Vegetarian for Life

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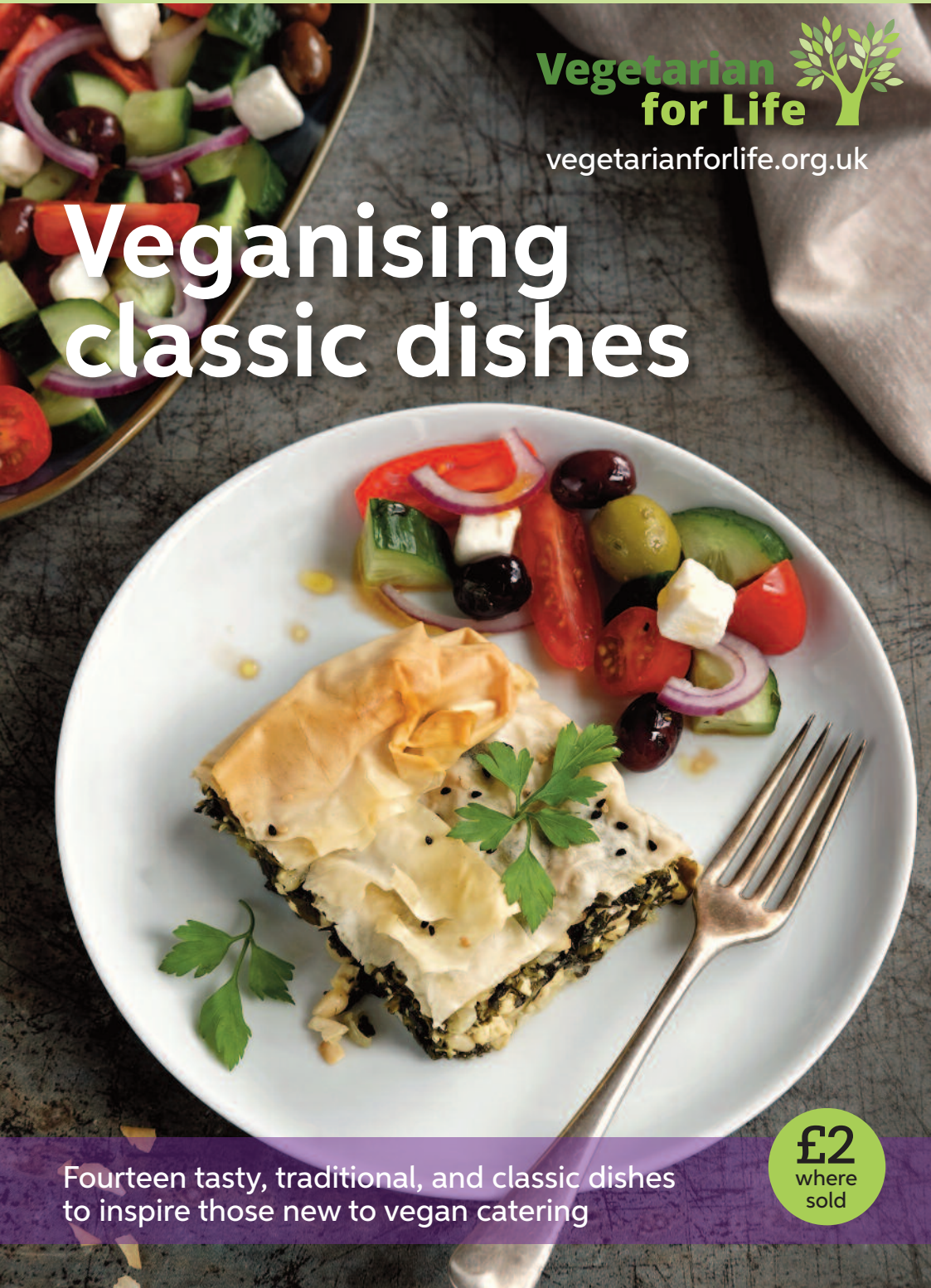
Veganising classic dishes



Fourteen tasty, traditional, and classic dishes to inspire those new to vegan catering

£2 where sold

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Vegetarian for Life

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Introduction

Catering for vegans and vegetarians (veg*ns) needn't be difficult. You don't need to serve completely different dishes. This guide focuses on classic, traditional dishes, which can be made vegan with a few simple swaps.

