

# eBites

Spring 2026

Published by Vegetarian for Life, the advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegans and vegetarians

*Feeling  
good,  
eating  
well*

Where do you  
get your protein?

**We want  
your story:  
Enter Veggie  
Voices**

**WIN  
Delicious,  
nutritious  
Nudie  
Snacks**



**Plus:** New digital carers' guide

# Welcome

Spring is a time for fresh ideas and new voices – and in this issue we're celebrating both.

Our Veggie Voices competition (page 8) invites older vegans and vegetarians to share the stories behind their lifestyle choices. From first inspiration to lifelong commitment, these personal journeys will come together in an exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester this autumn. We hope you'll take part.

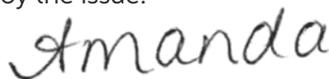
This issue also marks Nutrition and Hydration Week. Roving Chef Ollie highlights our food fortification guide (page 3), with a focus on protein – a key nutrient for maintaining strength and wellbeing as we age.

Making sure dietary choices are understood and respected in care settings is equally important. Our new digital carers' guide (page 6) helps older veg\*ns communicate their needs clearly with carers and support staff. In this issue, Karin shares her father's experience of maintaining his vegan values in later life.

Meanwhile, Vfl's chefs continue their inspiring outreach work – supporting communities and helping care providers better understand the needs of older vegans and vegetarians (page 4). If you know a group or organisation that would welcome a cookery demonstration or talk from one of our chefs, we'd love to hear from you.

I hope that you enjoy the issue.

Amanda Woodvine  
Chief Executive





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Vegetarian for Life is an advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegans and vegetarians throughout the UK.

**Vegetarian for Life** 

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Be part of our exhibition

## Reader exclusive

Nudie produces an exciting range of free-from, healthier snacks, including multi-award-winning options with fewer than 100 calories per serving. Gluten-free and made with all-natural ingredients and flavours, they're perfect for dipping or sprinkling over salads for extra crunch. Pick up a bag on the high street or treat yourself and friends to a multipack online.

We have three snack boxes to give away to three lucky winners (RRP £14.99). To enter, answer:

Nudie Crisp Collection

does NOT contain which flavour?

a) Cauliflower, b) Quinoa, c) Quince

Email your answer to

[info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk](mailto:info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk) by midday on 30/04/26.

Hint – the answer can be found here: [nudiesnacks.co.uk](http://nudiesnacks.co.uk)

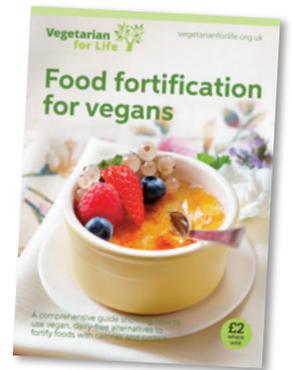


**WIN!**

Terms & conditions: The winners will be drawn at random from all entries received. One entry per household. UK addresses only. There is no cash alternative.

# Where do you get your protein?

VfL Roving Chef Ollie Bragg discusses how balance and variety ensure sufficient protein for older veggies



For those readers who follow a vegan or vegetarian diet, chances are you've been asked the question, "Where do you get your protein?" While most of us can confidently list lentils, beans, tofu and nuts, it is worthwhile to pause and reflect, particularly for those readers who care for older veg\*ns.

VfL's [food fortification guide](#) highlights protein, especially because our nutritional needs can change as we get older. Our bodies become less efficient at using protein – we may require slightly greater levels to maintain muscle mass, strength and resilience. Good protein intake supports mobility, recovery from illness and overall quality of life – all essential for ageing well.

Vegan and vegetarian diets can provide sufficient protein – the key is not just how much we eat, but how well we spread it across the day, and the variety of sources we include.

Rather than relying on one protein-rich meal, aim for balance. As a general guide, many older adults benefit from around 20–25g of protein per main meal, depending on individual circumstances. That might be contained in a protein-rich breakfast such as fortified soya yoghurt with nuts and seeds; in a hearty lentil and vegetable shepherd's pie at lunch; and tofu stir-fry with wholegrains in the evening.

