

WHAT I DO VEGAN EDITION

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Forward

This eBook is based on a revision of an older document that I made back in 2014. At that time, I had adopted a whole food approach to eating. That approach did include meat, eggs, and some dairy (in the form of goat cheese). For more than a decade, I would source my meat, eggs, and cheese from farmers who raised their products naturally. Most of these farmers I knew personally, and I would visit their farms regularly. My general focus at that time was to avoid sugar, gluten, most dairy, and processed foods. My basic acid test was this: If I could recognize the item as something that grew in nature, then probably my body would recognize it, too. After all, the nutrients and vitamins we read on labels aren't necessarily recognized by our bodies. The issues of inflammation, acidity, and bioavailability of nutrients were key issues of importance to me at that time.

Every now and then, someone would ask me about my diet, and they would ask if I could share some menu ideas with them. One day I decided to make up a quick outline of the kinds of things I ate. As I often say, I'm not a doctor, a dietician, or a nutritionist, so I'm hesitant to dispense advice. I am, however, fairly comfortable simply sharing what I do.

Over the course of my adult life, I've experimented with both veganism and vegetarianism. However, none of my forays into these respective lifestyles ever seemed to last more than six months. I did make an interesting observation, though. I found that being vegan was actually easier for me than being vegetarian. When my diet included eggs and cheese, I was essentially made an egg and cheese junkie: I was always hungry until I had my hit of eggs or cheese. If I wasn't eating eggs or cheese, I was thinking about eat eggs or cheese.

With my growing concern about climate change, my ongoing concerns about health and vitality, as well as a continuing awareness of the horrible treatment of billions of animals in factory farms, I found my interest in veganism renewed. I was also incredibly inspired by a number of friends I knew who were living a vegan lifestyle. I saw that both the young children and the adults in these families were not simply surviving as vegans... they were thriving as vegans.

With all this in mind, I gave veganism another shot. Yes, the first few weeks were tough. I was hungry a lot: I craved meat, eggs, and cheese. However, I was armed with more knowledge about how to find vegan sources of protein, and, in truth, there were far more vegan meat alternatives available in the marketplace - both in grocery stores and in restaurants. While I try not to eat this kind of processed food very often, it has always served me well when I might desire a good old-fashioned hamburger, pizza, or meatball sub.

I recall that my cravings for meat, eggs, and cheese, as well as the volatility of my hunger, subsided after about three weeks. Suddenly, I felt full, satisfied, and energetic all the time. I could last a long time between meals, and my hunger wouldn't tend to sneak up and overwhelm me. At that point, I found that being vegan was not only easier than being vegetarian, but, quite frankly, it was a little easier than consuming a standard diet that included meat, eggs, and dairy.

I have now been vegan for over a year, and I have no desire to go back to eating animal products. I believe that every person who becomes vegan not only makes an important difference in our world, but, whether they like it or not, they also end up being an ambassador for veganism. For that reason, I think it's important to not just "get by" as a vegan, but to noticeably and conspicuously thrive in the lifestyle. With that in mind, I think all vegans should strive to become healthier, more energetic, and more vital versions of the people they were when they included animal products in their diet.

I hope the food ideas, menu plans, and the sample of quick and easy recipes contained in this eBook will not only help you transition away from consuming animal products, but flourish and grow within a vegan lifestyle.

A Few Random Notes

- I start every day with a glass of lemon water and turmeric powder. In recent months, I've been adding fresh ground black pepper to my lemon turmeric water. (See [video](#).)
- After breakfast (usually when I get to work), I have a matcha green tea. On weekends, I'll treat myself to a dairy matcha latte. (See [video](#).)
- Most foods and ingredients I use tend to be organic.
- Most foods and ingredients I use tend to be gluten-free.
- I often share my vegan snack ideas using the hashtag [#PlantBasedSnack](#). I invite you to do the same!

Typical Breakfast

- green apple
- green smoothie (see recipe below; see [video](#).)
- A choice of:
 - freshly milled, gluten-free hot cereal,
 - blended, creamy vegetable soup (using cashew cream), served with Mary's crackers,
 - buckwheat pancakes with fruit, apple sauce, or homemade chocolate sauce,
 - tofu scramble with toast,
 - plant-based toast with flax oil, often with and mashed avocado, sometimes with nut butter and banana (although I don't have this on the mornings when I have pancakes)
 - See video on how I make [homemade vegan, gluten-free bread](#).