When catering for veg*ns you are supporting their identity, life choices, and individuality. This stuff is important. Take an interest in the choices that residents make. There's no point spending hours creating dishes that won't be enjoyed. Veg*ns are a broad group. Some enjoy mock meat products, others prefer less processed foods and wholefoods. Either way, without asking you won't know their preferences.

As a chef, particularly one caring for vulnerable people, you have a great responsibility. Providing tasty, well balanced, and nutritious meals for your residents, and supporting the enjoyment and social aspect of eating together. This not only fuels the body and mind, it's life enriching and impacts positively on residents' wellbeing. Don't take your contribution lightly – you are important in many ways that are sometimes difficult to appreciate on a daily basis. Thank you for your hard work.

We hope that this short collection of recipes will give you some new ideas and inspiration.

Shortcuts and quick tips

Veganism and vegetarianism are enjoying immense popularity at the moment. Food manufacturers and suppliers are ready to get on board with this. What once involved a visit to a specialised health food store can now be bought in supermarkets and wholesalers. Restaurants, cafés, schools, and hospitals all offer vegan options to varying degrees.

- **Make your life easier by researching what vegan products are available from your wholesaler. Some wholesalers even have a vegan catalogue.**
- **What dishes do you make now that could be adjusted without losing any of their flavour or popularity? Simple swaps could reduce time and cost and create one dish that everyone can enjoy.**

PLANNING

When you are creating your weekly menu, you have more to think about than just breakfast, lunch, and an evening meal. Snacks, treats, drinks, fortification, textures, allergies, specials, seasonal cuisine, celebrations, events, and more, all need to be taken into account for the veg*ns you cater for too. A cliché but true – preparation and planning really are key.

CELEBRATE YOUR HARD WORK

Having gone the extra mile, don't be shy to tell people about it. Put your hard work to good use. Your website, newsletters, social media, awards, and cookery competitions should all be exploited to shout about what is going on in the kitchen. If you don't already, come out of the kitchen. Put your best whites on and enjoy a bit of time with the people you cook for. Don't forget about VfL's Annual Awards for Excellence in Vegetarian and Vegan Care Catering, too: vegetarianforlife.org.uk/veggiehero

STARTING THE DAY OFF RIGHT

Breakfast is often said to be the most important meal of the day. Many breakfast foods such as most cereals and bread are vegan. However, be mindful of a few hidden ingredients. Gelatine appears in some cereals, as does honey, milk powder, and vitamin D sourced from sheep's wool, all of which are not vegan. Fortunately, manufacturers are making life easier by labelling what is suitable. In addition, many vegan products are now available. Plant-based milk, whether it be oat, soya, almond, or rice, can all be used on cereals and in drinks. Vegan yoghurts are available in most supermarkets and wholesalers. For a cooked breakfast you might include baked beans, hash browns, mushrooms, tinned tomatoes, scrambled tofu, and ready-made sausages. Even vegan black puddings and vegan bacon can be used to create the heartiest of starts to the day. For more breakfast recipes see our website.



Breakfast sausages

You can buy a variety of good quality ready-made vegan sausages but these homemade ones have two extra ingredients – individuality and love.
Time to prepare 10 minutes
Time to cook 10 minutes
Makes 10 medium sausages

- 400g/14oz can kidney beans, drained
- 100g/10½oz mushrooms
- 50g/1¾oz ground almonds
- 1 garlic clove
- 25g/1oz breadcrumbs
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp fresh thyme (most fresh herbs will work)
- Salt and pepper
- 50g/1¾oz breadcrumbs for coating
- 1 tbsp olive oil to fry the sausages

1 Place the sausage ingredients into a food processor and blend. The mixture should be quite thick. If too soft, add additional breadcrumbs.
2 Shape the mixture into sausage shapes and coat in the breadcrumbs.
3 Gently fry the sausages in a non-stick pan for 10 minutes, carefully turning to get an even, crispy exterior.

Chef's tip These simple sausages are relatively soft in texture and not suitable for cooking on a BBQ. They can be prepared, shaped, then chilled before cooking. Other types of beans will work just as well. Kidney beans just add a little colour.

