

## The Veganistas: How Veganism Is Becoming A Way Of Life

Veganism, after all, rests on the idea that humans are compassionate beings and it is in their nature to choose kindness over killing—or that such a state must be aspired to and can be taught or inculcated.

LACHMI DEB ROY | 16 JANUARY 2019



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If not for that goat milk, Gandhi would have been vegan. Yes, that's how close India is to having a patent on one of the biggest global fads of recent times. 'Fad' or 'trend' perhaps would be a wrong word for something that comes out of a deeper philosophy. Veganism, after all, rests on the idea that humans are compassionate beings and it is in their nature to choose kindness over killing—or that such a state must be aspired to and can be taught or inculcated. Those who turn vegans see it as a life-changing transformation free of any religion, propaganda, violence, lies, guilt, cruelty, rules, agenda, guru or a guidebook. A lot of that can be admired, a lot of it can also be submitted to a careful, respectful and sceptical analysis. But whichever side of that cheese omelette or chocolate sundae (or smoked pork) you stand, there are things here that we can learn from and apply—for the sake of the planet.

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Veganism A Way Of Life

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But back to Gandhi first. Whether you prefer to bring him down a few notches, thinking of him as a faddist, or to ennoble the 'fad' itself by linking it to him, the historical connection is interesting. From a family steeped in Vaishnav traditions in Gujarat—with the very visible imprint of Jainism—it's easy to trace that movement in the mind towards non-violence as a moral ideal, leading up to a whole worldview around collective sustainability. It's also easy to see how these ideas also link up with a kind of monkish renunciation. How thinkers have associated vegetarianism with celibacy (even if a handful of hundreds of millions in India will not agree). How Gandhi, before journeying to England as a young man, swore to his mother that he would not touch "wine, women and meat" (an association that will strike us now as anachronistic and sexist). Or how he linked intake of milk to "animal passions" (remember all those film scenes with the coy bride). A freeze-frame of the noble intent and a touch of the mental confusion going with it, therefore, is already available in the early Gandhi, way before British woodworker Donald Watson coined the word 'vegan' in 1944.

The confusions around veganism extend beyond how the word is to be pronounced. For starters, it's not the same thing as being vegetarian. A masala dosa from that neighbourhood Udipi joint would be vegan (if there's no ghee), but the butter milk you wash it down with is not. And yet, a lot of its primary impulse comes as a reaction to the cruelty and excesses of the meat industry, which it shares with vegetarianism. Paul McCartney famously said, "If all slaughterhouses had glass walls, everybody would be vegetarian." That simply gets extended to dairy products. Actress Richa Chadha became a vegan two years back when she realised the kind of unethical practices that goes into keeping cows pregnant throughout their life because humans want to have milk. "I think to be a vegan is a compassionate choice," she says.

Taken to its logical extreme, any kind of animal product would be forbidden in veganism as a lifestyle choice. And not just most Indians, but most of humanity would fail the test. For it's not just that tall glass of lassi, that plate of thair saadam, or ice cream or mango shake, that would be sinful. You can't carry a leather bag, or wear wool in winter, that pearl necklace is a no-no, so is that Kanjeevaram, all the piano you've heard is a sin (the keys are ivory), so are all the songs with tabla or most other drums (animal skin), or even string instruments where animal gut was used. Yes, ethical alternatives can be found in many instances, but you get the drift. Don't even call your darling 'honey'.

The other big strand in veganist thought has to do with biology. The idea that humans are naturally vegetarian; that monkeys are vegetarian; that the convoluted shape of our intestines are more like that of deer and not the linear one of lions; that drinking milk beyond infancy is unnatural to all other mammals (not to speak of snatching some other animal's milk).

A few contrasting thoughts here before going to the practitioners, the evangelists

“After a doctor’s hour-long presentation on how diet can prevent 15 common fatal diseases, I was convinced about veganism.”

*Aamir Khan*

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and the sceptics. The vitamin B12 cannot be got from anywhere other than animal sources, and most vegans have to pop a pill to make amends there. Then, teeth: humans are heterodontic. We have incisors to tear/cut plant food and molars to grind them, but also canines for meat, a sign of our omnivorous nature. And our closest ape relatives, chimpanzees and bonobos, are omnivorous too. Frugivorous mostly, subsisting on fruit. But they are more than just opportunistically non-vegetarian (consuming meat if they come across a carcass), they actually hunt monkeys, birds and smaller mammals, and chomp down termites and insects (even if all that forms just 3 per cent of their diet). There’s also the troubling thought that it’s precisely the expanded nutritional palette brought about by cooked meat that may have made the ape brain grow and created the human being in evolution.