Green Smoothie

- 2 cups greens: mix of chards, kales, beet tops, & other greens (pre-washed, organic mixes make this much easier and faster; I usually start with a two handfuls of mixed greens, and then add in a couple of big leaves of kale or one big leaf of chard.)
- ¾ cup mixed berries: strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, cranberries (again, mixes of frozen organic berries make this a lot easier),
- ¼ cup mixed nuts and seeds with goji berries: styrian pumpkin seeds, black sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, chia seeds, flax seeds, and walnuts.
- teaspoon of spirulina
- sometimes (if I'm fighting a cold) a pinch of camu camu berry powder (for the vitamin C boost)
- blend in high speed blender for approximately 20 seconds. (See [video](#).)

A note about kale and chard: I rip the leaves of kale and chard off of their stems and I'll then keep the stems in the crisper drawer of my refrigerator for soups that I'll make later on.



One of my personal [breakfast faves](#): a tofu, turmeric, spinach, vegan bacon scramble, with plant-based toast and flax oil, and a rice milk matcha latte.



An interesting way to make your own vegan bacon is to fry up strips of butternut squash.

Buckwheat Pancakes

- equal parts buckwheat flour and brown rice flour (ex. 1 cup buckwheat and 1 cup brown rice flour)
- one cup of water for every cup of flour (ex. 2 cups water)
- one vegan egg for every cup of flour (ex. 2 vegan eggs for this recipe)
 - How to make a vegan egg:
 - 1 tbsp whole raw flax or chia seeds
 - You can use ground, or grind them fresh. Fresh ground works better.
 - 3 tbsp water
- whisk flour, water, and vegan egg mix together
- melt one tablespoon of coconut oil in a pan
- drop one soup ladle of pancake batter into centre of hot pan
- cook on medium heat for 4 or 5 minutes
- flip and wait another 4 minutes.
- garnish with anything from maple syrup to unsweetened applesauce to cinnamon to cocoa powder



The buckwheat pancakes are fine on their own, but they're not sweet at all. However, they're quite good with just unsweetened applesauce.



Lately, I've been enjoying these pancakes with flax oil, unsweetened applesauce, cinnamon, and cocoa powder. (Often, I pre-mix my cocoa with a dash of stevia powder and a dash of salt).



When you mix all of these ingredients together with a fork, you end up with a nice chocolatey sauce. Delicious! This makes a great snack, too.

Homemade Hot Cereals

- mill approximately 1 cup of any of the following gluten-free grains (mixing two or three grains together works fine, too):
 - quinoa
 - buckwheat
 - millet
 - teff
 - brown rice
 - wild rice
 - wheat-free oats
- whisk into a pot of 2 cups water (or rice, coconut, almond milk), and then bring to boil (milling the grain with water also works quite well)
- add any of the following to add crunch and sweetness:
 - mixed nuts and seeds
 - crushed walnuts
 - raisins
 - unpasteurized or manuka honey
 - 1 scoop of Sunwarrior brown rice, chocolate protein powder

Morning Snack

Usually, my morning snack is leftover hot cereal or pancakes from breakfast, sometimes with Bio-K (fermented rice).

Homemade chocolate banana bread or black bean cake, sometimes with rice milk, sometimes with Bio-K (fermented rice).

Carrot, cucumber, and celery sticks (often with humus or cashew nut butter) are also a quick snack that I like to eat whenever I can.

Two Foundational Dishes

Lunch in the old days almost always included a green salad and warm vegetable soup, but more recently I've moved the soup to breakfast, and I've added a plethora of filling and satisfying lunch ideas into my meal plan. Nonetheless, the salad and soup will always be foundational staples in my diet.

Green Salad

- mixed greens (mix of chards, kales, beet tops, romaine lettuce, red lettuce)
- sprout mix
- mix of two beans
- one avocado
- sometimes chopped carrots
- sometimes diced red onion
- unpasteurized sauerkraut
- kelp or dulse flakes
- apple cider vinegar



A note about beans: I usually like a mix of two different beans, from black, adzuki, chickpeas, white, butter, lentils, or kidney. I buy Eden brand as they are organic and packed in BPA-free cans. I soak the beans for at least two hours before using.

A note about sprouts: I generally like having different mixes of sprouts. They can often be bought together in nice mixtures of different sprouts, such as sunflower, broccoli, radish, buckwheat, ruby mustard, shungiku, etc.

