recipes included often have just two or three wholesome ingredients but make stunning vegan alternatives to ice cream.

The cookbooks that everyone here tells us they love are by Kaushy Patel of Prashad, our local veggie Gujarati restaurant and winner of Gordon Ramsey's best restaurant. 'Prashad At Home: Everyday Indian Cooking from our Vegetarian Kitchen' and 'Vegetarian Indian Cooking: Prashad' are both fantastic and the perfect intro to clever spice cooking. Their veggie recipes can be easily made vegan and they taste exactly like the delicious food they serve in their Bradford restaurant.

Then we have some useful app tips. The Happy Cow app helps you find vegan and vegan friendly restaurants by location. The Kronometer app keeps a tally of the vitamins and minerals you consume.

And you have us! Since Suma first opened way back in 1977, we've always been focused on supplying high quality wholefoods and plant-based ingredients. Suma stocks everything you need to prepare healthy and delicious culinary creations from scratch.



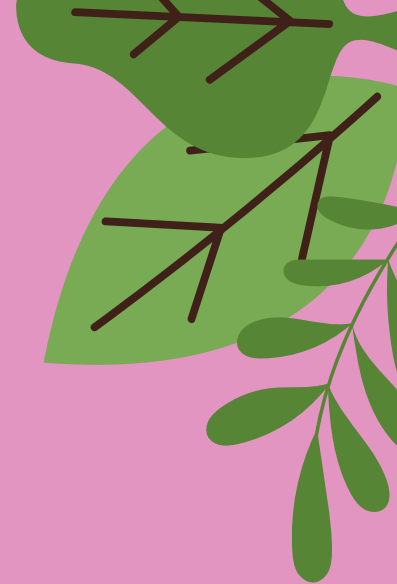
"Keep up to date with vegan issues, keep a track of your progress, read all the literature and don't beat yourself up if you make a mistake."



INSTA FRIENDS!

1. *Veganuary* @weareveganuary
2. *Bettina* @bettinas_kitchen
3. *John Robb* @johnrobb77
4. *Riverford* @riverford
5. *Dave & Steve* @thehappypear
6. *Eva Agha* @thecuriouschickpea
7. *Maya Leinenbach* www.fit-green-mind.com
8. *Max Lamanna* www.maxlamanna.com
9. *Henry & Ian* @bosh.tv
10. *Vegan Olive, X's vegan agony aunt!* @VeganOlive1

EMBRACE THE JOURNEY: ENJOY THE PLANT-BASED EXPERIENCE



Veganuary is a chance to explore new flavours, discover hidden culinary gems, and experience the positive impact of a plant-based lifestyle. So, have fun, be creative, and savour the journey! Take a look at the book list included here for some inspiration.

"When I found or made a vegan product that replaced something that wasn't vegan, and I enjoyed it, I always did a little 'happy dance' in the kitchen. I don't think becoming vegan is easy, however, there are so many great recipes and products out there, it is becoming easier. Have fun with it!"

Lee

Think about how you cook. Since switching to a vegan diet Kate looks at how she can add more flavour to food and making the best of the ingredients she has. Roasted cauliflower is incomparable to its boiled counterpart.



KATE

"The idea of boiling a cauliflower now is almost inconceivable!"

EASING INTO VEGANUARY

While transitioning to a vegan lifestyle might seem daunting at first, it can be a smooth and enjoyable process with the right approach and preparation.

There's never been a better time to go vegan. The range of products available is astounding and always growing. The support from Veganuary is tremendous and it's a wonderful opportunity to venture into veganism with all their – and our - resources at hand.



LISA

“It wasn't at all easy 30 years ago, but once I became aware of all the reasons around veganism, there really wasn't an option for me.”



TIPS FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION

Don't be afraid to get creative in the kitchen.

With a little imagination, you can whip up delicious plant-based versions of your favourite dishes. Instead of a chicken korma make a cauliflower korma using coconut milk to replace cream. Steph loves chickpeas, capers and spring onions mashed with vegan mayo for a tasty 'tuna' mayo! And silken tofu makes a beautiful chocolate mousse instead of cream – as demonstrated by Ash's dad in a recent Suma reel.

Get ready for Veganuary by eating up the contents of the fridge before the New Year. You could batch cook and freeze if there's a lot. Or give it away to friends and neighbours to avoid food waste.

Clear some room in the fridge and cupboards for your vegan groceries. Having everything together makes it easier to see what you're working with and helps when writing a shopping list.

WHERE TO...

START

Start by swapping out your regular animal-based products with [plant-based alternatives](#). This will help you get used to new flavours and ingredients without feeling overwhelmed.

Use plant-based milks instead of dairy, try veggie burgers instead of beef, and explore vegan cheese alternatives. Many swaps are super simple, like switching out honey for syrup made from [agave](#), [coconut blossom](#) or maple.



LISA

“Initially it'll feel like you're looking for swaps, but after a while you get used to it and then you're just shopping for good ingredients.”

Lisa's flavour enhancing essentials include good quality [tamari](#), [sesame oil](#), [lemons](#), garlic and [agave syrup](#). Plus foods that provide a deep savoury taste called umami. These include soy sauce, [tomato paste](#), mushrooms, [miso](#), olives, capers and [vinegars](#), onions, nutritional yeast and [marmite](#), roasted nuts and seeds, and seaweed. There aren't many things that aren't improved by the considered addition of some - or all - of these!

Much of your choice will depend on how health conscious you are. If you don't mind processed foods, then you can get vegan versions of most cheeses, yoghurts and sandwich meats. These can be great introductions to vegan food and act as easy transitional foods. Whatever non-vegan ingredients you have in your current repertoire, swapping them out can make the process smoother while you figure out other elements of the transition.

After that, think outside the box. When Ben first went vegan, he didn't think he would have cheese again, but he often uses [hummus](#) in its place. It's different, but still tasty and satiating. He still enjoys plant-based cheese alternatives, but they don't feature in his diet the same way they would have previously.

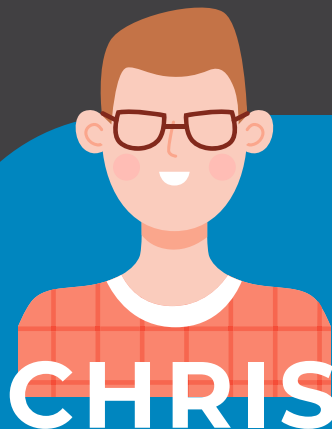
EASY SWAPS

PLANT-BASED MILK

The market is saturated with dairy-free milk, and so it shouldn't be too hard to find one you enjoy. The most well-known are made from oats, almond, coconut and soya. Try the ones you like the look of and that fit your budget. As a wholefoods wholesaler, Suma sells 124 different plant based milks. We're confident you'll like at least one of them!

People may have preferences over how they use plant-based milks and find that one works better with tea/coffee, and another works better with cereal or for cooking.

Look out for those with and without sugar and be mindful of the environmental impact of their production.



"My recommended easy swap is "barista" style oat milk, because if you like milk in your coffee, this is an absolute staple as it will never curdle on you."