Potato latkes

Serve these gently fried potato cakes with a cooked breakfast or as a side.
Time to prepare 5 minutes
Time to cook 20 minutes
Makes 10–15 latkes

- 1 large potato, grated
- 1 small onion, grated
- ¼ tsp mixed herbs
- ¼ tsp paprika
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 2 tbsp flour
- Salt and pepper
- 100ml/3¾fl oz vegetable oil for frying

1 Place the raw potato and onion into a bowl of cold water to wash out some of the starch. Drain, then place onto a clean cloth and squeeze out the excess liquid.
2 Place the potato, onion, herbs, paprika and garlic into a bowl and mix. Add the flour to help bind the mixture together. Season with salt and pepper. I would recommend plenty of pepper.
3 Gently heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan. Cooking in batches, place a heaped spoonful of the mixture into your hand to shape the latkes. They should be quite thin. Carefully fry for 5 minutes, then turn over and cook the other side. Place the cooked latkes on a paper towel to absorb excess oil.

Chef's tip Shallow frying the latkes will give a crispy texture. Try adding other herbs and spices to create your own twist on these crispy treats. At home I add chilli flakes to the mixture.

Cottage pie

Such an easy, satisfying, and comforting dish. You can be flexible with ingredients too.

Time to prepare 20 minutes
Time to cook 1 hour
Serves 8

- 1.5 kg/3½lbs potatoes
- 15g/½oz margarine
- 60ml/4 tbsp oat milk (or any unsweetened plant milk)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 stick celery, finely chopped
- 300g/10½oz carrots, chopped
- ½ tsp mixed herbs
- 2 bay leaves
- 400g/14oz frozen soya mince
- 500m/18fl oz vegetable stock
- 2 tsp Henderson's relish (or any vegan Worcestershire sauce)
- 1 tbsp vegan gravy granules*
- Salt and pepper to taste

1 Peel and slice the potatoes and place into a large pan of boiling water. When the potatoes are cooked, 15 minutes or thereabouts, drain and add the margarine and oat milk.
2 Thoroughly mash – no-one wants lumpy mash! Season as required and set to one side.
3 Gently fry the onion in a large saucepan for at least 5 minutes. This extra time cooking will add flavour to the finished dish. Add the garlic, celery, and carrots, then sauté for a further 5 minutes. Finally, add the herbs, bay leaves, frozen mince, stock, and Henderson's relish. Simmer for 15 minutes.
4 The mixture should have reduced significantly. Sprinkle in the gravy granules a little at a time. The amount of gravy mix needed may vary depending on the amount of liquid.
5 Transfer your filling to a deep ovenproof dish. Remove the bay leaves and top with the mashed potato. For extra flavour, add grated vegan cheese to the top. Bake in the oven at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 40 minutes, or until a nice golden crust has developed.
6 Serve your cottage pie with peas, broccoli or green beans, and extra gravy.

Chef's tip Why not create individual servings and freeze some for another day? This recipe uses Henderson's relish to add additional flavour, because Worcestershire sauce contains fish. Other brands of vegan Worcestershire style sauce are available.

*Bisto original gravy granules (the red packet) are vegan. Some vegetable gravy powders contain milk powder so always check the label.





Vegetable biryani

This dish can be made in a number of ways. Essentially it is rice cooked with spices, dried fruit, nuts, and vegetables with a curry sauce.

Time to prepare 15 minutes
Time to cook 45 minutes
Serves 6

Curry sauce

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tbsp mild curry powder
- 1 tbsp sultanas
- 2 apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 200ml/7fl oz vegetable stock
- Salt and pepper to taste

Biryani

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 50g/2oz sultanas
- 75g/2½oz chopped almonds
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 cauliflower, cut into small florets
- 300g/10½oz vegan Quorn chunks
- 300g/10½oz easy cook rice
- 500ml hot vegetable stock

Garnish

- 50ml/3 tbsp vegan natural yoghurt
- 30g/1oz toasted flaked almonds
- 3g (a sprinkle) fresh coriander

Curry sauce

1 Gently fry the onion for at least 10 minutes, then add the garlic and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the curry powder and cook for 5 minutes.
2 Add the sultanas, apples, and stock, then simmer for 10 minutes. Set to one side until ready to use.