Vegetable Soup

- kale and chard stems (left over from smoothies)
- sweet potato
- cabbage
- beats
- carrots
- black radish
- chinese radish
- parsnip
- onion
- ginger
- any other vegetable I might find



Note: I often blend this soup and add in cashew cream to make it a cream soup. These days I more often have this soup as breakfast along with Mary's crackers and gluten-free toast. These days, Little Northern Bakehouse bread is my brand of choice for plant-based bread and bagels.

Early Afternoon Snack

- Another green smoothie (I usually make enough for two, 16 oz. glasses in the morning). This is the second glass.)

Late Afternoon Snack

- Mary's organic crackers (usually Superseed) or fresh vegetable sticks (carrots, celery, cucumber, or peppers) and bean or nut dips, such as hummus, black bean dip, cashew dill dip, red pepper cashew dip, cashew butter, sunflower butter, pumpkin seed butter, almond butter.
- Toast or bagel with flax oil and avocado.
- Toast or bagel with peanut butter and banana.
- Tofu, tomato, avocado, and sauerkraut served on toast.



Homemade hummus is a staple in any vegan's household.



Sometimes maintaining motivation is just a matter of finding snacks that can compete with the convenience of the processed meats and cheeses we enjoyed when we ate animal products. One of my goto vegan snacks is toast with a slice of firm tofu, some avocado, sauerkraut, vegenaise, and salt and pepper. I can whip this up in less than five minutes.

Typical Lunches

- Beans and vegan wieners (or chunks of gourmet tofu) with a little vegan spaghetti sauce.
- Homemade vegan tomato soup (fry onions, garlic, and cans of whole tomatoes) blend with cashew or pine nut cream
- Beyond Meat sausage in plant-based bun with sauerkraut, fried onions, and mustard
- chickpea (garbanzo beans) tuna-style sandwich made with mashed chickpeas mixed with vegenaïse, a few tablespoons of vegan pasta sauce, chopped red onion, chopped dill pickle, salt and pepper
- vegan piggies in a blanket (made with homemade bread recipe, wrapped around vegan hotdogs). See [video](#).
- Tofu, tomato, avocado, and sauerkraut on toast. (This also makes a quick, satisfying snack).
- Gluten-free, vegan wraps filling (cabbage, red and green onion, napa, tofu, garlic), and store-bought or homemade wraps (cassava flour, salt, oil, water).
- Bean burritos, with or without vegan cheese, can be made with store-bought or homemade wraps (cassava flour, salt, oil, water).
- Pizza made with homemade gluten-free, vegan crust, tomato sauce, melted vegan cheese, onion, and kale.
- Turmeric tofu egg salad sandwiches



Fried onion, cabbage, and tofu wraps.



Vegan pizza



Homemade tomato soup

Egg salad sandwich? Not for this plant-based boy!



This sandwich is made with soft tofu, turmeric, Vegenaïse, salt and pepper.

One day I stumbled on a good way to make a [#vegan](#) salmon sandwich.

Mash up a 540 ml can of chickpeas (with potato masher - not a blender). Add 3 oz. spaghetti sauce, 3 tsp. of flax meal, 3 tsp. of olive oil. Mix in chopped onion, chopped pickle, Vegennaise, and then add salt and pepper to taste.



Bean burritos are always a quick and fun dish, especially if you take the time to chop up some tomato and mash up some avocado to make guacamole.



Typical Dinner

- starch: either sweet potato, squash, quinoa, millet, brown rice, or wild rice
- steamed or stir fried vegetables: either broccoli, asparagus, bok choy, green beans, brussels sprouts, or mixed leafy greens and garlic (the same mixes I use for my smoothies and salads, see note below)
- protein: beans; bean, nut, and seed meat patties or meatballs; TVP; firm or soft tofu, tofu products (such as gourmet tofu); commercially made meat alternatives (ex. Beyond eat, Tofurkey, Yves pepperoni or bacon).

Alternatives for side dishes:

- mixed sprouts
- kimchi
- sauerkraut
- raw root vegetable salad (shredded sweet potato, beet, carrot, and sometimes parsnip)
- mixed bean salad, with green onion, garlic, olive oil, seasoning, salt and pepper.