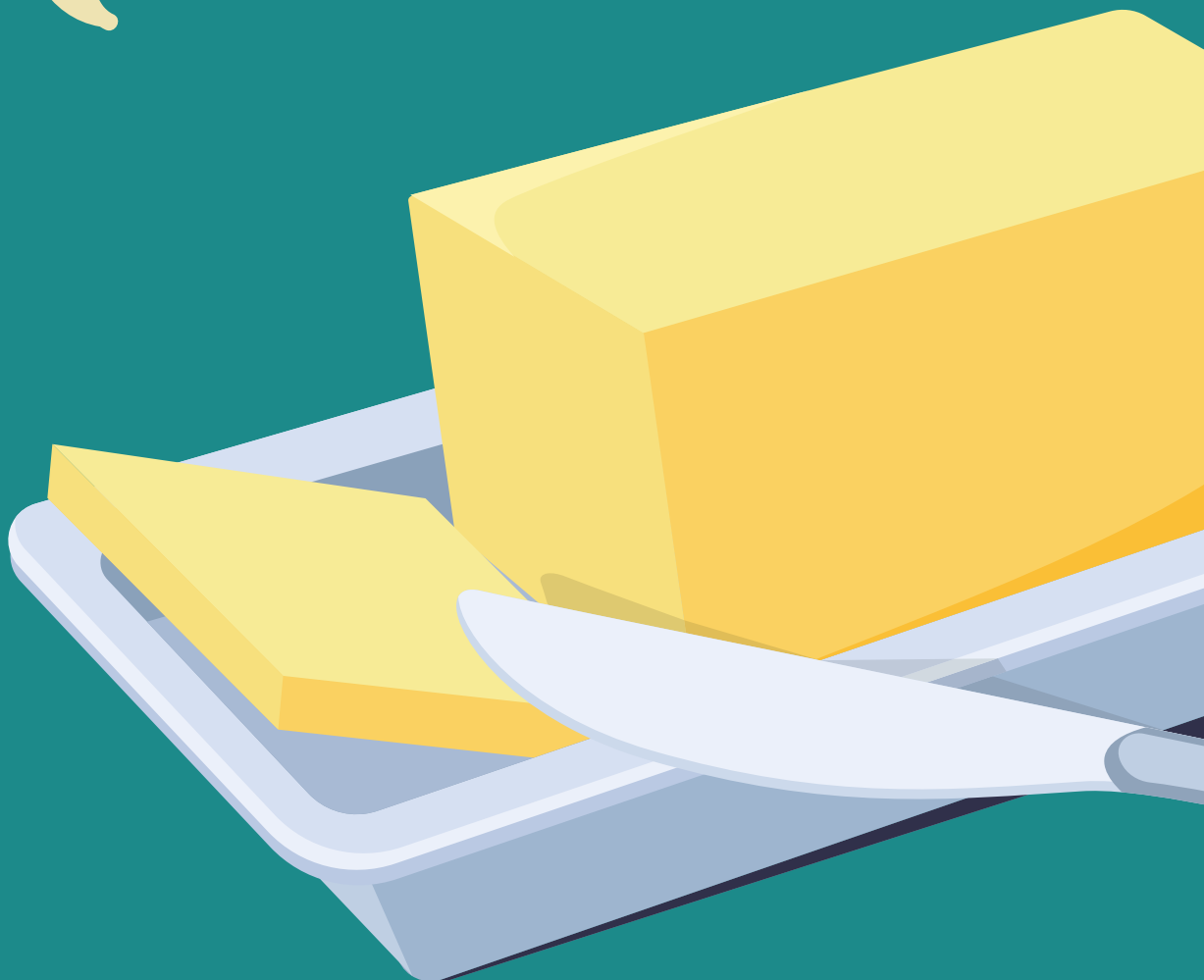
"The hardest thing I found about going vegan was getting used to tea without dairy because 20 years of tea drinking habits take a bit of time to overcome! I'm now firmly an oat convert and pleased to have found products that work equally well in coffee, like Minor Figures Oat M*lk."



PLANT-BASED BUTTER AND SPREADS

There are plenty of vegan options to choose from, including big name brands that now make vegan versions in spreadable and block forms to replace your dairy version. Suma makes a tasty soya and a sunflower vegan spread. You can use **nut butters** in place of regular spreads too.

"My recommended easy swap is Naturli butter for real butter, because it tastes so good, has no palm oil in, and the rapeseed oil in it gives a really buttery flavour."
Amy



PLANT-BASED CHEESE

There are so many vegan cheese alternatives out there. Ben rates Mouse's Favourite and Tyne Cheese. According to Andy the best ones are the cashew or almond based ones. They don't taste exactly like cheese, but they fulfil that same satisfying creamy space in any meal where you might use cheese.

They can be a bit pricey, but Andy has found you can make your own from [ground almonds](#) quite easily and for a fraction of the price. Add ground almonds, [garlic](#), salt, and nutritional yeast flakes to a blender. Add a little [oil](#) and then add water slowly and blend until you get a thick creamy texture. Transfer to a small oven dish and bake for 20 minutes or so on a medium heat, until it starts to turn golden on top. You can experiment with [lemon juice](#) or herbs at the blending stage for variety.



“My recommended easy swap is ‘out with the parmesan, in with the nooch!’ Nutritional Yeast Flakes, also known as nooch, add a great nutty, cheesy flavour, perfect for anywhere you might put hard cheese – like on top of pasta dishes or salads. As an added bonus, this natural yeast product is rich in vitamins. If you’re going vegan, look out for nooch with vitamin B12, like Engevita Super Yeast Flakes.”

MEAT ALTERNATIVES

We cover protein sources like seitan, tempeh and tofu elsewhere, but let's talk about the plant-based burgers, nuggets, bacon and sausages popping up in stores en masse.

"I didn't go vegan because I disliked the taste of meat, it was because I couldn't ignore the fact that animals were being killed for my taste buds anymore. Over the last few years meat alternatives have become better in terms of both taste and texture."

Lee

There are so many options available and they are increasingly similar to the taste and texture of real meats.

"Heura are my fave right now but there are SO many good options available that there's just no need to eat animals!"

Ash

It's worth noting that not everyone enjoys meat and some people find the move to veganism is easier because they never enjoyed the taste or texture of meat and simply don't miss it at all.

"Veganism for me is an ethical stance that has become part of how I view food. Meat isn't appetising or what I'd consider food, so I prefer not to eat meat alternatives either. I am not tempted and don't get cravings."

Alice

Don't forget that these plant-based meat alternatives are ultra processed foods. If that's fine with you then pick your favourites, but it's not for everyone.

Jackfruit is a tropical fruit with a mild flavour and a fibrous, stringy texture that makes it work perfectly as a meat substitute to recipes like pulled pork. However, it has a low protein and fat content and contributes comparatively fewer vitamins and minerals than the meat it's replacing. Suma's organic canned jackfruit is grown by a community owned co-operative and makes a cracking pulled pork bao bun!

