

VEGAN CATERING GUIDE

Vegans eat from the bountiful plant kingdom.

Vegan food categories are: •Vegetables •Grains •Legumes (peas, beans, and lentils) •Fruits including nuts and seeds.

Vegans use no animal-source ingredients whatsoever. Vegans do not eat meat, fish, or fowl, or derivatives of these such as gelatin, rennet (in cheese), soup broths made with beef, chicken, or fish stock, Worcestershire sauce (with anchovies). They do not consume milk, whey, cheese, butter, yogurt, casein, eggs, honey, or other animal products.

It is advisable to provide a list of ingredients used in products and recipes. Such information is helpful to those with allergies, and it verifies that an item is vegan.

Ingredients exclusively from plants provide for an amazingly varied diet, including some excellent replacements for dairy and meat. For example, vegans use milks, yogurts, and cheeses made from soy, rice, nuts or seeds; meat substitutes from soy, wheat gluten, mushrooms; burgers and main dishes from combinations of grains, beans, and vegetables.

The **protein foods group** requirements are met by the use of mature legumes: beans and peas such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, lima beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas, lentils; also green soybeans (edamame) and mature soybean products (tempeh, tofu, TVP). Legumes, which also provide carbohydrates, may be used in the main dish, soups, pâtés, and salads. They must be thoroughly cooked. (Green beans, bean sprouts, and snow peas do not count as a protein food, only as a vegetable.) Wheat gluten (seitan) is protein from wheat. Nuts and seeds are additional protein sources and offer good fats.

A vegan meal should not be restricted to the narrow definition of “vegetable” but encompass **variety from the vegetable (plant) kingdom**—from the multitude of grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds available. Caterers should keep in mind that vegan caloric needs are met with starches found in grains (rice, millet,

quinoa, oats, bread, pasta, etc.), root vegetables (potatoes, yams, carrots, parsnip, turnip, etc.), and legumes—complimented by the less-filling vegetables and fruits valued for their minerals, vitamins, and phytonutrients.

In general, vegans favor a predominance of health-sustaining unrefined foods, such as brown rice and whole-grain bread over their white counterparts; and prefer natural sweeteners such as dried fruit or maple syrup over high fructose corn syrup and white sugar.

Fresh ingredients create flavor. Flavor enhancement is available from herbs, spices, salt, pepper, and soy sauce, as well as the food itself—so the dishes need not be bland. Many ethnic dishes are suitable for vegans.

If alcohol is desired, refer to Barnivore.com for listings of alcoholic beer, wine, and liquors without animal ingredients or

fining agents, also nonalcoholic beer and wine.

Vegan cuisine has developed rapidly in recent years. Vegan fare can meet the needs of many classes of diners—including those with health concerns, ethical or religious food restrictions. As with any other group of diners, there may be some people with low-salt, gluten-free, or other dietary restrictions, and people who do not consume any alcohol. Please keep vegan food separate from animal products during all stages of preparation.

Vegan cuisine features foods the public is encouraged to eat more abundantly: whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables. (Refer to the USDA Dietary Guidelines, and the Harvard Health Study.) People appreciate the opportunity to choose vegan meals, even when they don't always eat this way. Chefs enjoy a creative freedom when preparing meals from plants.



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