Turmeric Curry:

When the ingredients strike me as being conducive, I'll basically turn any meal into a turmeric-intense curry dish. I start out by chopping up and mixing all the basic ingredients together (i.e. the starch, vegetables, and meat), and then I'll add:

- a heaping teaspoon of turmeric,
- another level teaspoon of curry powder,
- a few tablespoons of olive oil,
- a dash of black pepper,
- and another dash of himalayan mountain salt.

I'll then mix all that together to make a quick and easy curry dish. The nice thing about using this approach is the rest of the family can have a non-curry meal while I have a curry.

Mixed Leafy Greens and Garlic:

For a quick, easy, and delicious green vegetable, we often take a bag of mixed greens (the same mixes I often use for the base of my smoothies and salads) and we'll pan fry these with a little water, coconut oil, salt, and fresh chopped garlic.



Weekly Menu Plans

A Week of Breakfasts

- Monday:
- green apple,
 - green smoothie,
 - wheat-free oatmeal with walnuts and maple syrup, *or*
 - blended vegetable soup with cashew cream.
- Tuesday:
- green apple,
 - green smoothie,
 - freshly milled wild rice hot cereal with walnuts and diced dried prunes.
- Wednesday:
- green apple,
 - green smoothie,
 - turmeric tofu scramble eggs (mashed firm tofu, fried in olive oil, add turmeric, salt and pepper), served with toast.
- Thursday:
- green apple,
 - green smoothie,
 - freshly milled quinoa porridge with dried apricots and prunes, *or*
 - blended vegetable soup with cashew cream.
- Friday:
- green apple,
 - green smoothie,
 - avocado toast or bagel
- Saturday:
- green apple,
 - green smoothie,
 - buckwheat pancakes with homemade pear sauce and cinnamon.
- Sunday:
- green apple,
 - green smoothie,
 - tofu vegetable scramble (fry up tofu in olive oil, with fried onions, crumbled vegan bacon, and sauteed greens) serve with plant-based toast.



Homemade vegan bread. (See [video](#).)

A Week of Lunch Ideas

- Monday:
 - Beans and vegan wieners (or chunks of gourmet tofu), often spiced up with fried onions and a little vegan spaghetti sauce.
- Tuesday:
 - Homemade vegan tomato soup (fry onions, garlic, and cans of whole tomatoes) blend with cashew or pine nut cream
- Wednesday:
 - Beyond Meat sausage in plant-based bun with sauerkraut, fried onions, and mustard
- Thursday:
 - Chickpea (garbanzo beans) tuna-style sandwich made with mashed chickpeas mixed with veganaise, a few tablespoons of vegan pasta sauce, chopped red onion, chopped dill pickle, salt and pepper
- Friday:
 - Vegan chile (mixed beans, canned tomatoes, tomato puree, onion, garlic, diced carrot, TVP, and vegan chile spice).
- Saturday:
 - Turmeric tofu egg salad sandwiches.
- Sunday:
 - Bean burritos, with or without vegan cheese, can be made with store-bought or homemade wraps (cassava flour, salt, oil, water).

Other Vegan Lunch Ideas

- Vegan piggies in a blanket (made with homemade bread recipe, wrapped around vegan hotdogs). This is a treat that takes more time. (See [video](#).)
- Tofu, tomato, avocado, and sauerkraut sandwiches.
- gluten-free, vegan wraps filling (cabbage, red and green onion, napa, tofu, garlic), and store-bought or homemade wraps (cassava flour, salt, oil, water).
- Pizza made with homemade gluten-free, vegan crust, tomato sauce, melted vegan cheese, onion, and kale.
- Toast or bagel vegan cheese melt with vegan pepperoni

A Week of Dinner Ideas

- Monday:
- vegan pasta with vegan pasta sauce and nut, seed, and bean vegan meatballs,
 - green beans,
 - Can supplement with mixed root salad with lemon, olive oil, seasoning, salt and pepper.
- Tuesday:
- vegan curry,
 - vegan palak paneer,
 - rice.
- Wednesday:
- vegan shepherd's pie with layer of nut, seed, and bean vegan meat (can be with TVP) peas, corn, and a layer of mashed potato or mashed sweet potato)
- Thursday:
- Beyond Meat sausage in plant-based bun with sauerkraut, fried onions, and mustard
 - mixed root salad with lemon, olive oil, seasoning, salt and pepper,
 - can supplement with mixed bean salad, with green onion, garlic, olive oil, seasoning, salt and pepper.
- Friday:
- bean, nut, and seed vegan burgers (see [video](#))
 - baked potato wedges (brush with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper)
 - broccoli
- Saturday:
- stir fry with onion, garlic, snow peas, sliced carrots, sliced broccoli, fried firm tofu, with sesame oil and vegan sweet and sour sauce or teriyaki sauce
 - served over rice
- Sunday:
- vegan noodle soup with chopped bok choy and soft tofu
 - can supplement with mixed root salad with lemon, olive oil, seasoning, salt and pepper,
 - can also supplement with mixed bean salad, with green onion, garlic, olive oil, seasoning, salt and pepper.