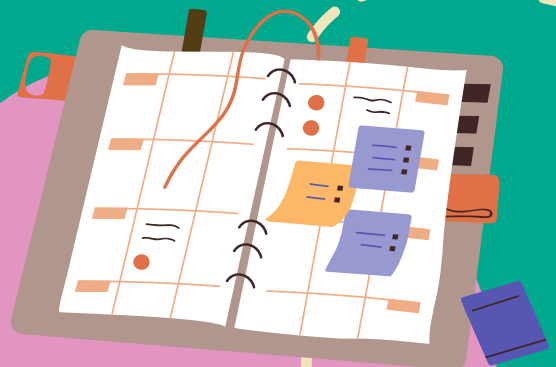
NUTRITIONAL KNOW-HOW: *FUEL* *YOUR VEGAN JOURNEY*

A plant-based diet can be incredibly nutritious, but it's important to make sure you're getting all the essential nutrients you need. With a bit of planning and a varied vegan diet, you can get everything you need.



ALICE

"Vegans can get plenty of protein in their diets by eating a variety of foods. There are a number of food items that can supply any nutrients missing or lacking. I take a supplement just to help cover any shortfall."



Here are some
key things to
keep in mind:



PROTEIN

A common concern is that a vegan diet lacks protein. There are lots of ways to get protein into your diet but it's important to realise that some sources are better than others.



“As a rule of thumb – eating any kind of grain with any kind of bean usually covers all the essential amino acids. Maybe that’s why this combination appears in traditional foods all over the world – rice and peas, tofu and noodles, beans on toast!”

Protein is made up of chains of molecules known as amino acids. There are 20 amino acids found in nature that your body can use to build protein. Of these 9 are considered essential. This means that your body cannot produce them itself, so you need to get them from food and supplements. The remaining 11 are considered non-essential as your body can produce them from the 9 essential amino acids. Animal protein contains all 9 essential amino acids in sufficient amounts. Plants also contain all 9 essential amino acids but, apart from a few exceptions, most typically offer a limited amount of at least 1 essential amino acid.

For instance, beans, lentils, peas, and many vegetables tend to contain low amounts of cysteine and methionine. On the other hand, grains, nuts, and seeds tend to be low in lysine. Because of this, many people refer to plant foods as incomplete sources of protein when compared to animal products. However, as long as you eat a variety of plant-based proteins, this shouldn't be a problem. You can still get enough of all the essential amino acids your body needs.

Let's look at some of those sources of protein available to those wanting to avoid eating animals. There's a whole world out there beyond tofu! Try lentils, beans, nuts, seeds, seitan and tempeh.

PROTEIN SOURCES

TOFU

Don't be scared of tofu, also known as bean curd. Made from soya milk, it's a rich source of complete protein (8g per 100g) and has lots of other suggested (but as yet unproven) health benefits. Calcium levels vary so look for one that's classed as calcium set if you want one with added calcium. It's available in silken, firm, marinated and smoked forms. Think of it as a vehicle for flavour. These versatile sponges soak up sauces and marinades with gusto, meaning you have endless opportunities to turn bland into brilliant. You can use it in both savoury and sweet dishes, from stir fries to salads and pancakes to mousse! Plus, how you cook it changes the texture. Soft and silky is lovely in a soup or sauce, whereas crispy tofu is to die for in a noodle dish!



TEMPEH

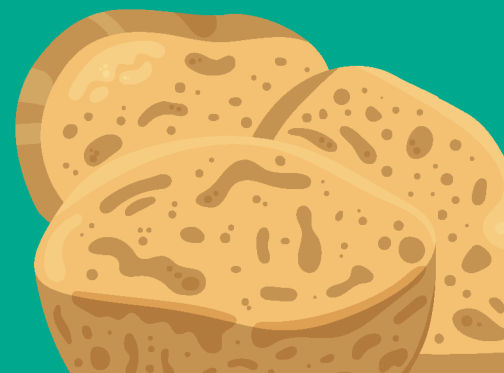
Tempeh is made from fermented soya beans and richer in protein than tofu at 20g per 100g serving. Soya provides all nine of the essential amino acids we need for growth, repair and other functions, making it a useful inclusion for those following a plant-based diet. It holds flavour from spices and marinades really well and is great roasted and stir fired.



"I used to eat a lot of tofu, then I discovered tempeh! This is now my go to ingredient when I want something "meaty" – chopped up small in a vegan carbonara; fried in strips and tossed in a little soy sauce as a great addition to wraps and salads; or used as a chicken substitute in a vegan "coronation tempeh". If you've never tried tempeh, it's like tofu but with a much firmer texture. It always goes down well with my kids (who never pull their punches with my cooking!) and with my guests – vegan or otherwise!"

SEITAN

Seitan, pronounced say-tan, is made from gluten. Sometimes called wheat gluten or wheat meat, it has about 25g of protein per 100g. The protein comes from wheat and feels and looks a lot like meat when cooked. Grill it, sauté it or pan fry it for the best results. You can buy it in the chilled section or make your own at home using vital wheat gluten. It's not suitable for coeliacs or those avoiding gluten.



TVP (TEXTURED VEGETABLE PROTEIN)

Try Suma's **TVP**, made from soya flour, for a good old fashioned taste of vegan nostalgia and a great source of protein with around 9g in each $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving! We sell TVP mince, **sausage** and **burger** mix. It's cheap, easy, quick and super versatile. Just add water, form into sausage or burger shapes and whack them on the barbecue - or shallow fry if barbecuing in January doesn't appeal!

Our traditional gluten-free savoury **nut roast** isn't just for Christmas. Packed full of nutritious nuts and delicious flavours, it's great for lunch, dinner or as a savoury snack and, of course, Sunday lunch with all the vegan trimmings. Any leftovers make a great sandwich filling too.



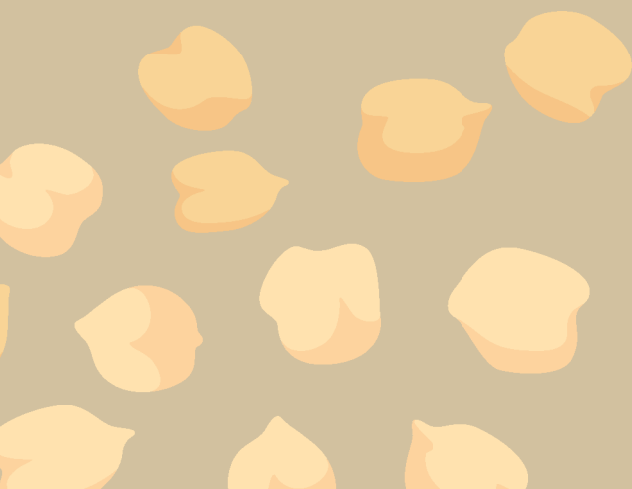
LENTILS

Lentils are the edible seed of legumes. Packed with protein (9g) they're also a fab source of the good prebiotic fibre your gut loves, as well as iron, potassium, vitamin B1, selenium, zinc and folate. These versatile beauties are budget-friendly ingredients and quick to prepare. They're perfect for salads and add tasty and filling bulk to soups, stews, and pies. At Suma we've been peddling lentils to hungry plant eaters since 1977! **Check out** our green, brown, red and black lentils. We sell them dried and ready to use in cans for those who prefer to take the easy option.