Biriyani

1 Gently fry the onion for 5 minutes in a large frying pan. Add the garlic and curry powder and continue to cook for 5 minutes.
2 Place the sultanas, chopped almonds, carrots, cauliflower, vegan Quorn chunks, rice, and the cooked onions and spice mix into an ovenproof casserole dish. Gently fold the ingredients then pour over the hot stock. Cover with foil and place into a preheated oven 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5 for 30 minutes.
3 Carefully remove from the oven and gently stir. Note the consistency of the rice and the amount of liquid in the dish. If necessary, add a little extra stock and return to the oven for another 15 minutes. Your biryani is ready when the rice and vegetables are cooked, and the stock absorbed.
4 To serve your biriyani, place a portion onto a serving plate and top with a spoonful of curry sauce. Add a spoonful of vegan natural yoghurt, a few toasted almond flakes, and a little fresh coriander.

Chef's tip This dish can use many different ingredient combinations. Aubergine, peppers, sweet potatoes, courgette, green beans, broad beans, and tomatoes all work well. Always add hot stock to the rice because this will considerably speed up the cooking process. The variety of rice used will also affect cooking time. This dish can also be cooked entirely in a large saucepan.





Lancashire hot pot

This traditional, one pot (almost) dish is a firm favourite of mine. Comforting and nostalgic. Like many of these classic dishes, ingredients and quantities can be flexible to suit what is available and seasonal.

Time to prepare 30 minutes
Time to cook 40 minutes
Serves 6

- 750g/1lb 10oz potatoes, sliced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 400g/14oz carrots, sliced
- 300g/10½oz vegan Quorn chunks
- 400g/14oz can of flageolet beans, drained and rinsed
- 500ml/18fl oz vegetable stock
- ½ tsp mixed herbs
- 1 tbsp vegan gravy granules
- 100g/3½oz peas
- Salt and pepper

1 Place the potatoes into a large pan of boiling water and simmer until almost cooked. Drain and set to one side.
2 In a large saucepan gently sauté the onions for 5 minutes. Add the garlic and carrots and continue to cook for another 5 minutes.
3 Add the vegan Quorn chunks, flageolet beans, vegetable stock, and mixed herbs. Simmer for 5 minutes, then add the gravy powder and peas.
4 Place your filling into a heatproof casserole dish and top with the cooked sliced potato. Drizzle over a little olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place your hot pot under a warm grill for 5–10 minutes or until golden brown.

Serving suggestion Green beans and pickled cabbage.

Chef's tip By pre-cooking the potatoes and then finishing them off under the grill you save time and still end up with a beautifully golden topping. If your grill is not large enough, simply bake in the oven at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4, for 20 minutes.

Moussaka

This dish originates from the eastern Mediterranean. These days it's commonly served as a vegetarian option, but this vegan version keeps all the flavour and richness people expect.
Time to prepare 25 minutes
Time to cook 1 hour
Serves 6–8

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 750g/1lb 10oz potatoes, scrubbed and sliced
- 1 aubergine, sliced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 200g/7oz vegan frozen soya mince
- 1 tsp mixed herbs
- 1 tsp paprika
- ¼ tsp cinnamon (don't overdo this!)
- 400g/14oz chopped tinned tomatoes
- 500g/1lb 1oz fresh tomatoes

Cheese-style sauce

- 10g/⅓oz vegan margarine
- 1 tbsp flour
- 200ml/7fl oz oat milk
- 150g/5oz vegan cheese, grated
- Fresh parsley for garnish

1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/ 375°F/gas mark 5.
2 In a large frying pan, fry the sliced potatoes and aubergine. You may need to do this in batches. Although this may take a little while, it will speed up the cooking of the final dish and add flavour and colour.
3 In a separate pan, gently fry the onion for 5 minutes. Add the garlic, carrots, frozen soya mince, herbs, paprika, cinnamon, and tinned tomatoes. Simmer for 20 minutes. Season as required.
4 In a deep casserole dish start to layer up your moussaka with potato, mince, aubergine and half the fresh tomatoes. Cover and place into the oven for 30 minutes. While the dish is baking, make the cheese sauce.
5 In a saucepan gently melt the margarine, then sprinkle in the flour to make a roux. Gently cook for 2 minutes, then add the oat milk a little at a time until you have a smooth sauce. Add the grated vegan cheese and continue to stir until melted.
6 Remove the moussaka from the oven and spoon over the sauce. Top with the remaining fresh tomato slices. Return to the oven for 15 minutes.
7 Finally garnish with a little chopped parsley.