But now that we are here, and in billions, and since the planet groans under our weight, choices can still be made. Richa Chadha was quite clear about it. The dairy industry doesn’t function the way it used to when “our parents were consuming milk”, she says. Lord Krishna wasn’t vegan either, but the cows then were kept in good conditions (and heard a lot of good flute). Now they have chemicals and steroids pumped into them to stimulate them to produce more milk, while the calf is cruelly separated from the mother. “If you ever witness that, I don’t think anybody will ever have the desire to drink milk again,” says Chadha.

She doesn’t believe in lecturing people, though, because “the entire philosophy of veganism is based on live and let live”. The desire must come from within. “I work with the NGO ResQ and I’ve seen how male cattle get thrown out of trucks. It’s inhuman to drink milk when you know how female cattle are pumped with hormones and forced to give milk. Sometimes blood comes out from their udder. The male cattle are not even this lucky—they often get separated at birth, to be given away to slaughterhouses because they are of no use in the dairy industry. There’s a lot of cruelty and I don’t want to carry all the negativity in my head. Plus, meat can cause cancer and this has been confirmed by WHO.” And how does she feel, physically, after becoming a vegan? “My hair and skin are better,” she says.

Dr Nandita Shah is one of the earliest stalwarts of veganism in India—in 2005, she founded Sharan, wishing to connect people to animals and nature in order to heal themselves and the planet. “It’s a documented fact that the slaughterhouse worker suffers from emotional problems—violence, anger, suicidal and homicidal tendencies, drinking, addiction—because they are always dealing with death. They do the work nobody else wants to do,” she says.

Does the seed of human violence spring from our acceptance of cruelty vis-a-vis how meat and milk come to our table? It’s not a self-evident fact, but what Hannah Arendt called the “banality of evil”—how cruelty, when repeated, becomes so mundane that we no longer balk—does resonate here. If we see an animal being stoned, we want to stop it. But meat, leather, wool, silk and animal testing happen out of our sight. Veganism, Dr Shah says, “is a social justice movement where equality and justice to every living being is asked for. When one stops commodifying any living creature, one starts seeing the world in a whole new way.” It’s conditioning that allows us to selectively love animals, she adds. To feel pain when a dumb tourist stones an egret in Bharatpur, but calmly dig into chicken curry at the jungle lodge afterwards.

If you’re an environmentalist by orientation, consider the fact that animal agriculture is the world’s leading cause of habitat destruction and species extinction. Research published by cbsnews.com says salt water fish will be extinct by 2048. An international team of ecologists predicts our oceans will be empty of fish by then. Why? Overfishing, for starters. Already, 29 per cent of edible fish and seafood species have declined by 90 per cent. But it’s not just about having seafood on our plates. Aquatic animals also filter toxins from water and protect the shorelines. A natural coast guard.

Any intense pressure on natural resources is detrimental to ecology—livestock meat is a good example. Forests need to be cut down to create ranches, and you could drown many times over in the amount of water a bovine needs to drink so it can become that burger on your table. Says Tiasa Adhya, conservationist and wildlife biologist, “Converting our diet in ways that reduce our pressure on the natural world and, in turn, on our own future is a significant step towards conservation. Our personal choice of meat-eating disintegrates the very natural system that sustains us. Chemical treatments to increase food production are a health concern for the planet, causing terminal illnesses like cancer.”

Dr Shah started her vegan journey in the early 1980s when she understood that to consume cow’s milk, a cow is artificially inseminated and her baby taken away from her. “I immediately thought about my grandmother’s ‘chikh’, a pudding made from colostrum. I felt a knot in my stomach. I realised that when we consume colostrum, the calf hasn’t even had the first drop of milk from its mother,” she says.

Veganism alone cannot guarantee love for all. Says Sayan Mukherjee, marine engineer, vegan activist and a fitness freak from Calcutta, “There’s a growing movement to integrate speciesism into the intersectionality movement.” The idea of human superiority over animals is just another axis on the interlocking systems of power that impact the most marginalised. Very often speciesism language is used to describe the marginalised. Carol J. Adams, in her feminist vegan critical theory laid out in the book *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, says how misogyny and meat-eating are similar in mechanism. Both require objectification—the separation of mind from matter. And women are frequently referred to as meat.

Beyond the social, there’s pure biology: diet, nutrition and our bodies. Says Dr Shah, “Greens and beans have more protein per calorie than chicken or steak. We are told lies by the companies that want to sell animal products. Excess protein causes acidity, gout, kidney failure, osteoporosis, allergies and cancer, and yet we are urged to have more of it.”