CHICKPEAS

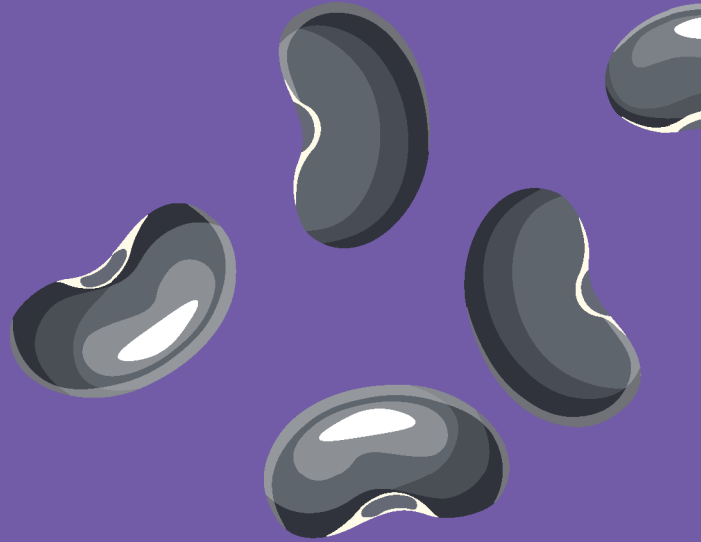
These have so many more uses than **hummus**. Add these affordable and filling legumes to curries, soups, salads and combine with grains. They contain 6g of protein per 80g.





KIDNEY BEANS

Where would chilli be without [kidney beans](#)? Grab some [TVP](#) mince and off you go! There's 5.5g of protein in a 80g serving as well as potassium, folate and fibre.

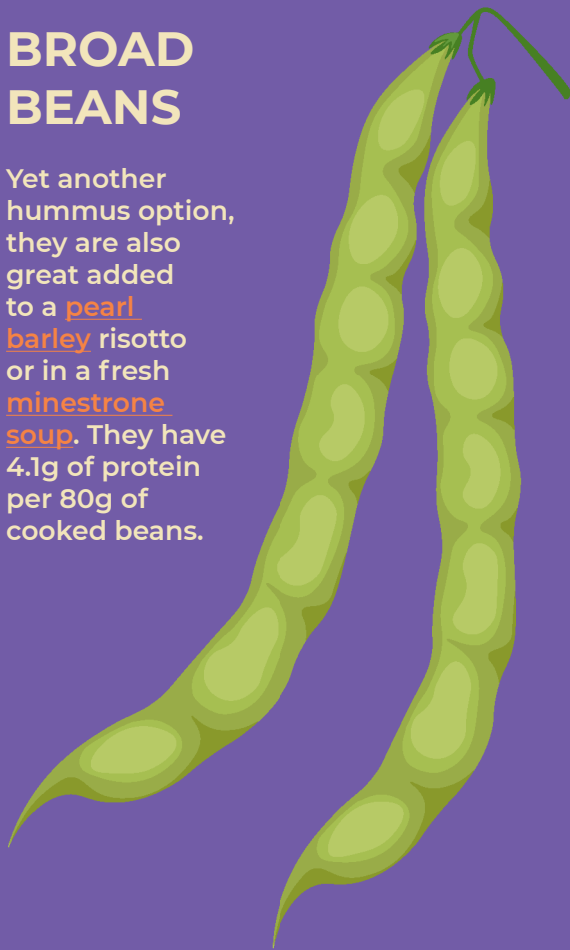


BLACK BEANS

Delicious in burritos, tacos and with nachos, they're also a tasty addition to soups, stews and chilli – and they make a cracking hummus! Packed with heart-friendly nutrients including folate, potassium and fibre, these [versatile beans](#) contain 4.8g of protein per 80g serving.

BROAD BEANS

Yet another hummus option, they are also great added to a [pearl barley](#) risotto or in a fresh [minestrone soup](#). They have 4.1g of protein per 80g of cooked beans.



EDAMAME BEANS

Beans are great sources of protein and these are one of the best (8g per 100g). Get your hands on some of our award-winning [edamame hummus](#) for a tasty alternative to chickpea hummus.



GARDEN PEAS

Yet more legumes masquerading as vegetables! Related to [chickpeas](#), [lentils](#) and [peanuts](#), they're a useful source of iron and B vitamins and have 5.4g of protein per 80g portion of cooked [peas](#).



PUMPKIN SEEDS

Useful as a handy snack on the go, toasted on top of porridge or roasted in salads, these tasty **seeds** have 7g of protein per 30g serving, as well as iron and zinc. Don't forget to save them when you're pumpkin carving!

"I love toasted pumpkin seeds - they're so easy to make and delish!"
Sophie



SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Loaded with selenium and almost 6g of protein per 30g handful, **they're** great chucked on top of a salad, granola or porridge.

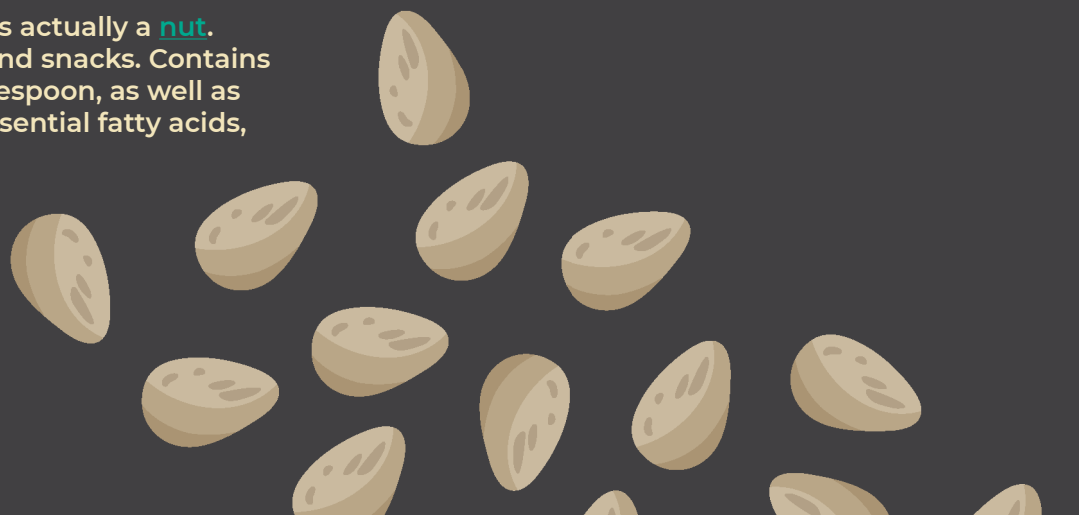


CHIA SEEDS

These soak up liquid to expand into a filling gel-like substance that lends itself to absorbing flavour. Use them to make **chia** puddings, instead of eggs in baking or as a pectin-free jelly. They're good dried sprinkled on top of porridge or salads and in smoothies too. 2 tablespoons contains 4 grams of complete protein, omega 3, calcium, magnesium, selenium and iron.