Variety matters too. Different plant foods provide different amino acids; the building blocks of protein. Combining lentils or other pulses with grains, such as rice or wholemeal bread, naturally creates a complete amino acid profile. Including tofu, tempeh or soya chunks a few times a week can give a particularly concentrated boost. Beans, chickpeas and sprouts are excellent cupboard staples, while for lacto-vegetarians fermented dairy options such as curd or kadhi can be valuable additions.

For carers, it is worth noting that with thoughtful menu planning, plant-based diets can be highly nutritious and can actively support muscle health and stable blood sugar levels. When we recently [reviewed menus for one care home chain](#), protein balance emerged as one of the most significant opportunities for improvement.

Across the menus we reviewed, protein content varied widely between meals. Some

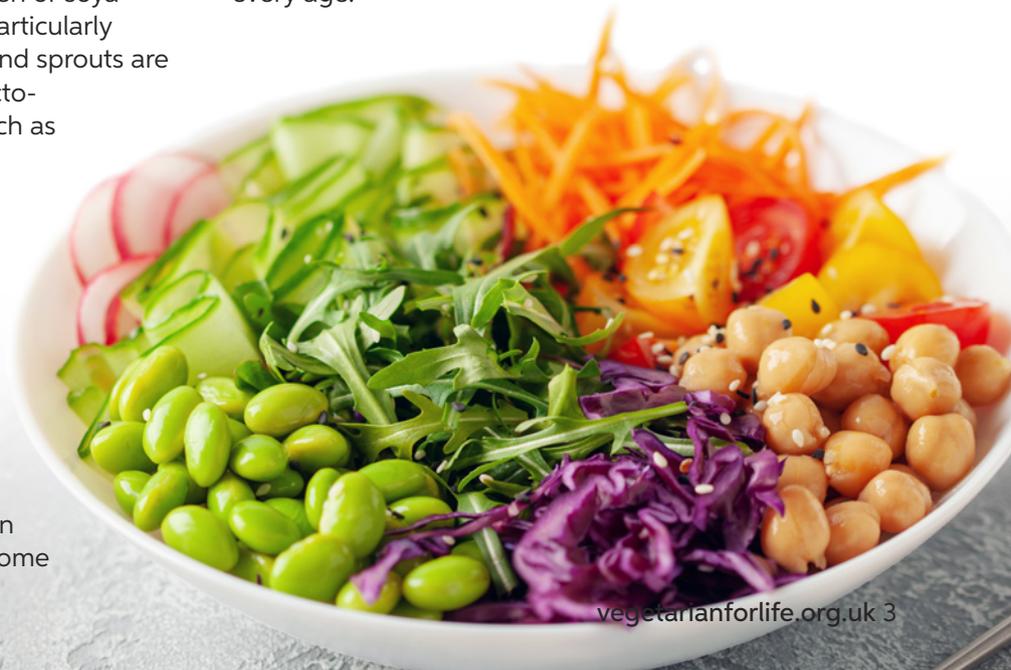
dishes relied heavily on dairy or fried paneer, while snacks and sweets offered very little high-quality protein. What was missing was the regular inclusion of pulses, wholegrains and soya foods across meals.

Working alongside the catering teams, we identified a series of simple shifts within these menus. One practical target was around 20–25g of protein per main meal, with protein sources rotated more deliberately – lentils paired with grains; tofu, tempeh or soya chunks included two to three times a week; and chickpeas, beans and sprouts woven regularly into dishes. Fermented dairy dishes were retained but balanced more carefully within the wider menu.

We also explored a number of practical swaps. Roasted chana or edamame were added to salads, while moong dal flour replaced 10–20% of standard flour in rotis to gently increase protein density. Seed powders such as pumpkin, flax and sesame were stirred into curries, and the frequency of heavily fried or cheese-based dishes was reduced.

The aim of these adjustments was straightforward: better support for muscle health, greater satiety between meals and more stable blood sugar levels for residents.

So next time someone asks where you get your protein, you can answer with confidence. And perhaps ask a question in return: not just "How much protein?" but "Is it spread well, varied and sufficient for this stage of life?" With a little awareness, and a few fortifying tweaks, plant-based diets can nourish us robustly at every age.