There’s a lot of confusion on whether animal protein increases the risk of cancers. The answers are not as straightforward as the question. According to research commissioned by Cancer Council in Australia, there exists a clear body of evidence to link bowel cancer with consumption of red and processed meat (but it’s just one in six cases). WHO classifies processed meats—ham, salami, bacon and frankfurters—as a Group 1 carcinogen, indicating strong evidence of causation, including for stomach cancer. Beef, lamb and pork are classified as ‘probable’ carcinogens.

“The way the meat is cooked is very important,” says Dr Jaskaran Singh Sethi, director and head of department, Radiation Oncology, Fortis Hospital. “Cooking meat at high temperatures above 100° C, in direct contact with the flame, creates possible carcinogens like heterocyclic amines and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Stewing, poaching and steaming create lesser amounts of those. Processed meat has a lot of nitroso compounds and nitrites, potential carcinogens. The way animals are reared in the farms is also a factor.” He means the pesticides and hormones used in feed, which result in toxic residues.

But does animal protein itself pose a risk? “There isn’t sufficient data and direct evidence to say that,” says Dr Sethi. “Further studies of biomarkers of intake and metabolism need to be done to fully understand the association between these food items and cancer risk. Still it’s advisable to limit the consumption of red meat and processed meat in particular.” Nutrients like high fat content, heme iron and choline are on the radar; the latter is linked to “increase in inflammation”.

Actress Kajal Agarwal turned a vegan a couple of years ago for health reasons. “I was extremely sensitive to gluten and milk: they caused chronic stomach pain. A vegan diet doesn’t by itself help in weight reduction. But I feel energetic,” she says. Genetically babies need milk, adults don’t. Every animal eats according to instinct.

“I have been sensitive to gluten and milk. On

But humans eat according to advertisements and social conditioning. “In the animal kingdom, it’s only humans who drink others’ milk,” she adds.

How did it go for her? Well, it’s difficult for anyone turning vegan in India, one of the world’s top milk-producing countries, where no vegetarian spread is complete without paneer, raita, ghee and milk-based sweets. But not impossible. Just that one needs to plan. Kajal recalls, “It used to be a task to find almond milk. I’d make it at home. But now everything is just a phone call away.”

A 2016 poll by Ipsos MORI showed the number of vegans has risen in the UK by 360 per cent in just a decade. And in the US, there were 600 per cent more vegans in 2017 than there were in 2014. In India too, a recent article on a website run by Franchise India Holdings Limited pegs the 360 per cent rise at 360 per cent, though absolute numbers may look more meagre. Chirag Medira, an ethnographer, design thinker and ex-army man, is one of them. For him, veganism is not just a diet, but “an identity that surpasses all man-made lenses of culture, traditions, society and nationalities, a more conscious and intuitive global identity. It’s NOT a choice, but a moral obligation for the three trillion animals slaughtered every year, a massacre we are a part of in our daily lives,” says Medira.

Medira also believes he is in his best physical and mental health, even better than what he was during his army days—he finds living without conscious and subconscious guilt quite freeing. “All health starts with mental health, and in today’s world the suppressed truths of us being murderers affects us at a deeper level. When I turned vegan, I felt this uncontrollable surge of clean, dynamic and natural energy I had never experienced before,” he says.

Author and travel blogger Shivya Nath had no idea an ordinary ‘chicken bus’ ride in Nicaragua would transform her life. But that’s how it is with the road; it changes you when you least expect it. “I no longer remember what our destination was, only that the chicken bus—so called because people are crammed in like chickens—was far more crowded than usual because it was New Year eve, and locals were heading home to the countryside,” says Nath. “An old lady kept her sack next to my feet, and I felt something moved.” When staring didn’t work, she asked her politely in Spanish to move it. Minutes later, she felt something poking her back. Much to her horror, inside were three little squeaking chicks trying to survive in a sack without a hole to breathe. “I breathed a sigh of relief when the lady got off at her stop. Clearly, she had taken the ‘chicken bus’ literally,” adds Nath.

A month or so later, when Nath was making an egg in her friend’s apartment, the incident came back to haunt her. “I knew the eggs we eat wouldn’t become chicks, but I wanted to know what eggs really were, what conditions they came from.” When she started reading, she was shocked. She had been vegetarian for over a decade, but had no idea that by consuming milk products, honey and other animal products, she was still contributing to animal cruelty. This was Nath’s foray into veganism.

“I stopped eating meat four or five years ago. What has happened now is that I’ve stopped having milk and milk products as well.”

