Living Life The Vegan Way

by [Ambica Gulati](#)

I was introduced to the vegan lifestyle by a friend. She did not eat meat and dairy products. While to me this looked like limitation, for her it was a conscious decision to refrain from damaging life in any form. Curiosity rose and here's more of what I discovered about the vegan way of life. Here are excerpts from talks with a nutritionist and a vegan:

Dr Parul Khurana, Nutritionist, SCI International Hospital, defines vegan as a person who does not eat any food that comes from animals and often does not use animals products. "Veganism is a lifestyle with a philosophy that animals are not ours to use. Vegans are animal and environment-friendly people who do not wish to harm animals and environment for their needs."

But being a vegan is expensive as these products are highly priced and stocked in selective outlets. However, there are things to be kept in mind such as:

- Where do the vegans get their protein from?
- Healthy vegan v/s Unhealthy vegan
- Sugar in Vegan diet
- Which healthy oil to use?

Devika Menon is a vegan and has a [vegan blog.](#) She defines a vegan as someone who does not consume any animal products, whether in terms of food, or clothing, cosmetics, shoes. Menon answers some frequently asked questions.

What kind of culture related to veganism do you find in India?

India does not really have a vegan culture as such and most people don't understand veganism. In comparison, vegetarianism is big and people relate to it and understand it more.

Is there a difference between a vegan in India and a vegan abroad?

Yes. In big cities abroad, vegan options in terms of restaurants and department stores are easy to come by. For instance, Berlin is the vegan capital of the world, and they even have vegan supermarkets. In contrast, India has vegan cafes in some cities, but the awareness is still pretty low, in my opinion.

How has this 'vegan' concept gained poularity in the last few years?

I have been vegan for over a year now and I do see more and more people understanding the concept. They are making efforts to accommodate vegans.

How does being a vegan help? What are the health benefits?

Healthy vegans, who follow a balanced diet, have many health benefits. A zero-oil, high in fibre, vitamins, minerals and proteins vegan diet can help curb diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Weight loss is also another benefit. However, an unhealthy vegan diet, where there are no vitamins, minerals and only fried, unhealthy food won't have as many benefits. However, going vegan automatically cuts out most junk food, sweets, dairy which is beneficial for the body.

Any special things that a vegan needs to keep in mind?

A balanced vegan diet is advised for good health. Another thing to keep in mind is to regularly check and maintain levels of vitamin B12 and D.

Any suggestions for newly turned vegans.

I would say that newly turned vegans should enjoy the process, and not be intimidated with limited options. For instance, when I go out to a restaurant, I usually speak to the chefs, who in most cases are very accommodating and dish out a vegan option. They should also be proud of the fact that they are making compassionate, ecological choices for a better planet.