“[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

“More and more people are deciding to replace chicken with tasty meat-free meals. Average chicken consumption in the U.S. has dropped nearly ten percent in the past few years. And a whopping 20 million Americans have stopped eating chicken 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 chicken products. More and more people are learning that they can spare dozens of animals each year — and live a happier, healthier life — by replacing chicken with something better.

“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
“Every factory-farmed animal is, as a practice, treated in ways that would be illegal if it were a dog or a cat.”

- THE 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.

Hens who get sick or injured do not receive veterinary care. They are left to suffer and slowly die on their own. Sometimes they are killed by being clubbed in the head with a metal rod. At the slaughterhouse, many end up being drowned alive in tanks of scalding hot water because they were not handled correctly.
“About 95 percent of American egg-laying hens are still raised in small battery cages...hens are crammed together, each getting less space than a letter-size sheet of paper. The tips of their beaks are often sheared off so they won’t peck each other to death.”

- THE NEW YORK TIMES, “Cleaning the Henhouse” (September 1, 2010)

A Healthier Life

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, people who replace chicken and other 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 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 also has high levels of cancer-causing chemicals such as dioxin, arsenic, and mercury.
Making The Switch

Taking chicken off your plate is one of the best things you can do for your 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 chicken, it’s important to make the switch in a healthy way. Here are two simple recommendations when cutting out (or cutting back on) chicken.

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 chicken 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 foods. So just replace chicken 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 chicken 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 chicken patties, chicken nuggets, and deli slices, or other meatless meats like burgers, meatballs, hot dogs, ribs, ground beef, and more.
Easy Eating Out

Eating out with friends or family? Don’t worry, replacing chicken with something better is easy! 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.
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 meat-free deli slices, chicken strips, chicken nuggets, ground beef, hot dogs, and more. In the freezer section, look for meat-free chicken patties and other chicken products, plus burgers, burritos, and breakfast meats. Replacing chicken has never been easier!

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