Vegan chickpea curry and palak paneer.

Inspiration from the World

An Asian-Themed Meal



Vegan Asian stir fry.

A Mexican-Themed Meal



Vegan Mexican burritos, refried beans, rice, and salad.

Indian-Themed Vegan Dishes



The base of my vegan chickpea curry is fried onion and garlic in olive oil, canned coconut milk, and perhaps some additional cashew / pine nut cream (made by blending cashews and pine nuts with rice milk).

The base of my vegan palak paneer is also canned fried onion and garlic in olive oil, canned coconut milk, and perhaps some additional cashew / pine nut cream (made by blending cashews and pine nuts with rice milk). I then put boiled spinach in a food processor, I mix it all together in a saucepan, and then add cubed firm tofu near the end.



An Irish-Themed Dish



My vegan Irish Stew is typically a hit on Saint Patty's Day. I try to also make this gluten-free, so the greatest deficit is the lack of a gluten-free stout beer (such as Guinness). The stout beer is really the foundation of an Irish Stew, so it's great to know that, as of 2017, Guinness became vegan!

An African-Themed Meal



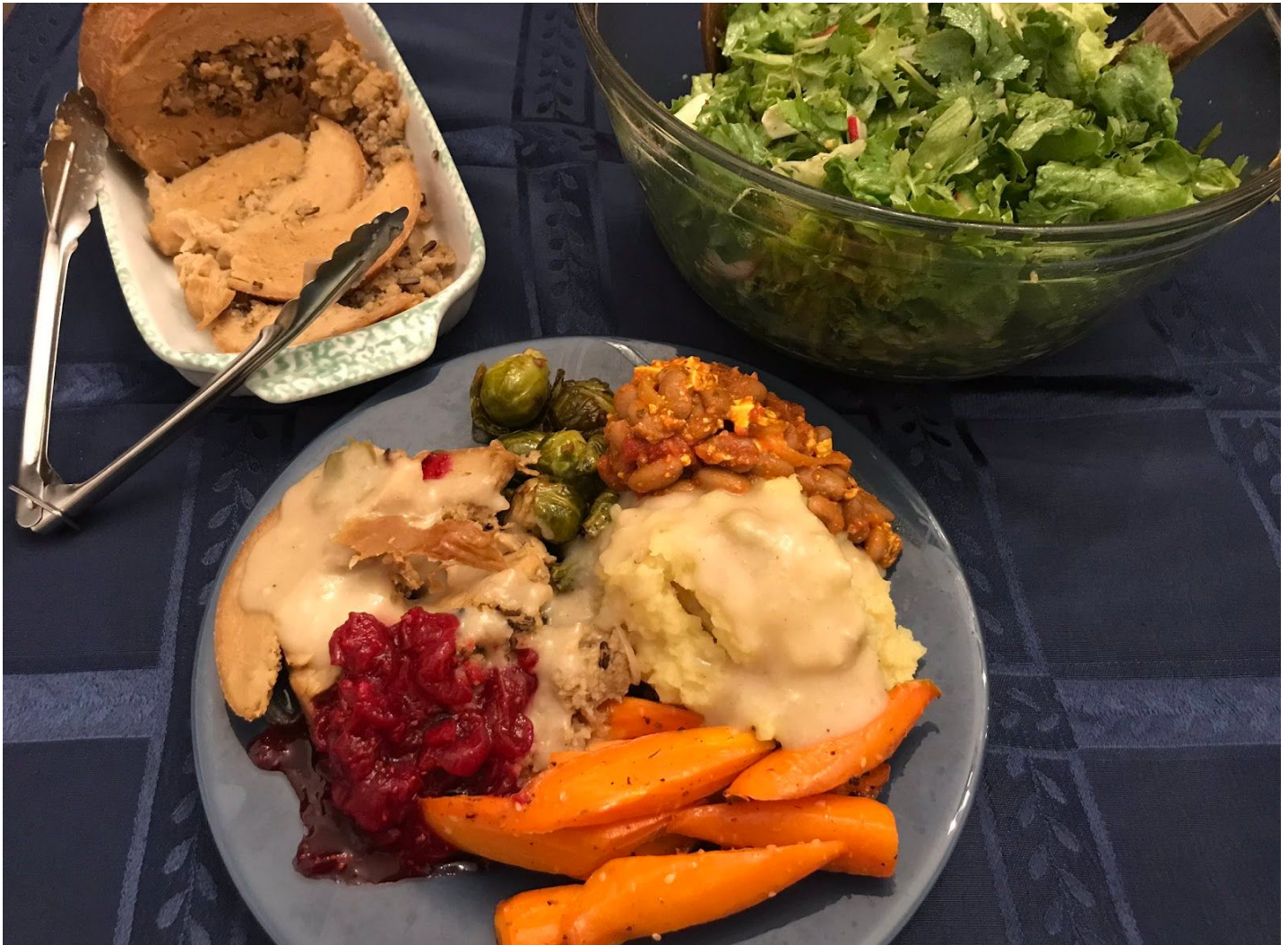
This zesty African-themed meal featured a quinoa and bean dish, sautéed vegetables, gourmet tofu, and a peanut-sauce.