# VfL chefs on the road

Our chefs have been busy engaging with communities and organisations across the UK. Through cookery demonstrations and masterclasses, they are helping improve veg\*n provision for older people – whether in care homes or at home.

If you know of an organisation that would benefit from a cookery demonstration from an expert VfL chef, do please contact us for availability.

## CINNAMON CARE TEAMS SHARPEN VEGGIE COOKING

Chefs from Cinnamon Care received a masterclass in vegan/vegetarian cookery when VfL Roving Chef Justina led a training event at luxury care home Oakley Grange in Heathcote.

Kitchen teams from across the group attended, including members of the Oakley Grange team.

Participants began with an hour-long presentation exploring the reasons behind residents' ethical food choices. This was followed by a 90-minute hands-on kitchen workshop, where attendees recreated Justina's recipes.

Dishes prepared included [Lancashire hot pot](#), [roasted cauliflower salad](#) and [apricot cake](#).

Justina says she chose Lancashire hot pot because it is a simple, inclusive dish with a mild carbon footprint. She adds that the recipe is fortified with ProSauce gravy powder.

"Roasted cauliflower salad showcases how tahini can be incorporated into a dish to liven it up," she says. "Using such ingredients, salads are never boring."

After sampling the dishes, attendees rated the class 5/5 and said the recipes were both tasty and practical.

The visit marked a return to Cinnamon Care for Justina, who last year delivered training for the group at care home supplier Bidfood's kitchen in Slough.



## TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF VEGGIE CHEFS

Trainee chefs at Wakefield College took a lesson in veggie cookery from VfL Roving Chef Alex. He has visited the college in recent years to help ensure the next generation of caterers understands the requirements of vegan and vegetarian diets.

"The workshops always go down well," he says. "I start with an interactive quiz and information about catering for vegans and vegetarians."

Alex also delivered a cookery demonstration featuring dishes such as [pad Thai](#) and [sweet and sour Quorn](#). Students then worked in pairs to recreate the Quorn dish and prepare a [sticky toffee pudding](#).

## COOKING TOGETHER AT AGE UK LONDON

Service users at Age UK's Healthy Living and Learning Centre learned warming winter recipes in a hands-on session when the charity's Lewisham and Southwark branch received a veggie cookery class delivered by VfL Roving Chef Ollie.

Ollie has previously delivered a successful session at the centre, and returned to share some ideas for comforting, nutritious food. Attendees made [root vegetable tagine](#) and [flatbreads](#), with a dessert of [apple crumble](#) with vegan coconut yoghurt.

"The session was very well received, with lots of happy faces and plenty of compliments," Ollie says. "We ate a bit afterwards, but mostly participants took the food away to enjoy at home."





## Pea super soup

A great soup for Nutrition and Hydration Week – fortified with pea protein powder with added soya. You could add calories with more soya cream. See VFL's [Food fortification for vegans](#) guide for more recipes. 509 kcal, 15.6g protein per serving.

**Serves 1**

**Time to prepare** 10 minutes

**Time to cook** 15 minutes

- 2 shallots (alternatively, use white, red, or spring onions)
- 1–2 tbsp fresh mint
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 150g/5oz peas (fresh or frozen)
- 2 tbsp pea protein powder
- 220ml/scant ½ pint vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp soya cream

- 1 Finely chop the shallots, mint and garlic.
- 2 Heat the olive oil in a saucepan over a low heat. Add the shallot and garlic mix.
- 3 Cook gently for about 2–3 minutes until the shallots turn translucent.
- 4 Add the mint and cook for a minute or so.
- 5 Add the peas, pea protein powder and broth. Stir and let it simmer for about 15 minutes, then turn off the heat.
- 6 Blend in a food processor or with a hand blender.
- 7 Return to the pan and heat.
- 8 Season to taste. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil and soya cream.



## Cashew nut cream

This dairy-free 'cream' is packed with protein from the nuts and tofu. It's a great way to try tofu for the first time. Be sure to buy the silken variety not firm tofu. This is delicious with fresh fruit or cooked fruit puddings – adding a protein boost to a hydrating dessert. 221 kcal, 3.4g protein per serving.