The lifestyle choices it implies means abjuring not just leather, silk and wool, but also cosmetics that have been tested on animals; also, not visiting places based on captivating and commodifying animals such as the zoo, circus and water worlds. “I avoid any lifestyle products that feature animal products like honey, beeswax and goat milk. It’s a myth that one can get protein only from meat or eggs. I get mine through a balanced diet, which features lots of legumes, green vegetables and soya tofu,” adds Nath.

Most cities around the world have a vegan movement in swing, and apps like Happycow make it easy to discover vegan-friendly places. Nath has been travelling

becoming vegan, I started eating clean and feeling energetic too.”

*Kajal Agarwal*

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**Sonam Kapoor**

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constantly for over five years now, and has been vegan for the last three. “It sounds difficult, but actually, every cuisine has dishes that are accidentally vegan or can be customised. I’m happy to drink green tea. Many of my vegan friends have mastered the art of coffee and chai with almond, soy or oat milk,” she says.

But what’s with milk? “Infants and children produce enzymes that break down lactose, but as we grow up, many of us lose this capacity,” says Anuradha Sawhney, former head of PETA India and author of *The Vegan Kitchen: Bollywood Style!*. “Lactose intolerance is common, affecting about 95 per cent of Asian Americans, 74 per cent of Native Americans, 70 per cent of African Americans, 53 per cent of Mexican Americans, and 15 per cent of Caucasians.” See that last figure against an old pastoral history, which India shares.

And what about dairy products and bone health? It’s apparently debatable. An analysis published in the *British Medical Journal* says most studies fail to show any link between dairy intake and fractures. In one study, researchers tracked the diets, exercise and stress fracture rates of adolescent girls, and concluded dairy products and calcium do not prevent stress fractures. Another study of over 96,000 people found the more milk men consumed as teenagers, the more bone fractures they experienced as adults!

“Milk is not the problem, the quality of milk is,” says Luke Coutinho, who styles himself as a ‘holistic lifestyle coach’ using integrative medicine. “Most of us have grown up drinking milk and eating milk products. So, have our grandparents. Its source and the way the source has changed create the problem.” Sawhney cites how cruelly cows are kept tethered. The milk-extracting machines are fixed to their udders, even if they are turned on and off during milking timings. Even if a cow has an infection or her milk has run dry, these machines keep on squeezing the udders. Cows and buffaloes are also injected with Oxytocin, a drug banned for humans, to stimulate milk production.

Vegans believe lactose and casein are not really great for our health. “In fact, people who consume milk are more prone to osteoporosis and cancer, contrary to the dairy industry line that says ‘drink milk for healthy bones’. Moreover, dairy is one of the leading causes of obesity and cholesterol. No external cholesterol is good for our body,” says Medira.

Becoming a vegan needs a lot of thought, effort and investment, if there’s no easy access to good quality produce. Being creative with cooking is the trick. An ideal vegan diet includes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, nuts, seeds and legumes. A typical menu might include grain porridge with fresh fruit for breakfast, a veggie stir-fry with quinoa for lunch, and a bean and vegetable soup with a leafy-green salad for dinner.

Being a global fad helps. The mushrooming restaurants, cafes, snacks, ice-cream parlours, clothing concepts and home decor devoted to veganism attest to it. “It’s unfortunate that very few people follow veganism with the right intention,” says Coutinho. “For most, it’s just about following what others are doing...herd mentality.”

Sawhney feels it’s not too difficult in India: there are already so many vegetarian places. One only needs to inform the server that you don’t want any dairy products. “Today in India, chefs and waiting staff in restaurants understand this term. It’s no longer like what it was back in 2000 when I turned vegan, when we had to sing a long litany of stuff to avoid in one’s food...no ghee, no cream, no cheese, no curd, no butter, no white sauce, no paneer...and invariably the food would have to be turned away because there would be some dairy product or the other in it,” she recalls.

Milk may be essential to the Indian palate. But unfortunately, milk production can’t keep pace with our population growth. It’s adulteration that chips in. And you get pesticides, urea, aflatoxin and such like, all potential carcinogens. “They’re linked to the development of various cancers...hepatocellular, colon, lung, prostate,

“It is inhuman to drink milk when you know how female cattle are pumped hormones and forced to give milk.”

**Richa Chadha**

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brain, kidney and leukemia...as per multiple reports from across the world,” says Dr Sethi. “Ammonium sulphate is associated with respiratory diseases.” In a ~~short~~ study published in the *British Medical Journal*, the galactose in milk, associated with higher oxidative stress, is cited as the villain.

