



VEGAN DIET
HOW TO GUIDE



“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food” - Hippocrates

The foundation of good health begins with the food you eat, which is why healthful nutrition is such an integral part of your holistic healing journey at Kamalaya. We firmly believe in the body’s natural healing ability and that every individual has the power to facilitate its unfolding. Choosing a healthy diet on a daily basis can make a huge difference to our overall health and wellbeing.

In this short guide, we take a beginner’s look at the vegan diet with particular emphasis on its nutritional benefits. At Kamalaya, we are very aware of the healing power of this plant-based approach. Our Detox Cuisine is 100% vegan and has potent anti-inflammatory properties that support the effectiveness of our detoxification programs.

Although most of the dishes at Kamalaya are plant-based, our Healthy Cuisine menu also includes delicious sustainable fish and meat options. In this sense, it is important to understand that Kamalaya is not exclusively a 'vegan resort'.

We hope that you enjoy reading this guide and that it helps enrich your knowledge and understanding of the vegan diet.

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The foundations of a vegan diet

A vegan diet consists of only plant-derived foods. From a nutritional perspective, plant-based foods can be broadly categorized into five main groups.

- **Starches:** Wholegrains are healthier than refined grains and provide essential B vitamins, fibre, minerals, protein and antioxidants.

Examples: rice, oats, quinoa, barley, buckwheat, millet, spelt, corn, wholegrain pasta or bread, puffed or flaked grains, potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, winter squashes.

- **Legumes:** These nutrient-dense foods are packed with protein, fibre, minerals, B vitamins, protective antioxidants, and essential fatty acids.

Examples: black beans, kidney beans, navy beans, lima beans, cannellini beans, pinto beans, lentils, peas, soy beans, tofu, tempeh.

- **Vegetables & Greens:** Eating a rainbow of brightly coloured vegetables every day will help ensure that you receive a healthy balance of protective nutrients in your diet.

Examples: asparagus, broccoli, brussels sprouts, potatoes, carrots, cauliflower, green beans, mushrooms, sweet potatoes, yams, pumpkin, squash, bell peppers, eggplant, kale, zucchini, spinach, cabbage, bok choy, lettuce.



Build Your Bowl

Try mixing and matching between the different food groups to create a well balanced and satisfying meal without always needing to stick to an exact recipe.

- **Fruits, Nuts & Seeds:** All fruits are a source of antioxidants. Choose whole fruits over fruit juices for increased dietary fibre and other health benefits. Meanwhile, nuts and certain seeds provide healthy fibre and protein as well as vitamins and minerals.

Examples: apples, oranges, bananas, stone fruit, berries, melons, pineapples, mangos, lemons, avocado, tomatoes, pears, coconut, almonds, walnuts, hemp seeds, flax, chia, sesame, pumpkin, cashews, hazelnuts.

- **Other Categories**

Liquids: water, non-GMO soy milk, rice milk, oat milk, almond milk, veggie broth, fresh fruit juice, coconut water.

Spices & condiments: ginger, basil, pepper, fresh or dried herbs, paprika, thyme, sage, oregano, turmeric, cinnamon, tarragon, dill, cayenne pepper, mustard, tomato paste, nutritional yeast, vinegar, soy sauce, onion, garlic, ginger, miso, himalayan salt, sea salt.

Sweeteners: coconut nectar, stevia maple syrup.

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Transitioning to a Vegan Diet

If you are considering transitioning to a vegan diet, it is a good idea to begin by creating a sustainable plan of action. Try to set realistic goals and avoid putting yourself under too much pressure at the beginning. Before you change diet, it is also highly recommended that you consult a qualified nutritionist or medical professional to confirm any changes will be compatible with your current state of health.

Here are some general tips to help you integrate more vegan cuisine into your daily diet.

- **Phase 1:** Begin by gradually reducing meat and other animal products from your diet whilst slowly increasing the quantity of plant-based foods.
- **Phase 2:** Introduce one vegan meal per day. This could be breakfast, lunch or dinner – whichever you find is the most convenient for you.
- **Phase 3:** Slowly progress to having one full vegan day per week. As you become more comfortable with this approach, slowly increase the number of vegan days per week.

We recommend a gradual transition where you have an opportunity to listen to your body and approach change in a healthy way, rather than 'shocking' your system by radically changing your diet overnight.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some people find it challenging to give up dairy products. This might be because cow's milk and cheese contain an opiate-like substance derived from casein which triggers the release of dopamine in the brain.

Handy Kitchen Equipment

When you change your dietary habits, you may want to ensure that your kitchen is properly equipped to make food preparation quick, simple and fun. Here are some tools that can make vegan food preparation a little bit easier:

- Slow cooker
- Pressure cooker
- Containers for food storage
- Grain cooker

Meal Planning

Cook and freeze: Save time by devoting one morning per week to prepare meal portions for the week ahead.

Use portion planners & containers: keep things easy by freezing your meals in individual portion sizes.

DID YOU KNOW?

Concentrated fats such as oils and oil-based spreads are not required for optimal health, as essential fats are found naturally in whole foods like avocados, olives, nuts, and seeds. However, during the transition a small amount of concentrated fats may be included in a healthy vegan diet. Choose oils and spreads that are minimally processed and limit your daily intake.





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Beat the cravings

After years of consuming animal products, dairy produce, sugary and fried foods, it is quite normal to experience cravings after you reduce or remove them from your diet.

Mindful Eating

We like to eat food that tastes good and triggers positive memories. Try creating new memories by envisaging a delicious and satisfying vegan meal or smoothie bowl.

Habits

Do you switch on the TV and instantly reach for a bar of chocolate, or bag of potato chips? Be aware of external stimuli that cause you to eat certain foods and make positive changes to any habits that are detrimental to your health.

Digestion

Your body may react differently after eating vegan foods which are generally much higher in fibre than a standard diet. Initial symptoms, such as gas and bloating are common, but don't let that put you off from the start.

- The Winds of Change

The microbiome in the gut takes time to adjust to an increase in dietary fibre. This reaction will gradually reduce as your body adapts to the changes. If you still suffer from persistent gas or bloating, consult a nutritionist or doctor.

- Use Digestive Aids

Herbal teas such as ginger, mint, chamomile and cardamom are natural remedies to sooth digestive discomforts or bloating.

- Gradual Progress

Being vegan does not mean eating exclusively raw foods as this can be harder for the gut to digest. Opt for cooked vegan food instead and if your aim is to be a raw vegan, do it gradually.



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What is your motivation?

Take some time to contemplate and reaffirm to yourself why you have decided to transition to a vegan diet. Thoroughly research the advantages and disadvantages of following a restricted diet. This will allow you to make an informed decision that supports your personal health and wellbeing as much as your individual beliefs.

Here are some of the many positive reasons people transition to a vegan diet.

- **Compassion**

Animal welfare is one of the key reasons that people choose a vegan lifestyle. Vegans seek to exclude all forms of exploitation of animals for food, clothing, or any other purpose.

- **Sustainability**

Animal agriculture produces greenhouse gas emissions that damage the planet. It is also a leading cause of deforestation, water pollution and biodiversity loss.

- **Health Benefits**

Following a balanced vegan diet can significantly reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Other health benefits may include enhanced mental clarity, better digestive health and an increased sense of vitality.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The word 'vegan' was created by Donald Watson back in 1944 when he co-founded the Vegan Society in England. Vegan contains the first three and last two letters of the word 'vegetarian'.
- Introducing one vegan meal to your daily diet can help reduce LDL cholesterol and total cholesterol in the body.
- Research shows that eating a vegan diet can decrease the risk of dying from heart disease by more than 40%



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