**Serves 2**

**Time to prepare** 5 minutes

- 50g/scant 2oz cashew nuts
- 75g/2½oz silken tofu, drained
- 2 tbsp soya milk
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

- 1 Put the cashews into a food processor or blender and process to a fine powder.
- 2 Add the rest of the ingredients and whizz into a thick cream.
- 3 Store in a covered container in the fridge for up to 3 days



# New digital carers' guide – helping protect your vegan or vegetarian beliefs at home



For many older veggies, being vegan or vegetarian is not simply about food – it is about identity, ethics, compassion and lifelong conviction.

When you receive care at home, you are inviting new people into your daily life. Most carers are kind, well-meaning and genuinely want to do their best. However, unless your carers clearly understand your dietary beliefs, misunderstandings can happen.

That is why we are pleased to launch our new [digital carers' guide](#), designed to support anyone shopping, cooking or caring for a vegan or vegetarian at home.

## RESPECTING VEGGIE CHOICES AND COMMITMENTS

Being served meat, fish or animal products is not a minor mistake, especially for someone who has followed a veg\*n diet for decades. It can feel deeply distressing and undermining.

We recently heard from Karin, whose father – a passionate, long-term vegan – needed home care after periods of hospitalisation and deteriorating health linked to an essential tremor. Read his story below.

## Be respectful, even if these are not your values

When Karin saw her father's general health decline, she also noticed pressures at home for his carers to respect his vegan diet. She urges carers to be attentive to the requirements of people in their care. "Be respectful, even if these are not your values," she says. "Gain advice if need be and also speak to the person you are caring for. Have conversations and ask them about their core values. It can build rapport and trust."

Karin's father passed away at the age of 80. Approximately 40 years previously, he had adopted a vegetarian lifestyle, having watched Channel 4's *The Animals Film*, and he naturally transitioned to becoming vegan. "He knew that factory farming and the treatment of animals was abhorrent and he wanted no part of this," Karin says. "For my dad it was always about being kind and treating the planet the best we can."

Over the years, Karin says, her father's mobility declined, and he experienced postural drop. "My dad was awarded carers to his home on the last couple of occasions he came out of hospital," Karin explains. "At first it made him feel quite anxious, as he didn't know the people or when they would be coming in." She adds that his family would help with the shopping –

they were assisted by a friend as part of her paid work. Although acting with the best intentions, Karin says, the carer lacked some basic knowledge of the requirements of a vegan diet: "Not understanding properly, we found products such as Quorn with egg and beef stock cubes in my dad's kitchen – I did mention this to my dad and it was frustrating, as he just wanted to buy his own things."

For older veg\*ns who find themselves similarly being cared for, Karin recommends asking family members to help advocate on your behalf. "It depends on how poorly you are – ask for family members to communicate for you if need be," she says. "It can be hard if you have multiple people coming into your home as you may end up repeating yourself."

She recommends displaying Vfl posters, and easy-to-read information about what you do and don't want to eat or use in your home.

As a strong advocate of a veggie diet, Karin's father made an impact on those people who provided care for him. Karin says: "My dad changed how the hospital ward operates – even being very poorly you can still make a difference, and I know this had a big impact on my dad."

## A GUIDE TO HELP EVERYONE STAY ON THE SAME PAGE

Our [digital carers' guide](#) is practical, clear and supportive. It includes:

- Suitable foods and ingredients
- Guidance for shopping and reading labels
- Meal ideas and planners
- Information to highlight vegan and vegetarian beliefs and commitments

The guide is designed to support carers – not to criticise them. By giving carers accessible information, we help them to respect your beliefs.

## OUR POSTER CALLS ATTENTION TO YOUR WISHES

Alongside the guide, we have created an A4 poster for people receiving care at home. It is designed to be placed somewhere visible – such as on a kitchen cupboard door – as a gentle but clear reminder for carers.

The poster explains:

- You follow a vegan or vegetarian diet
- This is a deeply held belief
- Serving unsuitable food can cause distress

It also details where carers can access practical support. You can [order one free poster per customer](#). We simply ask for **£2 to cover postage and packaging**.

For many families, this small step provides reassurance. It helps to avoid awkward conversations and ensures that carers understand the importance of a veggie diet from the outset.

Most carers want to do the right thing. Our role at VfL is to make that easier for them, and safer for you.