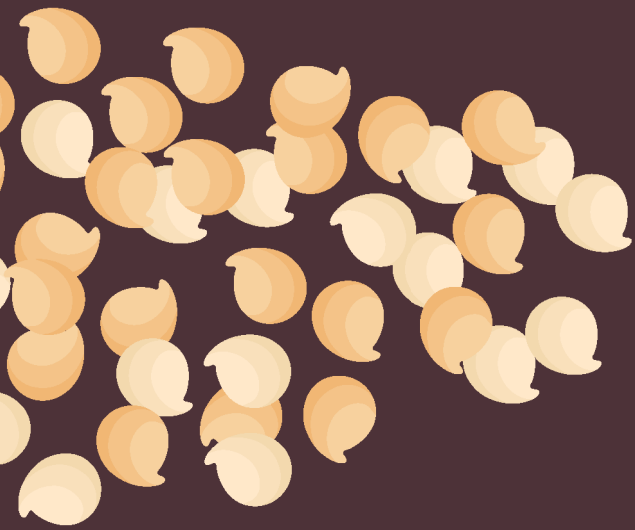
HEMP SEEDS

This complete protein is actually a **nut**. Add to bakes, cereals and snacks. Contains 3.2g of protein per tablespoon, as well as omega 3 and 6, iron, essential fatty acids, potassium and more!



WHEATGERM

You'll get 4.1g of protein from just 1 tablespoon of wheatgerm. This is the nutritious part removed when they make refined white wheat products like flour. It's packed with fibre, magnesium, zinc and folate. Add to bakes and cereals.

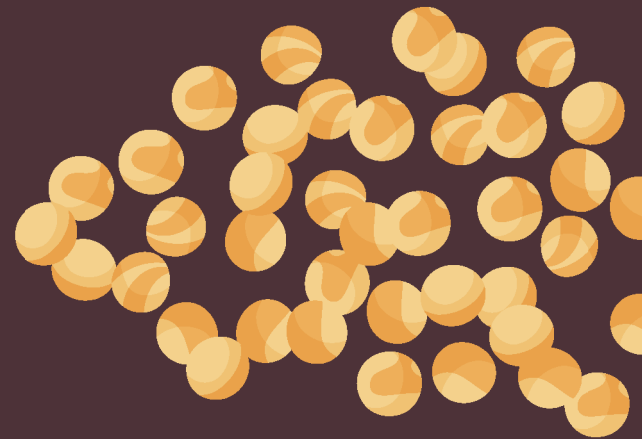


QUINOA

Another complete source of protein, [quinoa](#) (pronounced keen-wah) contains all 9 essential amino acids. It's a seed and not a grain and is incredibly versatile.

AMARANTH

This versatile grain is a complete protein source containing 9g per cooked cup, as well as manganese, magnesium phosphorous and iron. It's similar to quinoa and can be made into 'porridge' or in salads and granola bars. Amaranth flour is a great gluten-free alternative too.

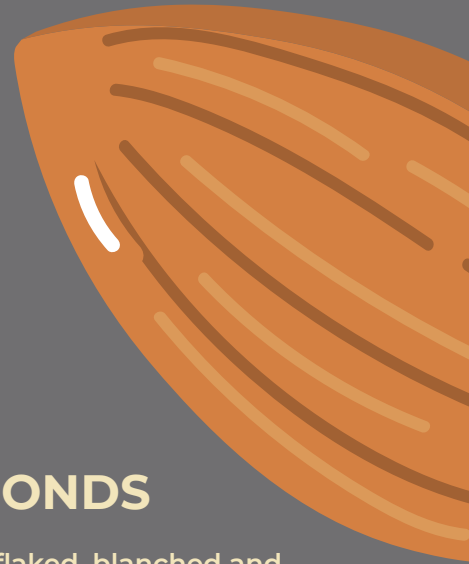


BUCKWHEAT

Lower in protein than amaranth or quinoa, [this](#) is also a complete protein. One cooked cup contains 6g of protein. It's nutty and can be used like oatmeal. It can also be made into flour and is the basis for soba noodles.

PEANUTS

Peanuts are not nuts. Astonishing, I know! Like **lentils**, garden **peas** and soya beans, these are members of the legume family. They're also a good source of protein with 8g in a small handful. Pop them in a curry or fill ya' boots with your favourite **peanut butter**. Suma has every combo; crunchy or smooth, salt or not, organic and Fairtrade available.



ALMONDS

Whole, flaked, blanched and **ground**. We sell them all! You can eat them by the handful (6g of protein), add to baking, or make a cheaper pesto instead of using costly **pine nuts**. They also contain magnesium and calcium. **Almond butter** is also great.



"Peanut butter is great on toast, but also a great ingredient for cooking – adding to stews, or using in satay sauces. Suma's no added salt peanut butters have just one ingredient – peanuts – so you know what's in your food, and you have complete control over ingredients like salt and sugar when cooking."



PISTACHIO NUTS

A small handful contains 5.4g of protein and a good amount of potassium. They're good in baking, ice cream or wherever you want to make something green!



CASHEW NUTS

Did you know you can make cream from **cashews**? It's true. It's also yummy. Toss them into salads, on top of cauliflower cheese, or munch on a handful for 5.3g of protein per 30g and zinc and iron. Or try **cashew butter** on toast.





WILD RICE

The wild variety of rice is chewy, nutty and fab in salads like tabbouleh, soups and pilaf. There's 5.3g of protein per 100g and more potassium, phosphorous and folate than white rice.

OATS

You can do so much with oats. Pancakes, vegan 'meatballs', cookies, overnight oats, flapjack, breakfast bars, oat milk, and good old porridge. Slow-release carbs like oats are full of good fibre and have 4.4g of protein in a 40g serving.

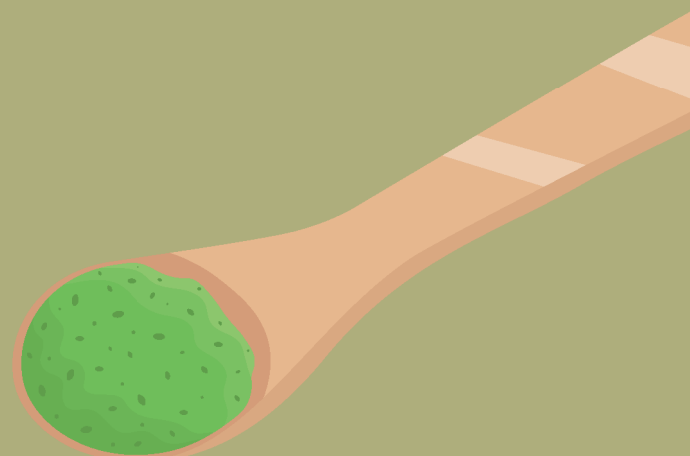


"I love soaked oats. It's just like making porridge, but no cooking required. Make it the night before, and leave it in the fridge overnight. By next morning the oats have softened and swollen. Like porridge, the possibilities for additions and flavours are endless. Soft fruits, dried fruits, banana, nuts, nut butters, seeds, spices, coconut-based yoghurts, and probably many more things I've not thought of yet! A couple of tips – you don't need to use milk, soaking in water works well too. Stir after adding the liquid to make sure there's no nooks that the liquid hasn't got to. Another top tip is to add linseed or chia seed to the oats – they're so good for you, and finding an opportunity to slip a teaspoon in at breakfast is a great way to start the day."



SPIRULINA

This powdered supplement is made from algae and forms a complete protein when mixed with grains, oats, nuts or seeds. Pop a tablespoon in a smoothie, soup or granola bar for an added 4 grams of protein, B vitamins, copper and iron.



VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Two vitamins we would suggest looking out for from day one are B12 and Iodine. B12 is produced by bacteria in the soil, and finds its way in to most animal products as most animals don't clean their food as thoroughly as we do. You may want to make sure you're getting something in your diet that's fortified with B12. Some milk alternatives are, some aren't. Some nooch is, some isn't – it's a case of reading the ingredients.

Iodine is a mineral that we would probably all be deficient in without supplements. For people who consume dairy, the farmers usually do the supplementing for you as cattle feed is often fortified with iodine, and this passes through to the dairy products. For vegans, we need to find some other source – either a fortified food or a supplement.

VITAMIN B12

This nutrient is crucial for nerve function and red blood cell formation. You can find it in fortified plant-based foods or supplements.

IRON

Iron is essential for carrying oxygen in the blood. Include iron-rich foods like beans, lentils, and leafy greens in your diet.

CALCIUM

Calcium is vital for bone health. Get your calcium fix from fortified plant-based milks, leafy greens, and tofu (check for added calcium.)

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

These fatty acids are essential for brain and heart health. Include sources like flaxseeds, chia seeds and walnuts in your diet.



"I love Essential's yeast extract. It's the absolute best and they are also a worker owned co-op like us!"



LISA



CHRIS

"My favourite vegan product is Marigold's B12 enriched Nutritional Yeast – or better known in the vegan world as nooch! Not only does the food help ensure I'm getting a required dose of vitamin B12, but it also helps disguise all my terrible and flavourless cooking with its deep savoury tones. Plus, it's made by Marigold, who I sometimes have the pleasure of dealing with. They're very lovely people."

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR!

Look out for non-vegan ingredients. It is very easy to accidentally eat or drink something with hidden non-vegan ingredients, such as carmine, cochineal, lactic acid, lactose, casein, castoreum, and isinglass. Read the labels – especially when a product boasts a new and improved recipe!

While there is plenty of alcohol that is suitable for vegans, the filtration process can mean some alcohol isn't suitable. Wine, for example, sometimes uses a substance called isinglass made from fish bladders to clarify and remove astringency in white wines. An app called Barnivore is your friend when you're looking for a vegan tippie.

Tomato soups often contain milk products to make them creamier. Our [tomato soup](#) is not one of them, happily. Lee loves our Tomato and Basil soup – it's delicious and completely vegan.

Lots of meaty flavoured crisps are actually vegan but not all of them so check! The meaty flavour often comes from [yeast extract](#), with other ingredients like onions and [smoked paprika](#) helping too. Even if you're not a lover of crisps, there's a great tip for vegans in here – people have been using [yeast extract](#) to create meaty flavours for decades, and you can experiment with it too, adding a small amount to sauces, marinades or [gravy](#).



*"I love the more obscure things like Natures Charm 'calamari' and the mo du 'duck' by Marigold. Next level."
Ash*

What is that and what do I do with it?

A quick look around any good wholefoods or vegan store will turn up things that are plain confusing. Don't despair! The beauty about shopping in your local independent shops is that they know the answer to all your questions. They're small enough to care and experts on their products. Just ask and be willing to try something new. You might just love it! (And if you don't it's not the end of the world.)

VEGAN ON A BUDGET



Most vegan friendly foods on the planet would once have been called 'peasant food' simply because they are the cheapest foods. Veganism can get complicated, but it can also be super simple. Rice, lentils, potatoes, beans and many vegetables are all very healthy, accessible and easy to prepare. Healthy fats don't have to come from avocados; use peanut butter or other nut butters. If you meal prep, avoid the processed foods and concentrate on wholefood plant-based foods, you'll not find many cheaper ways of eating!

Ben explained that it limits choices, leading to a lot less option paralysis. You avoid more aisles in the supermarket. It's actually easier and quicker to get what you need from smaller, independent shops like zero waste shops.

Eat seasonally to make sure you're enjoying fruit and veg at its best and most affordable. Lisa advocates eating pure unprocessed food that's cooked simply with love to maximise the flavours.



ALICE
"Going vegan can be done cheaply. It is the more processed vegan alternatives to some foods that tend to be on the pricier side."

Chilled dairy-free milks can be pricey. Look for store cupboard ones instead and just pop it in the fridge when you're ready to use it.

Cook in batches to save money on cooking costs too. Spending a few hours at the weekend roasting veg in bulk, baking potatoes and breakfast bars can set you up for a week's worth of meals using the oven just once for an hour or so. A batch of roasted tomatoes can make something delicious and different every single day – soup, pasta sauce, lasagne, chilli, curry, bruschetta, etc. Or use a slow cooker to whip up a warming batch of stews, soups or curries.

Don't forget the freezer! Freeze portions of slow cooker meals for use at a later date. Frozen chopped garlic, ginger, herbs and chilli provide flavour on tap with zero waste.

Cans are a convenient store cupboard friend, offering a cost effective and lower waste approach to meal prep. Our Suma bean collection is HUGE. Dive in.

Maurice and Sophie suggest shopping at international supermarkets too. They're often great value, sell spices in bulk and have lots of exciting new foods to try.

Join a food group which allows you to take advantage of wholesale prices. Ask us for more details!

"The best thing I found about going vegan was that food shopping was much cheaper"
Amy

"If I ask for help I am usually surrounded by fellow shoppers happy to share tips and recipes for ingredients I am not yet familiar with. Their enthusiasm and generosity of spirit is heart-warming and has led to some delicious finds!"
Sophie



In essence, if you prepare a lunch now, you can veganise it. It depends on your budget, time constraints, and your relationship with processed foods, but there's a way to create the version of your lunch box now in a variety of plant-based ways.

Lisa swears by peanut butter butties (also known as sandwiches outside Yorkshire) with pickled chillies, tomato and rocket. Or smoked tofu, avocado and pickled onions. Kate's go to lunch is a falafel wrap.

Sophie loves a soup and thinks pea is the easiest by far. Chuck some frozen peas in with some hot vegan bouillon or stock, add a little garlic and mint from the freezer, blend and add to a flask. Easy!

"My favourite packed lunch would consist of a toasted bagel with mashed avocado and hummus, topped with tomato, cucumber and red onion. A packet of dry roasted peanuts and some mango slices."

Lee

EATING OUT

Every vegan can tell you about a disastrous restaurant meal. Sophie was once served ham in rural Poland after ordering a vegan meal. When she queried it, they patiently explained it was 'meat lite' and basically considered to be a vegetable.

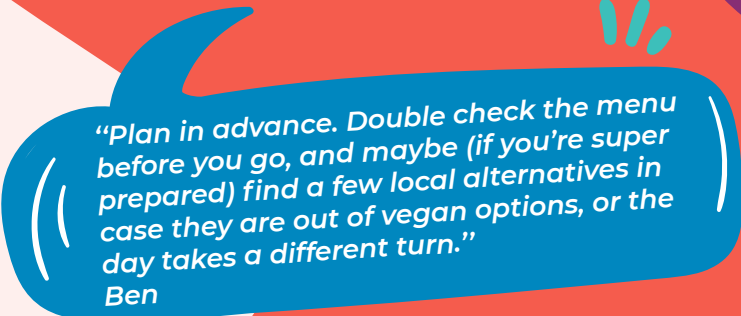
Hopefully the days when restaurants looked at you blankly when you asked for the vegan options are a thing of the past. As veganism grows in popularity and has become mainstream, the hospitality industry has caught on and restaurants and cafes have made huge inroads in creating vegan menus and it's now easy to find somewhere to eat that caters for vegans.