Chef's tip Although this is made in a large casserole dish, individual portions can easily be created and frozen.





Mushroom and ‘steak’ steamed pudding

These soft, steamed puddings are so comforting and delicious. The filling should have a strong flavour to balance with the subtle, soft pastry.

Time to prepare 15 minutes
Time to cook 1 hour
Makes 4 individual puddings

Filling

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 200g/7oz mushrooms, sliced and chopped into a variety of shapes
- 150g/5oz Quorn vegan pieces
- 1 tbsp red wine (optional)
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp balsamic vinegar
- ½ tsp tamari soya sauce
- ½ tsp mixed herbs
- 200ml/8fl oz vegan gravy
- You will also need four pudding moulds, approximately 5cm deep x 8cm across

Pastry

- 200g/7oz plain flour
- 100g/3½oz vegetable suet
- ¼ tsp salt
- 100ml warm water
- Vegan margarine, for greasing

Filling

1 Gently fry the onions for 5 minutes, then add the garlic and mushrooms. Continue to cook for another 5 minutes.
2 Add the Quorn pieces, wine, paprika, balsamic vinegar, soya sauce, mixed herbs, and gravy.
3 Simmer on a low heat for 10 minutes. Set to one side to cool.

Pastry

1 Place the flour into a large bowl then add the vegetable suet and salt, and mix.
2 Gradually mix the water into the flour until the raw dough is formed.
3 On a lightly floured surface, roll out the pastry. Rub a little margarine around the inside of your pudding bowls. Line each with the pastry, allowing it to overhang the edge.
4 Fill each case with your filling. Top the puddings with a pastry lid. Pinch the edges of the pastry together to seal the top. Trim any excess pastry. Wrap the pudding bowls in foil.
5 Place your puddings into a steamer and steam for 45 minutes. Check the water level from time to time so it doesn’t boil dry.
6 Carefully lift the puddings out of the steamer and remove the foil. Slide a small knife around the edge, then turn the pudding out onto your serving plate. A smart tap sometimes helps to get it out.

Serving suggestion Serve your puddings with new potatoes, green beans, carrots, and extra gravy.

Chef’s tip Initially this recipe may seem long but broken down it’s quite easy. Basically, it’s a steamed pie. When making the puddings, don’t push the pastry into the pudding bowl because this may cause it to stick and make it difficult to remove once steamed. The filling can of course be altered with different ingredients, such as chopped nuts, tofu, pulses, spices and herbs.



Vegan ‘fish’ and chips

Fish and chips have a special cultural place in the UK. Although veg*ns don’t eat fish, they don’t want to miss out on the social aspect it brings. Creating a vegan alternative to the traditional battered fish is relatively easy and can be achieved with various fish replacements, such as tofu or banana blossom (available tinned from some supermarkets and wholesalers). Ready-made vegan fish alternatives are also available.

If you have not used banana blossom before a practice run is recommended. Each 400g tin (drained weight 250g) contains around 5 sections of blossom.

The nori adds a ‘fish’ skin and flavour. Some people prefer this with nori, others without.

Time to prepare 15 minutes
Time to cook 5 minutes
Serves 2



- 250g/9oz banana blossom OR 300g/10½oz firm smoked tofu, drained and sliced into portions
- 1 sheet nori

Batter mix

- 100g/3½oz cornflour
- 100g/3½oz plain flour
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 175ml/6fl oz chilled water, sparkling water, or ginger beer
- Vegetable oil for frying

1 Combine all the batter ingredients. The batter should be relatively thick to be able to easily coat the blossom or tofu.
2 Stick a small piece of nori to the side of each piece of blossom or tofu.
3 Dip the ‘fish’ into the batter until coated.
4 Carefully deep fry for approximately 5 minutes.

Serving suggestion Chips and peas, naturally! You could also go the extra mile by providing vegan tartar sauce. Combine ready-made vegan mayo with a small amount of chopped gherkin, tarragon, capers, and onion. Job done.

Chef’s tip Not all vegetarians or vegans want foods that resemble meat or fish in texture or flavour. It is always prudent to ask them what their preference is before spending time, effort, and money creating mock dishes.