Find our digital carers' guide at: [vforlife.org.uk/carers](http://vforlife.org.uk/carers)



## Supporting nutrition and hydration with our Featured Suppliers

Nutrition and Hydration Week highlights the vital role that good food and drink play in supporting the health and wellbeing of older adults – including those following vegan and vegetarian diets. VfL's [Featured Suppliers](#) help care teams meet these needs with confidence, providing the expertise, training, and procurement support needed to deliver nutritious, balanced meals to the people they support.

### PROCUREMENT FOR CARE

A CIPS Award-winning procurement specialist with over 20 years' dedicated experience in the care sector. [Procurement for Care](#) supports providers with procurement, dining, and housekeeping services, helping them create safe, delicious, and compliant dining experiences for residents. Services include:

- Menu and recipe development
- Nutrition and safety compliance
- Audits and stock control

### THE IDDSI GUY LTD

Providing specialist training tailored to the needs of care homes, [The IDDSI Guy Ltd](#) helps teams deliver safe, texture-modified meals with confidence. Courses cover understanding the IDDSI framework, recognising different levels of modified foods and drinks, practical preparation techniques, and maintaining safety and hygiene standards. Designed for chefs and care staff alike, the training equips teams to provide meals that are both nutritious and enjoyable.

### GREETWELL PURCHASING SOLUTIONS

A procurement specialist helping organisations maximise savings across foodservice and consumable categories. [Greetwell Purchasing Solutions](#) offers clients access to a multi-supplier ordering platform and catering management software that streamlines procurement and improves efficiency. The system also enables teams to build menus and recipes with full nutritional and allergen data.

### OTHER CARE CATERING SUPPLIERS

For full details, please visit our Suppliers Directory.

To find out more about membership options, visit: [vegetarianforlife.org.uk/uk-list/about](http://vegetarianforlife.org.uk/uk-list/about)



# Veggie Voices

share your story



To celebrate the launch of Veggie Voices at Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery this autumn, we're inviting older veg\*ns to help make history and to take part in a special competition.

The UK has a long and often overlooked legacy of veganism and vegetarianism. Veg\*ns in the limelight have ranged from Percy Bysshe Shelley to Billie Eilish, George Bernard Shaw to Natalie Portman, including peace campaigners and politicians, suffragettes and musicians; many people have proved that living a plant-based life is not just a flash in the pan.

Now, we want to hear your story.

Selected entrants will have their film featured in the Veggie Voices exhibition, showcasing real lived experiences alongside pioneers past and present.

## WHO CAN ENTER?

This competition is open to:

- UK residents aged 50+
- People who identify as vegan or vegetarian
- Anyone with a personal story connected to their veg\*n journey
- Those happy for their film to be shown publicly

You don't need to be famous – we're looking for authenticity, honesty and lived experience.

Your story might include:

- When and why you became vegan or vegetarian
- What it was like in earlier decades
- Family, workplace or cultural reactions
- Activism or campaigning
- Health, ethics, environment or animal welfare motivations
- How attitudes have changed over time

Your story can be serious, funny, political or personal – there's no 'right' angle. If you would like some inspiration from other fantastic veg\*ns, see our [fascinating online exhibition](#), which tells the stories of veggie pioneers, past and present.

## HOW TO ENTER

Please submit a short self-filmed video telling your story. We're looking for a maximum length of 3 minutes shot in landscape mode. Find the additional video requirements on the [V for Life website](#). But remember – you don't need professional equipment; a modern smartphone is absolutely fine.

Our panel will review all eligible entries and select stories to feature in:

- The Veggie Voices exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery
- The online exhibition
- V for Life promotional channels

The closing date for entries is 31 May 2026. Winners will be notified by 1 July 2026.

Please upload your video [using this link](#). Alternatively, you can send it by email to [info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk](mailto:info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk), or by using a file transfer service such as WeTransfer.

## PERMISSIONS & CONSENT

By entering, you confirm that:

- You are the person appearing in the film
- You own the rights to the footage
- You give permission for your video to be exhibited and promoted by V for Life

Every story matters. Whether you've spent decades living quietly on a veggie diet or a seasoned campaigner, your experience helps shape the future.

We can't wait to hear from you.