"It's actually harder now to find a restaurant that doesn't cater for vegans!"
Lee

There are always going to be exceptions but with a little forward planning, it's possible to find a recommendation online or via word of mouth to ensure you and your friends are all able to enjoy great food in a sociable environment.

Ben and Lee also swear by the Happy Cow app.



"Plan in advance. Double check the menu before you go, and maybe (if you're super prepared) find a few local alternatives in case they are out of vegan options, or the day takes a different turn."
Ben

And when it isn't great, say so. Customer feedback increases awareness of how important it is to provide delicious and nutritious meals for everyone. It won't get better unless we tell them how it can improve.



"When it comes to eating in a very non-vegan friendly restaurant, take a look at the salads and sides. I have done this before to make a meal as such."
Marie

Marie has a great suggestion for when you can't find a vegan restaurant...



ALICE

"My partner relies heavily on Happy Cow to find local options for dining out and we build holidays around restaurants that cater to vegans. It would be really nice if there was a standardised way of marking vegan dishes on all menus and if every restaurant would offer a vegan option (ideally many vegan options). At least most have moved a bit beyond the standard offering of hummus for those that do provide for vegans."

TRAVELLING AS A VEGAN

Food is always a big part of a trip, especially when you're experiencing different countries and cultures. It's good to be prepared.

"I always take a carton or two of soya milk with me when I go to stay with friends and family or on a UK holiday to ensure I can still have my coffee and tea."

Marie

Kate never goes anywhere without a stash of nooch! Lisa says take snacks, just in case. Sophie does the research before she goes, often relying on Facebook recommendations from fellow vegans. In fact, sometimes the restaurant is the destination! Alice prefers self-catering to increase the control she has over meals.



ALICE

"On holiday we usually self-cater to ensure that if we can't find places to dine out, we can do a shop and cook on the road. Any special items I'm unsure I'll have access to I take along with me."



RECIPES

Where do we start? There are far too many to list here but you'll find many vegan recipes on our website www.suma-store.coop/recipes. A simple Google search will unleash a deluge of delicious vegan goodness.

We'd suggest you make a start with [Bosh](#), [Riverford](#) and [The Happy Pear](#). Plus [Prashad's](#) vegan cookbook is fab. The dishes taste exactly like the food in the restaurant and we all love them!



VEGAN HAIR AND BEAUTY

[ALTER/NATIVE](#) is Suma's range of hair and skin care. We've been cruelty-free from the beginning (1977) and always will be. The range includes deliciously scented soaps, hand wash, skin care bars, and shampoo and conditioner in both bar and liquid form. Made using cruelty-free ingredients and essential oils, there's something for everyone.

Suma also stocks a range of vegan hair dyes from Oiamiga and Lisa recommends The Organic Pharmacy for skincare and Lush for bath time treats.

VEGAN CLOTHING

Vegan clothing, shoe and accessory options are everywhere and often more affordable than the animal derived alternatives. It's impossible to tell so many of the non-leather coats, bags, shoes and boots apart!

Andy told us there are a few things he's not found a great vegan substitute for. Smart belts that aren't made of leather, for example. His tip for these is to buy second hand from a charity shop. That won't sit well with everyone as some people won't want to wear leather at all, but for Andy it means he's not funding animal agriculture and his money is going to a good cause. You do you.



VEGAN HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Many household cleaning products are not cruelty-free or contain ingredients that have been tested on animals.

Ecoleaf by Suma is different.

"In terms of household products, I will now only use Ecoleaf multi-surface cleaner, washing up liquid, hand soap and laundry detergent. All these products are vegan and cruelty-free."
Sophie



VEGAN PARENTING

As a parent of two vegan children, Andy told us how he worries about their nutrient intake more than he does for himself. While he eats a wide variety of fruit and veg, obviously children can be fussy and leave things on their plate. Just because he cooks plenty of greens, does that mean they're eating enough? As a precaution they have multivitamins every morning and fortified milks to drink, on top of a wide variety of fruit and veg.

They also get the children involved in growing and cooking, which can help them to be more adventurous with their foods. Never would he have imagined a 3 year old could be so enthusiastic about eating broad beans as when they harvested their first crop last year, after having planted and cared for them together.

VEGAN HEALTH

This is a contentious and serious issue that Alice highlighted as part of her long-term vegan journey;

This is something to be aware of and to discuss with your healthcare provider to make sure you are aware of the options and making an informed decision.

WHAT ABOUT WHEN IT'S NOT GOING WELL?

Veganuary is not going to all be rainbows and kittens. There will be challenges and moments where you wonder 'what have I done?' We hope that our vegan Suma members can provide some support and suggestions to help when things feel difficult.



ALICE

"Having access to vegan medications has been an issue. I've been in the position where I have had to decide whether I will take a medicine I need that is not vegan or forego the medication in order to maintain my ethics."

HOW DO I DEAL WITH PEOPLE WHO CRITICISE MY CHOICES?

As you've been thinking about Veganuary it's possible you've already come across this. Veganism seems to be something everyone has an opinion on! Don't assume that everyone will be supportive and that's OK. This is your decision and no-one else's. People choose veganism for many different reasons. Veganism is a philosophy and a plant-based diet is a way of eating to align yourself with that philosophy. Explain your view, set your boundary and carry on living your life.

You don't have to set out to change their minds either. Sometimes they are set in their assumptions and there's nothing you can do. As Maurice and Marie explain;

"It can be tough but veganism is not as unusual as it once was. My mission was never to convert others, just to be as compassionate as I can in my own life."

Maurice

"However much you believe it is the right thing to do, others will not. My advice is to pick your battles, if someone is open and wanting to know more share that information, share your opinions, help them on their vegan journey (if that's what they want). If they are against it, for me the easier and more peaceful thing was to let it be. Let them have their beliefs, opinions as sometimes you cannot change someone's mindset and you have to have peace with that. In time, once they came to accept my choice, the conversations around it became neutral, engaging and positive. Instead of trying to argue my case, I will accept their decisions and be at peace with it, for my own good. I will share facts rather than emotions and my beliefs. I will share articles, news stories, factual information, YouTube videos etc. and allow them to see for themselves. The proof is in the pudding as they say!"

Marie



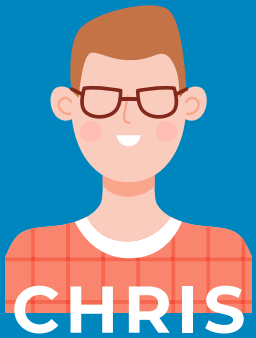
"My family has never accepted my life choices, veganism included. I used to get a lot of snide comments, was offered no options at family dinners. I just brought my own. People who speak out against veganism, claim we push our choices on others, etc, frustrate me when they behave as if I am not allowed to ask about what is in my food, to order what I want, to question my own choices as a consumer. My partner is very supportive and despite not being vegan will prepare and search out vegan food as default."