But some nutritionists believe completely eliminating animal food can lead to a lot of deficiencies. “Vegan diets are low in vitamin B12, which can be reconciled with supplements,” says Karishma Chawla, a Mumbai-based nutritionist. “There’s a risk of low protein as well. Hence it’s important to plan meals to include a variety of nutrient-dense foods.” Many people find it easier to start by eliminating one or two things from the diet and replacing them with healthy vegan ~~alternatives~~. Coutinho is harsher. “Any diet that’s not flexible in terms of options and requires you to eliminate a certain food group forever is a fad. A good diet is the one that’s flexible and dynamic in nature,” he says.

If you choose to go vegan, it’s important to carefully plan your nutrition. One cannot wake up one morning and decide to go vegan. Veganism requires you to eliminate all sources of meat, fish, eggs and dairy. Hence, a vegan diet should be designed in such a way that it makes sure one is eating adequate protein via lentils, pulses, legumes, nuts and seeds. Most non-vegans consider protein the mysterious element in a vegan diet. “Vegans can either be under-~~ating~~ protein or overeating ~~protein~~,” says Coutinho. “Cereals and pulses offer a complete protein. A vegan diet has enough options to meet a person’s dietary needs, just that it needs to be planned and executed well.”

Delhi-based nutritionist Kavita Devgan says, “The best option to mark up the protein math of our body requirements can be pea or soy.” A lot of vegans, anticipating deficiency, turn to protein powder. But consuming too much protein can itself be dangerous. “Our body can digest only 12-15 gm of protein during a meal, and this can be met with our regular intake. Too much protein isn’t digested well by your body and it piles up as fat,” says Coutinho.

Research shows that the average vegan diet is higher in vitamin C and fibre, and lower in saturated fat, all of which are beneficial. Vegans also have a lower BMI than meat-eaters—in other words, they are skinnier. “Being a bodybuilder, I was initially sceptical of a vegan diet’s efficacy in helping me build and retain lean muscle,” says Sayan Mukherjee. “But the more I read, the more I found that a vegan diet is adequate in providing all essential macro- and micro-nutrients, including vitamins and proteins.”

Bodybuilding on a vegan diet was an issue. “My gym trainer was disappointed with my decision. But I was determined to prove them wrong and I had the science on my side. I definitely felt more energetic than ever, though some would say it’s a placebo effect. My cardiovascular capacity ~~increased~~ and my lifting prowess went through the roof.” He encountered an obstacle when it came to protein supplements: the standard is whey protein. But he soon came to know of vegan protein powder brands in India made of high-quality pea.

And what of restaurateurs who keep the faith? Vikramaditya Sharma, founder of Purple Greene, Delhi, knew he would use stoneware and avoid bone china as it contained bone ash, not serve food made with cheese containing animal rennet and serve gelatos not containing any gelatine. “Cooking vegan was never the challenge,” says Arun Tyagi, chef at Purple Greene. “The process remains the same, just some ingredients aren’t easily available. The key was to adopt some of the soups, salads, small bites, main meals and desserts to the vegan grid, ensuring they continue to be delicious.”

The converts are happy. “I have emb~~aced~~ a vegan lifestyle for a year and it’s indeed one of my best decisions in my 61 years on this planet,” says Subrata Ghosh, an architect in Calcutta. “I feel sorry it took so long.” Personal and professional issues drove him—last May, it suddenly struck him that no other species had ever hurt him as much as his own kind. His response: veganism. “It’s difficult for people to be 100 per cent vegan; some medicines are coated with animal fat,” he says. But he knows children who follow selective veganism, on a few days of the week, just “to reduce the carbon footprint”.

“I’d turned vegetarian at a very young age,” says Stefan Kaye, a Delhi-based musician and actor with roots in England. “I recall the moment as a six-year-old making the connection between animals, which, we are told as small infants, are our friends, presented to us as cuddly toys and anthropomorphised Disney characters, but also as the dead thing on my plate.” Shortly after this, sometime in the late ’70s, Kaye stopped eating meat, eggs and then gradually all animal products. Veganism was little understood then. “School dinners were always a problem,” he recalls. “For a few years, I’d eat potato chips with a pickled onion from a nearby fish and chip shop. I was considered to be a problematic child with an eating disorder.”

Carrots, in Bangalore, is touted as India’s first vegan fine dining restaurant. They also prepare gluten-free, sugar-free and other allergy-friendly options on request. Says managing partner Susmitha Subbaraju, a vegan herself, “Our bread, dips, sauces, desserts, dairy-alternative milk...everything is prepared in-house.”