Spinach pie

A traditional Greek pie commonly made with filo pastry. Shop bought filo saves a lot of time and is much easier. Most brands are vegan but be sure to check. Any spare pastry should be wrapped quickly because it will dry out. If you do have spare pastry, it lends itself well to a variety of sweet desserts.

Time to prepare 15 minutes
Time to cook 20 minutes
Makes 6 slices

- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 400g/14oz frozen spinach (thawed)
- 150g/generous 5oz firm smoked tofu, chopped
- 100g/3½oz vegan feta, chopped
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 75g/2½oz pine nuts, toasted (optional)
- Salt and pepper
- 4 filo sheets
- 10g/⅓oz vegan margarine, melted

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.
2 Gently fry the onion and garlic in a little of the margarine. Set to one side.
3 When the spinach has thawed, press out as much water as you can.
4 Gently mix the onion, garlic, spinach, tofu, vegan feta, lemon juice, parsley, and pine nuts together. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5 Line a pie dish with non-stick paper, allowing it to drape over the side.
6 Place a sheet of filo into the pie dish, allowing it drape loosely over the edge. Lightly brush with a little melted margarine and repeat with the other sheets.
7 Add your filling and then fold over the draped edges to create a lid. Brush over any remaining margarine. Finally, let the non-stick paper rest over the top. This will help prevent the top from burning. The extra paper will also allow you to lift the cooked pie out easily.
8 Bake for 15–20 minutes until golden and crispy on the top.

Serving suggestion Tomato, cucumber, and olive salad.

Chef's tip Spinach pie, or spanakopita, is generally vegetarian. A simple swap to vegan cheese will mean vegans can enjoy this tasty dish. You can also adapt the recipe to make individual pasties.

Sunday lunch

The tradition of a large roast dinner on a Sunday. Family round, perhaps a glass of wine, tall stories, and a large pile of washing up. It's difficult to overestimate the significance of the experience, which can form social bonds that last a lifetime.

The elephant in the room for a vegetarian or vegan is the lack of meat on a roast dinner, which for some is the whole point of the meal. Although vegans and vegetarians don't eat meat, they still want to enjoy the social experience and it still has the same significance – just no meat, thanks.

What do vegans and vegetarians want to have on a Sunday roast? Well, if you take out the meat, pretty much everything else. This means roast potatoes, gravy, carrots, cabbage, peas, and a centrepiece, which is where tastes can differ. Some, not all, like to eat something that is similar to meat. Meat alternatives are readily available such as turkey, ham, or beef, and come with or without stuffing. Others may prefer something less meat-like and processed. Nut roasts may be a cliché but they can be quite delicious, easy to make, and nutritious. Others may prefer a pie, a Wellington, or something completely unique. As a caterer, it's your job to find out what the people you care for want, and provide that where possible.

Take care when making the dinner because some common practices should be avoided, such as using animal fat to roast the potatoes. Some premium brands of ready roasted potatoes also contain animal fat. Avoid using meat juices to make the gravy, too. Vegan gravy granules are commonly available – just add water and stir. Easy. Here are a few recipes you could try for your next vegan roast dinner:

- **Mushroom, nut & cranberry Wellington**
- **Easy nut roast**
- **Creamy mushroom and 'chicken' pie**

Visit vegetarianforlife.org.uk/recipes and search by keyword for full details.





BBQ

A BBQ is a great opportunity to socialise and relax. Vegan options don't need to be limited. Food manufacturers now have many ready-made options available, with a wide variety of burgers and sausages. Softer vegetable burgers are usually easier to cook under a conventional grill or oven, but the firmer meat-style products work fine on a BBQ. Jazzing up ready-made products is easy with your own marinade or dipping sauce. Veg*ns don't want their food cooked where cross contamination can take place so may prefer a separate BBQ grill, or to have their food cooked before the meat is placed on the grill. Remember to use separate cooking tongs too, as would be good practice in the kitchen.

Marinated tofu kebabs

Time to prepare 10 minutes plus time to marinade
Time to cook 10 minutes
Serves 4 (8 kebabs)

- 1 red pepper
- 1 yellow pepper
- 1 small red onion
- 1 small courgette
- 300g/10½oz firm tofu

Marinade
- 1 tsp soya sauce
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 garlic clove, crushed into a paste
- 1 tbsp Henderson's relish (vegan Worcester sauce)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice

Glaze
- 2 tbsp mild/sweet chilli sauce

1 Slice the vegetables and tofu into large chunks and carefully thread into skewers. Place into a shallow tray.

2 Mix the marinade ingredients together and spoon over the kebabs. Ideally allow the kebabs to marinate for a few hours, or overnight. This will allow the flavours to develop.