Ben responds in kind and sticks to the facts:

You'll need to be flexible too. Having to prepare different meals at home can be tricky, but having confidence in your rationale and being willing to prep your own food will help. You may even convince people to join you if you can tempt them with your delicious vegan cooking!

"A healthy mix of compassion and honesty - empathetic to the fact that we are all brought up in a society that deliberately separates us from what animals experience, so we all become accustomed and separated from how meat and dairy are actually created. Deal with it honestly; not patronising or confrontational, just be truthful about what factually happens."
Ben

"The hardest thing I found about going vegan was people's input on my experience, because whoever it is, whatever their experience has been, this was my own journey. Going vegan isn't just changing one's diet to a plant-based one, but it's an entire change of lifestyle, of all the things we've grown up to accept and normalise. To anyone trying to go vegan or plant based, I recommend only listening to those who can offer helpful and understanding advice based on your own experience and lifestyle."



If you are younger you may need to get buy in from a parent or carer before making changes to what you eat. There's lots of literature available to help guide the conversation and provide reassurance that you can get the nutrients you need.

Criticism can also come from other vegans. The Vegan Society definition of veganism is:

"Veganism is a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of animals, humans and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals."

That doesn't go far enough for some. Here's what Alice had to say:

"I've not found the vegan community very supportive when it comes to understanding one another or listening to the reasoning behind some choices that individual vegans make for themselves. I prefer The Vegan Society definition as the most realistic approach. I think it is a positive outcome when people are working toward being more ethical, including becoming vegetarian or vegan, and that we shouldn't criticise each other, rather offer support and look for opportunities to educate."



"The hardest thing for me was disappointing my dad who had given me a gun at the age of 9!"



WHAT ABOUT WHEN IT FEELS DIFFICULT AND YOU'RE CRAVING CHEESE, CHOCOLATE OR A BURGER?

You've chosen to go all in with Veganuary but if you feel overwhelmed remember that going vegan doesn't have to be an overnight transformation. Instead, think of it as a gradual shift, where you explore new flavours, textures, and culinary creations. This month is an opportunity to ease yourself into it. Be kind to yourself and set yourself achievable goals.



"I became vegan in stages, starting as a teen, with dairy the final item I cut from my diet when I was in my mid-30s. Then there were no good dairy alternatives for most products, so it was a bit more difficult than would be now (to sacrifice certain foods), with all of the variety."

If you have cravings for foods that aren't vegan, Lisa suggests trying to narrow your cravings down to sweet, salty or sour and then find something vegan that ticks that box.

Sophie suggests you always have a stash of vegan chocolate on hand. Always! Marie agrees and adds that looking for a vegan alternative is a good excuse to try all the chocolate!

Ben's tip is to remove yourself from the environment if you can to give yourself the space to process that experience so you can make a level-headed choice. If you can't, talk to someone who might understand, perhaps another vegan. Be honest and open to hearing the response.

Maurice found that if he focused on the reasons for becoming vegan, it became surprisingly easy to ignore cravings.



WHAT ABOUT WHEN I AM

TIREO?

Lisa suggests doing your meal prep the night before. If that's not an option, keep plenty of tinned basics to throw something together like a chilli which can be really quick. She also always has store cupboard essentials at hand to cut corners to create depth of flavour, like tamari, miso, good stock, chocolate or cocoa powder.

Let's be honest, in the real-world folks don't cook from scratch every single night. We're tired, busy and looking for something easy and quick. Despite the likes of Instagram and prime time television trying to tell us otherwise, weekday dinners are more likely to be super-fast, low energy options like a ready meal, beans on toast, or a bowl of soup.

If you're looking for some easy meals for Veganuary, check out [Suma's vegan meals in a can](#). These handy store cupboard staples include a [vegan Spag Bol](#), [vegan Meatballs](#) in a Bolognese sauce, a spicy [vegan Chorizo Stew](#) and a [Veg Stew and Dumplings](#). Then there's our famous and much-loved [Baked Beans and Vegan Sausages](#), as well as Baked Beans on their own for the purist

"My favourite vegan Suma product is Suma baked beans and sausages – perfect for a quick and easy meal if you are short on time, that the kids enjoy too."

Amy

Plus, we have a vegan twist on everyone's fave - classic [Mac n Cheese](#) - and a slightly more virtuous [Cheesy Pasta Pot](#) with added veg.

We've got three raviolis too, including our new mushroom ravioli which is now totally vegan. If curry is your thing, seek out our brand-new, and just in time for Veganuary, Saag Aloo and Chickpea and Lentil Daal. Created especially with hungry, time poor vegans in mind. These tasty and warming bowls of goodness are the perfect solution to the endless 'what's for dinner' conundrum! Just heat and eat. Totally vegan, totally delicious.



WHAT ABOUT WHEN I SLIP UP?

You are getting used to a new way of eating and shopping. It takes time to get to know what all the obscure ingredients are on packaging. All Suma's vegan products are clearly labelled so you don't have to worry about label scanning.

There's a lot to learn and, while we hope this guide will help, you will still find there's lots of unexpected surprises on the way. You're bound to make mistakes. It's OK. The good news is that more and more food products are being labelled as vegan, making shopping less stressful.

Here's what Suma vegans had to say about what to do if and when you slip up.



"Take it one day at a time and don't be too hard on yourself if you accidentally eat/drink something that isn't vegan."
Lee

"A slip up isn't the end of the world, be kind to yourself and just do your best!"
Amy

"Be kind to yourself, but also hold yourself accountable. Mistakes happen, we are not infallible. Acknowledge the reasons why truthfully. Don't lose sight of why you went down this journey in the first place. If you feel guilt, perhaps your actions did not align with your ethics. Guilt is okay to feel, it's a useful emotion to be in touch with. That's different from shame, which it converts into if you ignore that inner voice. It can be a good idea to have the support of a mixed group of vegan and non-vegan people to keep that accountability there. Reconnect with your initial motivations, find accountability, and get back on that wagon."
Ben



"Doing a great job at cutting out animal products is almost as beneficial as doing a perfect job! Celebrate every successful meal, and remember the reasons you're doing this – whether that's for the animals, the planet or your health."

AFTER VEGANUARY...

What happens when February 1st rolls around? Some of you will go back to eating as you did before Veganuary and some will remain fully vegan. There's also every permutation in between and it's your decision. Every change you adopt on a longer-term basis will contribute to better personal health, animal welfare and ecological benefit.

"My top tips for staying vegan are to educate yourself about food politics, animal welfare and stay up to date with ecological issues. When you read about the suffering animals go through to provide us with food, it gives you a big incentive to stay on track."

Amy

"The reason why I became vegan, and why it continues to be the right decision for me, is because I care about animals. I don't want them to suffer because of the choices that I make. I always felt uneasy when I consumed meat, but now I have peace knowing my beliefs and my actions are aligned."

Lee

"Even 9 years into being vegan, I still feel a pride and optimism when looking at a plate of plant based wholefoods."

Ben

We hope you found this guide useful. Let us know how you got on during Veganuary and what your plans are for veganism.

   @SumaWholefoods