Wholesome ingredients with maximum nutritional value: vegan milk, curds, cheeses. When someone orders a hot chocolate, they get to pick from five varieties of milk—almond, soy, cashew, coconut or brown rice. They have six shakes on the menu, each prepared with a different plant-based milk. They also prepare their own seitan, a meat analog made with a blend of wheat gluten and soy. This goes into replacement dishes: the Chef’s Special Mock Meat Curry, Sloppy Joe Burger and Seitan Stroganoff.

But is veganism a rich man’s choice? “My parents have a big part in influencing my values, and being vegan is one of them,” says Abhay Rangan, 21-year-old animal rights activist and CEO of Goodmylk (a plant-based dairy start-up in Bangalore). “I definitely am thankful it happened when I was 13.” At 16, as an activist for the Society for Animal Rights and Veganism, he realised the difficulties people have. “People wanted to be vegans, but the alternatives were expensive and not easily available. That’s why my mother and I decided to start Goodmylk, to make plant-based milk (cashew and oat milk) affordable and accessible.”

Rangan says vegan alternatives are now more affordable and accessible, and anyway all new movements take time to scale. “In urban settings, where people spend 300 bucks on a coffee at Starbucks, or several thousand bucks on a meal at a restaurant, cost is simply a non-issue anyway,” adds Rangan. The cost of Goodmylk subscription starts at Rs 400 per month, including four deliveries (and the price per unit reduces the longer one subscribes for).

It’s a misconception that vegan food has to be expensive. That idea probably came from Instagram. A few years ago, ultra-rich people in the West obsessed with health and fitness began to follow a vegan diet. That movement in part was responsible for veganism spilling over into the mainstream, but also for creating the impression that it was a western diet fad. Most people don’t realise that a lot of common Indian foods are vegan. (Many others would be vegan too if ghee is foregone.) That includes dal, rajma, potato, chhole puri, mixed vegetable curries, even street food like pani puri, vada pao, aloo tikki and jhal muri. Traditionally, non-veg food was the luxury of rich households in India. Today, a kilo of chicken costs Rs 170. “My parents joke how, after I’ve gone vegan, my food expenses have become zero,” says Mukherjee. Gandhi would have approved.

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- **619 mn humans** killed in all wars and genocides in our recorded history. We kill the same number of animals every five days.
- **2.4 bn chicken** raised for slaughter every year in India
- **9 mn pigs** raised for their meat every year in India
- **8.6 mn cattle** slaughtered every year in India for meat

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### **The Good Charter**

Delhi-based vegan nutritionist Bipasha Das says, “One should keep in mind that a vegan diet doesn’t create deficiencies if a person consumes it the right way under proper professional guidance.” She points out the dos and don’ts of the special diet...

### **Vegan Do’s**

All grains, fruits, vegetables, plenty of leafy greens and whole grain products

- **Milk replacement:** Soy milk, coconut milk, almond milk, cashew milk, oat milk and rice milk
- **For protein sources:** Nuts and seeds, legumes, lentils and combinations with lentils and