3 To cook, place on a medium heat over the BBQ coals for 10 minutes, turning from time to time. Alternatively, these can be cooked indoors under a grill, in the oven, or on a griddle pan. Brush the kebabs with the glaze when they are nearly cooked.

4 Serve with a couscous salad packed with fresh chopped tomatoes, cucumber and fresh herbs. Alternatively, use as a filling for a pitta bread or wrap.

Chef's tip If you haven't tried tofu before – or have but weren't so keen – it's worth persevering. Tofu can be bland by itself, but it does take on flavours very well. For this recipe be sure to use firm tofu. If you can find flavoured tofu it will add extra flavour to the dish.

Stuffed field mushrooms

Mushrooms are a great addition on the BBQ grill. Easy to cook and can be eaten as an alternative to a burger.
Time to prepare 10 minutes
Time to cook 15 minutes
Serves 4

- 4 large field mushrooms

Filling
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 40g/1½oz chopped mixed nuts
- 1 tomato, deseeded and chopped
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 50g/1¾oz vegan grated cheese
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh herbs (parsley, dill, coriander, and thyme all work well)
- 1 tsp soya sauce
- Salt and pepper

1 Make the filling first. Remove the stalks from the mushrooms and put the tops to one side. Chop the stalks and gently fry with the onion for 5 minutes.
2 Add the garlic, nuts, tomato, lemon juice, most of the cheese and herbs, and soya sauce.
3 Remove from the heat and season as required.
4 If cooking your mushrooms on a traditional BBQ, place the mushrooms underside down for a couple of minutes. This will allow them to cook evenly.
5 Turn the mushrooms over and fill each one with the mixture. Top with the remaining cheese and continue to cook until juicy and ready to serve – approximately 12 minutes depending on the heat.
6 Serve the mushrooms with a garnish of the remaining herbs. Alternatively, serve them in bun with a slice of fresh tomato in the style of a veggie burger.

Chef's tip This is a simple filling but let your imagination run free. Cooked spinach, pine nuts, sundried tomatoes, cooked artichokes, spices, and breadcrumbs are all possibilities. If it's a rainy day, the mushrooms can be cooked under a grill or in the oven.





Dessert, pudding, afters… the best part

Whatever you call it, it's got to be there. Discovering a reliable vegan cake recipe is invaluable, because it can be reinvented to create many other desserts. For recipes beyond these few, visit our website and our vegan baking guide.

Eton mess

This classic dessert takes a while to make and the oven temperature needs to be very low. However, the result is amazing.

Time to prepare 15 minutes
Time to cook 2 hours (minimum)
Serves 8

- Liquid from 400g/14oz tin chickpeas (save the chickpeas for another day)
- 100g/3½oz white caster sugar
- 1 tsp xanthan gum
- 400ml/17fl oz Elmlea Plant Double Alternative to Dairy Cream OR 400g/14oz coconut milk, full fat – chilled for at least 2 hours
- 200g/7oz fresh raspberries
- A little icing sugar to dust on the top

1 Preheat the oven to 140°C/275°F/gas mark 1 or lower.
2 Whisk the liquid from the chickpeas for 2 minutes, then slowly add the sugar and continue to whisk.
3 After 5 minutes, add the xanthan gum. Your meringue mixture should stiffen up like traditional meringue.
4 Spoon small cases onto a lined baking sheet and place into the oven. Cook for 2 hours. This may take longer depending on how large the cases are.
5 When completely cooked, remove from the oven. They will crisp up as they cool.
6 Whip the cream or coconut milk until stiff.
7 Finally, create individual servings with meringue, vegan cream and fresh raspberries. For additional presentation create a raspberry coulis to spoon over the top. Serve straight away.

Chef's tip Of the two suggested creams, my preference is Elmlea. It will whip well and has a pleasant taste. The coconut cream needs to be thoroughly chilled, or it won't whip. You may decide to add a little sugar to sweeten. Serve the meringues shortly after baking because they can lose their crispy texture.

