"The drop in chicken [consumption has been] dramatic over the last five years or so; pork also has been slipping... we’re eating less meat because we want to eat less meat."


More and more people are deciding to replace chicken and other meat with tasty meat-free meals. Average meat consumption in the U.S. has dropped 10 percent in the past few years. And a whopping 15 million Americans have stopped eating meat entirely.

You care about animals and don’t want them to suffer. Once you see what modern farms look like, you can decide whether or not you really want to support them by buying meat products. More and more people are learning that they can spare dozens of animals each year — and live a healthier, happier life — by replacing chicken and other meat with something better.

"[I] stopped eating all meat a few years ago. I would feel guilty that what was on my plate was walking around yesterday. Either I could live with that or stop eating meat. I chose the latter, and I’m happier for it."

Carrie Underwood

"Usher is the latest big name to ditch animal products... No beef, no chicken, no fish... He says he not only loves [meat-free] food, but it's the healthiest way to live."

AOL Entertainment
Are You Against This Cruelty?

“They lie covered in their own urine and excrement, with broken legs from trying to escape or just to turn, covered with festering sores, tumors, ulcers, lesions.”

-MATTHEW SCULLY, Speechwriter for President George W. Bush

Pigs are kept indoors for their entire lives on concrete floors with no bedding. Female pigs are locked in cages so small they can’t even turn around for months at a time. Because pigs are very smart (smarter than cats and dogs), this causes severe mental problems. Some will repeatedly bite their cage bars; others become depressed and lie on the ground without moving.

When they are six months old, pigs are electrocuted or shot in the head with a “captive bolt gun.” (A gun that shoots a metal rod into the pig’s brain.) Pigs that don’t die right away are drowned alive in boiling water.
“Every factory-farmed animal is, as a practice, treated in ways that would be illegal if it were a dog or cat.”

-NEW YORK TIMES, “Against Meat” (October 7, 2009)

Chickens live their entire lives inside dark, crowded sheds. They have been bred to grow so fat so quickly that their legs can’t even support their weight. By the time they are one month old, a third of them are in constant pain and have trouble walking. As a result, they spend nearly all of their time lying in the feces that coat the shed floor. Some are killed by being hit in the head with a metal rod.

Hens raised for eggs have their beaks sliced off with a hot blade. They are then packed together into tiny cages. They aren’t able to spread their wings and can barely turn around.

A Healthier Life

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, people who replace meat with something better are thinner and more energetic. They have lower cholesterol and blood pressure levels, and lower risks of cancer, heart disease, and type two diabetes.

Meats like chicken and fish are linked to many health problems. Chicken and eggs are two of the biggest sources of saturated fat intake. That’s one reason they are linked to higher death rates from breast cancer. Chicken and fish also have high levels of cancer-causing chemicals such as dioxin, arsenic, and mercury.
Taking chicken and other meat off your plate is one of the best things you can do for animals and your health.

But it’s important to eat right. Filling up on soda and French fries is easy, but it’s not healthy. Whatever your reasons for ditching meat, it’s important to make the switch in a healthy way. Here are two simple recommendations when cutting out (or cutting back on) meat.

1. **MAKE SURE TO EAT THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF CALORIES EACH DAY** to get the protein your body needs. Beans, nuts, plant-based meats, tofu, whole grains, and dairy-free protein shakes are great sources of protein.

2. **IRON IS IMPORTANT.** Whole grains like oatmeal and wheat, beans, and dark leafy greens are filled with iron. People with low iron levels should discuss iron supplements with their doctor.
Meat-Free Meals: Delicious and Convenient

Replacing meat with something better can be fun and delicious. You can keep many of the foods and flavors you already love – and try a few new ones.

You already eat lots of meat-free food. So keep filling your plate with the foods you know and love! Good, simple breakfast choices include cereal, bagels, granola, toast, muffins, waffles, and fresh fruit.

Familiar lunch and dinner options include a veggie sub with chips, pasta with tangy marinara sauce, bean burritos packed with guacamole and salsa, stir-fried vegetables and tofu over rice, creamy mashed potatoes, and hearty lentil soup.

Next, replace animal meat with plant-based meats. There are so many mouth-watering options now that you’ll wish you had tried them before! They are also very convenient – just warm and serve in minutes. Satisfy your craving with protein-packed meat-free sausages, burgers, chicken nuggets, meatballs, lunch meats, hot dogs, ribs, chicken patties, ground beef, and more.
Easy Eating Out

Eating out with friends or family? Don’t worry! Many restaurant chains now carry meat-free items on the menu. Chipotle, Olive Garden, Taco Bell, Subway, Quiznos, Johnny Rockets, Denny’s, Red Robin, and Ruby Tuesday are some of the best.

Ethnic restaurants such as Chinese, Indian, Italian, Mexican, Middle Eastern, and Thai always have delicious meat-free options. If you occasionally end up at a restaurant with nothing good on the menu, just talk to the chef. Most are happy to make something special for you. To find the restaurants in your area with the best meat-free menus, visit www.vegguide.org.
At the Supermarket

Every supermarket has basic (and cheap) meat-free foods like pasta, rice, cereal, beans, nuts, vegetables, fruit, bread, and snacks. Most supermarkets also have plant-based meat near the produce section. You’ll find deli meats, ground beef, hot dogs, chicken strips, and more. In the freezer section, look for meat-free burgers, burritos, and breakfast meats. The dairy section will have soy milk and almond milk.

Some products taste much better than others, so try a variety to see which ones you like. Here are some of our favorites!