

Vegan's the way

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The green brigade is set to ensure that more people adopt the vegan way of life in 2012

What do Bill Clinton, Petra Nemcova, Bryan Adams and the Williams sisters talk about when they come together on a common platform? It's definitely not about politics, we can assure you that. Maybe they'd have a word about music or fashion, or maybe sports. But what's going to cook their goose, or more appropriately, their tofu, is the direction in which their stint with veganism is heading.

Some of the world's most recognizable faces have now embraced this lifestyle choice that completely does away with the use of animal products. And it seems the city is also warming up to the concept of going vegan this year. Many Chennaites have been prompted to take up this initiative to lead a 'healthier, compassionate and environmentally sustainable life'. Ask finance professional Lekha Nandakishore and she reveals, "I had been considering going vegan for quite some time now. And the New Year provided me with the best excuse to do so.

Apart from doing my bit for the planet and the well-being of animals that have no one to speak for, I realised that veganism entailed a much healthier lifestyle. The dishes are all plant-based, require minimum time to cook and are practically consumable by anyone."

Going vegan is an interesting notion, but those following this lifestyle say it's more a matter of conviction than anything else. Helen C Xavier, a clinical psychologist and a professional working with an MNC gives us a low-down on the challenges of turning vegan, "About two years ago, I stopped using all milk products, much to the shock of my mother. The Christmas that year marked the very first of our many celebrations - sans cakes, sweets and chocolates. From that point on, there was no turning back.

Subsequently, I stopped using leather, silk and cosmetic products tested on animals." There are also those in Chennai who have dedicated their lives towards keeping this spirit alive through their own personal and professional endeavours.

Preethi Sukumaran, CEO and co-founder of an e-commerce company whose forte is cruelty-free and sustainable consumer goods, says, "Going vegan has given me a finer appreciation for the rights of all sentient creatures and by logical extension, a greater tolerance for all viewpoints put forth by friends and family. I ensure that our products are vegan and cruelty free and it happens to be a very sound environmental decision."

She goes on to add, "We recently came up with our very first offering - a natural detergent powder, made from organic soapberries. And we're glad to say that the response from our consumers has been encouraging." Maybe that's all everyone needs - a little encouragement to set the vegan ball rolling.

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