Chocolate cheesecake

This easy-to-make cheesecake uses tofu as part of the filling, adding protein and calcium.
Time to prepare 15 minutes, plus 2 hours to chill
Time to cook 5 minutes
Makes 8 slices

- 60g/2oz vegan margarine
- 130g/4½oz vegan digestive or ginger biscuits, crushed

Filling
- 100g/3½oz dark chocolate, melted
- 150g/generous 5oz vegan cream cheese
- 300g/10½oz silken tofu
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 10g/⅓oz cocoa powder

Garnish
- A few strawberries

1 Melt the margarine, then add the crushed biscuits.
2 Press the biscuit mixture into a lined cake tin and refrigerate for 10 minutes.
3 Melt the chocolate, then blend half with the remaining ingredients. Taste at this point and add more maple syrup if required.
4 Spoon the chocolate mixture onto the biscuit base and decorate with the remaining melted chocolate.
5 Chill for 2 hours to allow the cake to set. Serve with a garnish of strawberries.

Chef's tip Vegan chocolate is widely available in most supermarkets. Additional flavours can be added such as orange, vanilla or mint. The chilling time can be reduced if placed into a freezer, or if you wish to serve slightly softer.







Lemon drizzle cake

A lovely lemony sponge, topped with a sweet and sharp drizzle. Delicious. Make sure to use unwaxed lemons because waxed lemons contain shellac, which isn't suitable for vegetarians or vegans.

Time to prepare 15 minutes
Time to cook 1 hour
Makes 8–10 slices

- 150g/generous 5oz vegan margarine
- 175g/6oz caster sugar
- 150ml/5fl oz soya milk
- 200g/7oz plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 75g/2½oz ground almonds
- Pinch salt
- 3 unwaxed lemons, zest, and juice
- 60g/2oz icing sugar

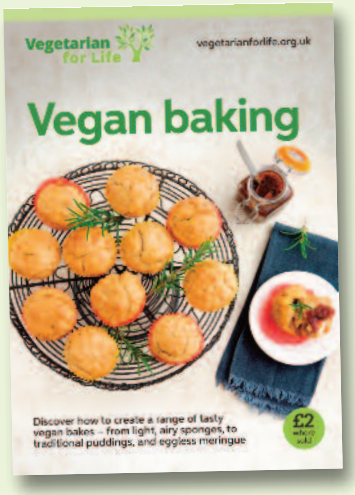
1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.
2 Line a round cake tin, approximately 20cm x 6cm, with greaseproof paper.
3 Cream the margarine and sugar together.
4 Mix in the soya milk.
5 Sift in the flour, baking powder, and bicarbonate of soda.
6 Add the ground almonds and salt.
7 Finally mix in the juice and zest of 1 lemon.
8 Spoon your mixture into your prepared tin and bake for 1 hour.
9 Mix 50g of the icing sugar with a little of the lemon juice. Set to one side for the final icing.
10 Gently heat the remaining lemon juice, zest and icing sugar to slightly reduce.
11 When the cake is cooked, spoon over the warm lemon juice.
12 Allow to cool completely before removing from the tin, and then icing.



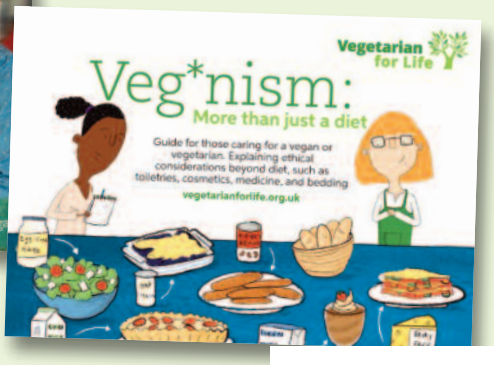
Vegetarian for Life (VfL) is the leading authority on diet and healthy living advice for older vegans and vegetarians. We work with care establishments and other organisations supporting older people, to ensure that they cater well and ethically for vegans and vegetarians.

We hope you've enjoyed this guide. If you'd like more recipe inspiration, check out our website and other publications. These include a vegan baking guide for more classic puds, and – if you're new to vegan catering – a vegan rescue pack, and a guide to ethical considerations beyond diet.

We also run online and in-person caterer training if you'd like to ensure that your catering team is confident in catering for vegans and vegetarians. Please get in touch for more information.







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