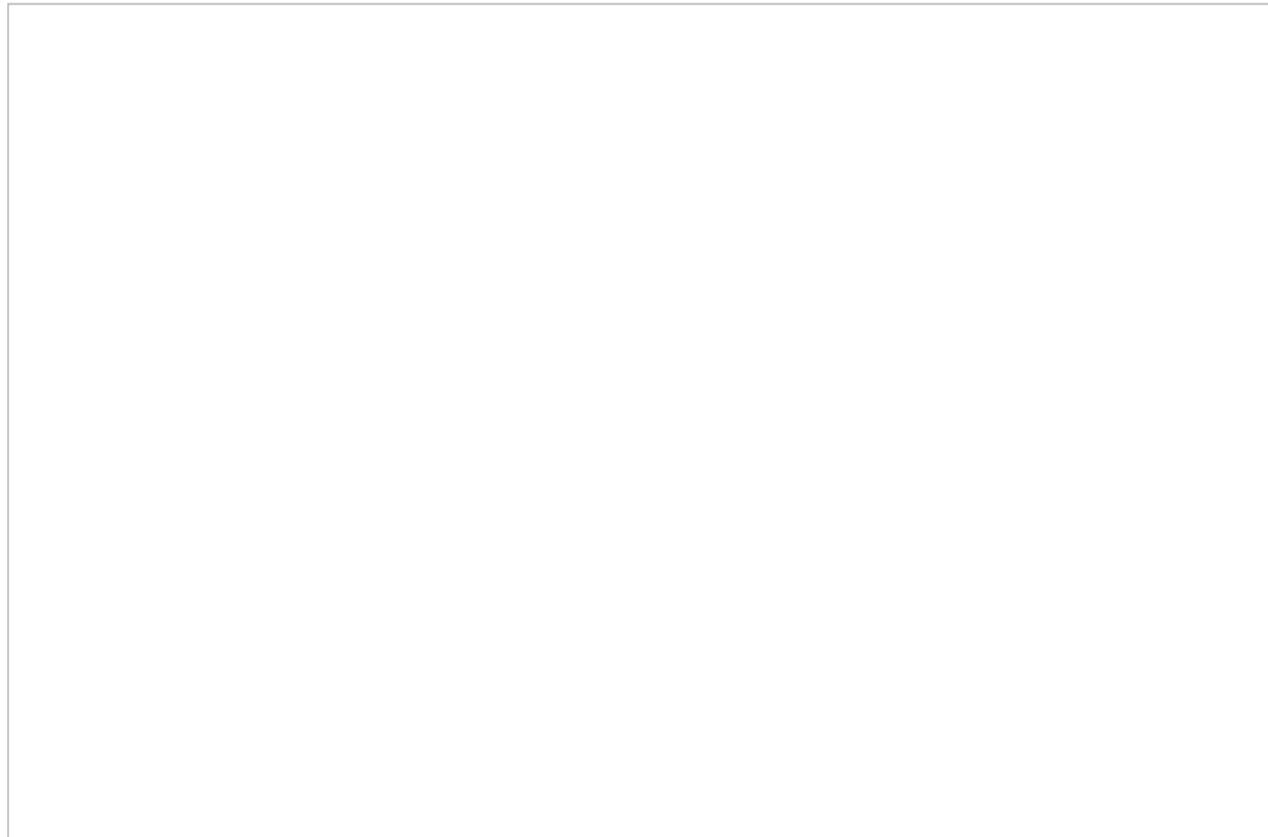
grains to make it a good protein diet

- **For good fats:** Olive oil and olives, coconut oil.
- **For calcium:** Vegan mayonnaise, peanut butter and sesame butter can be used as spreads and dips for calcium intake
- **Vitamin D:** Mushroom and sunlight (yes!); preferably, the morning sun
- **Omega3:** Chia and flax seeds

#### Vegan Dont's

- **Those meats:** Meat, poultry and fish,
- **The 'no' ingredients:** Food that contains animal ingredients like omega 3, gelatin and vitamin D3
- **The derivatives:** Dairy ice cream, cheese and dairy yogurt
- **Gold hush:** Honey

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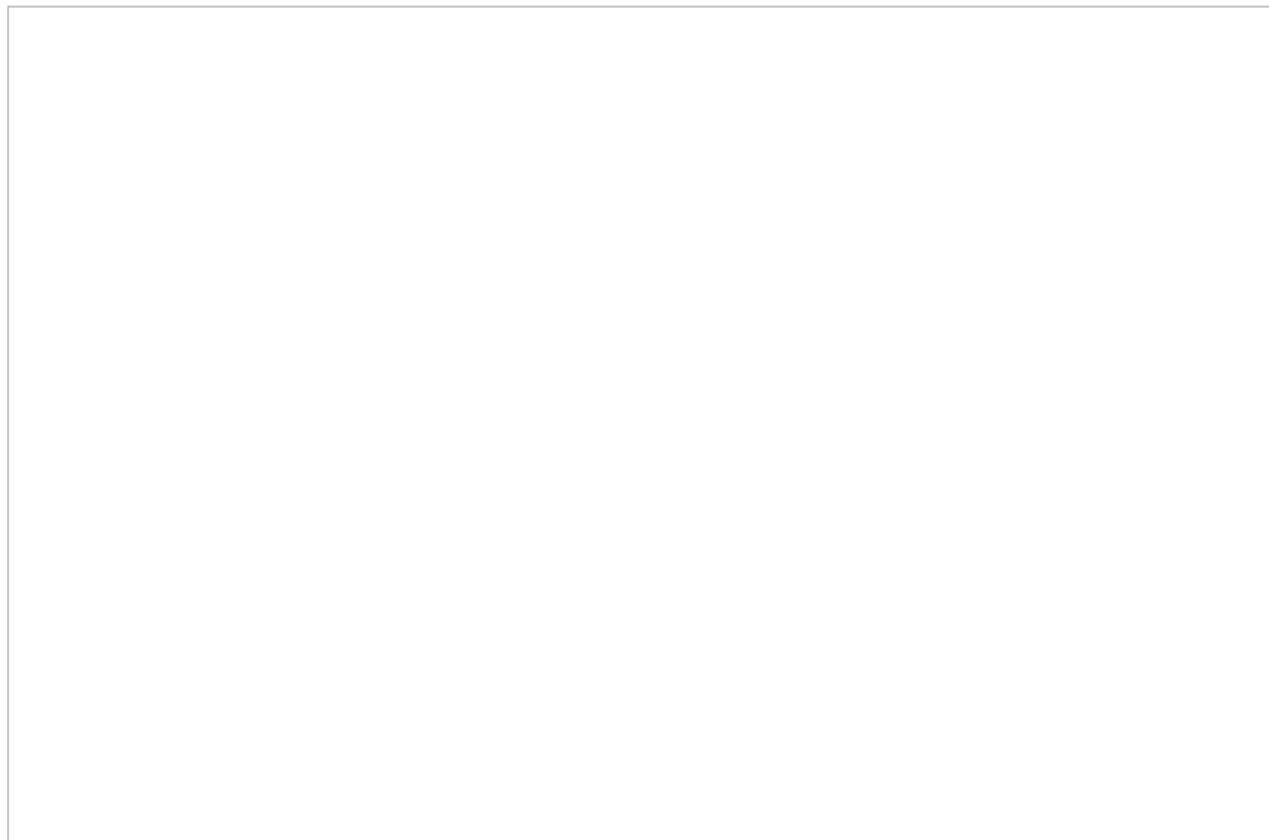