A Spanish-Themed Meal



This Spanish vegan meal featured a zesty chickpea and vegetable dish along with Spanish rice with beans. Delicious!

A Traditional Western Turkey Dinner



I enjoy my traditional vegan turkey dinner at Thanksgiving and Christmas. This meal features a Tofurkey chicken roast, mashed potatoes, roasted vegetables, vegan stuffing, vegan gravy, cranberry sauce, brussels sprouts, salad, and vegan pumpkin pie with plenty of vegan coconut whipped cream.

Sidebar: How to make a vegan gravy

A key to so many delicious meals is the sauce. If you're going to truly enjoy a vegan lifestyle, it's a handy thing to know how to make a vegan gravy.

The base to any gravy is the roux: which is oil and flour. I start with sauteed onions and garlic in olive oil, and then I add a few teaspoons of brown rice flour. Once it forms into a thick paste, I thin it out with more water or rice milk, or a combination of both. I then add Bragg (gluten-free soy sauce) to add the salty flavour. I throw it all in my Nurtibullet, blend it together, and there you have it: we have a rich, delicious vegan gravy that can add fun and flavour to so many different dishes.

The Staples

Being vegan starts with what you buy at the grocery store. Of course, you should fill your fridge and pantry with fresh fruits and vegetables whether you're vegan or not, but I've outlined below some pictures of the things that I seek out as a vegan. A lot of these items do a particularly good job of filling me up and giving me the energy I need.

NOTE: As a vegan, I find that my appetite is far more stable than it was when I ate meat. Moreover, my appetite is a lot more stable than when I was vegetarian. I actually found being a vegetarian to be far more challenging than being vegan. When I was a vegetarian, I found I was always hungry until I finally got my next hit of cheese or eggs.

Nuts and Seeds



Beans are a staple in any vegan kitchen. They're an important source of protein, they can be served whole or milled, hot or cold, added to stir fries and hot cereals, blended into creams, and can be the foundation of vegan hamburger patties and meatballs. They're a quick, convenient snack too, especially when mixed with dried fruit like raisins, apricots, or Goji berries.

Crackers



Crackers are always there as a base to a quick snack. They can hold salsa, guacamole, bean dips, nut butters, and they can be crumbled into soups as well.

Beans



Beans are a staple in any vegan kitchen. They're an important source of protein, they can be served whole or mashed, hot or cold, and can be made into stews, chiles, burritos, mixed bean salads, and even dips.

Nut Butters



Nut butters are filling, satisfying, convenient, and a good source of protein.

Vegan Protein Powders



Pumpkin seed powder is a great source of iron and zinc, which I understand to be important for men's health.

Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP)



TVP is quite handy when making spaghetti sauces or chiles.

Protein by way of Tofu and Commercial Meat Alternatives



I don't eat commercial meat alternatives a lot, but when I'm particularly hungry or feeling for a treat, these products can really do the trick.

Plant-Based Bread, Bagels, and Wraps



These just make being a vegan all the simpler.

Fats



It's important to have good, healthy sources of fat because this is what makes you feel full.

Supplements



It's important to seek sources of iron and Vitamin B12.