

healthygirl KITCHEN™

How to Eat

Healthy + Plant- Based at Restaurants



Research Ahead of Time

- Before heading out, take a moment to research restaurants in the area.
- Use platforms like Yelp, TripAdvisor, or HappyCow to find vegan or vegan-friendly eateries.
- Check the restaurant's website or call ahead to see if they offer vegan options.
- Call the restaurant ahead and ask if they can accommodate your dietary needs.

Scan the Menu for Vegan Symbols

- Many contemporary restaurants use symbols (e.g., a leaf, "V," or the word 'vegan') to indicate plant-based options.
- If you are gluten-free make sure to look for GF symbols. If you have celiac disease, have a conversation with the chef and restaurant about what this means if they can properly prepare you a gluten-free meal without any cross-contamination.

Start with the Sides

- Side dishes often have vegetable-based options which can be combined to make a full meal.
- Request multiple side dishes to create a diverse plate.

Customization is Key

- If you don't see an explicitly vegan dish, check if menu items can be customized.
- Ask to remove non-vegan components (e.g., cheese or mayo) or substitute them with plant-based alternatives.

Focus on Ethnic Cuisines

- Many global cuisines naturally offer plant-based dishes. For instance:
 - Italian: Pasta with marinara or aglio e olio.
 - Mexican: Bean burritos, veggie fajitas, or tacos with guacamole.
 - Indian: Lentil dal, vegetable curries (ensure they don't use ghee or cream).
 - Japanese: Veggie sushi rolls, miso soup, and edamame.
 - Mediterranean: Hummus, falafel, and veggie-stuffed grape leaves.

Ask About Preparation

- Ensure that dishes aren't prepared with non-vegan ingredients, like butter or chicken broth.

Be Clear and Polite

- Clearly state your dietary preferences, but be polite and understanding. Not every restaurant may be familiar with vegan requirements.
- A phrase like, "I follow a plant-based diet, can you help me find options without any animal products?" is both clear and courteous.

Appetizers and Salads

- Many appetizers and salads can be easily veganized by removing cheese or non-vegan dressings.
- Opt for oil and vinegar or lemon wedges as a simple dressing alternative.

Beware of Hidden Ingredients

- Some seemingly vegan dishes may contain hidden animal products. Common culprits include:
 - Gelatin in desserts.
 - Anchovy paste in Caesar dressing.
 - Egg in pasta or certain bread.
 - Non-vegan wines.

Drinks

- Most beverages are vegan-friendly, but be cautious with drinks like creamy cocktails or those that might use dairy.
- Opt for wines and beers that don't use animal-derived fining agents (check platforms like Barnivore).

Desserts

- If the restaurant lacks vegan desserts, opt for fresh fruit or sorbets.
- Some restaurants may offer vegan cakes, cookies, or other sweet treats.

Provide Feedback

- After your meal, provide positive feedback on vegan options you enjoyed.

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- If they lacked options, politely express interest in seeing more vegan choices in the future.

Support Vegan-Friendly Establishments

- When you find restaurants that cater well to vegan diets, support them! Return visits, positive reviews, and word-of-mouth recommendations can encourage more vegan offerings.