#### Other Food Trends

- **Fermented fad:** Fermented food is high in demand as people are becoming aware of their inherent probiotic health benefits. Many are switching to kefir, which is almost 100 per cent lactose-free after the bacteria have metabolised the milk sugar. Korean spicy fermented cabbage, or kimchi, is another popular item at restaurants.

- **Eating Wild:** Many regional cuisines incorporate wild ferns, berries, shoots and tubers into their menu. These are catching on with the foodies and turning up on five-star hotel tables.
- **The Locavores:** Eating moringa leaves is far more nutritious than lettuce and there are environmentalists, foodies and restaurateurs who are trying hard to bring such traditional greens to fine dining. Millets, ranked as poor man's grain, are now considered a health food and used to make breads and muffins.
- **Flower Power:** When it comes to eating flowers, we just don't restrict ourselves to banana blossoms. In fact, flowers have arrived in a big way; not just for decoration and garnishing, but also as essential ingredients in dishes. Begonia, carnation, lily, daisy, hibiscus, lilac, marigold, pansy, peony, rose, sunflower, tulip, violet...Japanese honeysuckles are a huge favourite of the chefs.

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## Say No Cheese, And Why

Arguments against milk and dairy products

- **Skin Sensitivity:** High consumption of full-fat dairy, particularly among teens increases the risk of moderate to severe acne.
- **Digestive Distress:** Many are unaware that milk causes digestive issues; lactose intolerance often goes undiagnosed. Nutritionist Karishma Chawla says, "Symptoms such as gastrointestinal cramping, flatulence, and diarrhoea are seen. Some also have a harder time tolerating dairy as they age."
- **Cancer Concern:** Experts say those who consumed high levels of dairy had an increased risk of developing prostate cancer.

- **Contaminant Challenge:** Synthetic hormones like recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) are often given to cows to increase milk production. They make way into our milk supply. The same goes for antibiotics administered to animals that develop infections due to milk production manipulation.
- **Respiratory Risk:** Many people find that they suffer less from respiratory diseases when dairy is removed from their diet.

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## Animal Farm

1. To produce foie gras, ducks are force-fed multiple times a day to inflate the liver
2. 97 per cent of dairy calves are taken from their mothers within the first 24 hours of life
3. Due to genetic modifications, 95 per cent of broiler chickens have gait abnormalities
4. More than 50 million animals are killed for fashion every year
5. Around 40 pigs are slaughtered every second globally. That's one billion pigs a year
6. 50 billion chickens are artificially hatched, fattened and killed after 42 days each year globally
7. The egg industry has no use for the male chick, and every year, over 6 billion male chicks are thrown into a shredder
8. Piglets born in factory farms often have their tails docked and teeth clipped usually without any anaesthesia
9. Chickens are crammed so tightly that they grow irritable and start pecking each other. So, they are debeaked without anesthesia soon after birth
10. Hens in the egg industry are kept in cages smaller than an A4 size paper, stacked up on top of each other
11. Dairy cows are typically artificially inseminated within three months of giving birth. They are fed steroids for a higher yield and kept pregnant so that they keep producing milk. Most dairy cows suffer from mastitis, a painful udder infection. A male calf is immediately sent for slaughter.