

CHEW ON THIS



REASONS TO GO ▶ VEGETARIAN

Because heart disease begins in childhood.

Meat has no fiber but is laden with fat and cholesterol, which is why the late Dr. Benjamin Spock, in the final edition of his book *Baby & Child Care*, recommended against feeding children any kind of meat.

Because a vegan diet reverses heart disease.

On the American Heart Association (AHA) diet, which includes meat and other animal products, patients' arteries continue to clog, while Dr. Dean Ornish's vegan diet unclogs arteries. In one study, AHA dieters experienced a 28 percent average worsening of clogged arteries, while dieters on Ornish's program experienced an 8 percent improvement in their arteries.

Because eating meat and dairy products can make you fat.

As a nation, we're getting fatter, with 68 percent of us overweight or obese. In contrast, only 2 percent of vegans suffer from obesity.

Because you shouldn't have to lie to your kids about the food you eat.

Children would be horrified to learn about the cruelty and violence involved in turning chickens, pigs, and other animals into nuggets and other "foods."

Because in every package of chicken, there's a little poop.

Fecal contamination of chicken and other meat products is a leading source of *E. coli* in the U.S. food supply. A recent study showed that most of those with urinary tract infections contracted *E. coli* from meat products, likely tainted with fecal matter.

Because meat is bloody and often contains harmful bacteria.

There are more than 50 million cases of foodborne illness every year in the United States, most of which are meat-related and thousands of which lead to death. Animals accumulate dangerous chemicals in their flesh and fat (which meat-eaters consume), including dioxins, antibiotics, pesticides, herbicides, and even arsenic.

Because it isn't fair.

Mistreating and killing other animals merely because we like the taste of their flesh, milk, and eggs is an act of exploitation and violence, and we do it only because we have the power to.

Because no living maternal creature wants to see her family slaughtered.

Cows love their calves, sows love their piglets, and chickens love their chicks. Farmed animals love their families and mourn their loss.

Because eating meat and dairy products can cause impotence.

Going vegetarian is a natural alternative to Viagra—not only does it avoid meat's artery-clogging action, which increases your risk of a heart attack, it also affects other important organs.

Because you wouldn't eat your dog.

Many people are horrified that some cultures eat dogs or whales, but chickens, pigs, cows, fish, and other farmed animals suffer just as much. The difference is only cultural, not moral.

Because mad cow disease is in the U.S.

Any animal with a brain could contract a version of mad cow disease, yet pigs and chickens may still be fed the remains of diseased animals—in violation of World Health Organization recommendations.

Because it's violence that you can stop.

We may feel powerless to stop war or other forms of violence, but we can choose not to support factory farms and slaughterhouses by rejecting animal products.

Because no one should have to kill for a living.

Slaughterhouse workers have among the highest rates of injury and illness in the country, and working in a slaughterhouse would dull anyone's sense of compassion.

Because it takes a small person to beat a defenseless animal ... and an even smaller person to eat one.

If you're eating meat, milk products, and eggs, you are paying others to commit acts so cruel that if committed against dogs or cats, they would warrant felony cruelty charges in most U.S. states.

Because no animal deserves to die for your taste buds.

A human being's desire for a momentary taste of flesh, milk, or eggs is not as important as another animal's desire not to be tortured and violently killed.

Because the grain used to feed animals could be used to feed hungry people.

According to the United Nations, raising animals for food (including land for grazing and land to grow feed crops) now uses 30 percent of the Earth's land mass. Meanwhile, more than a billion people are hungry. If the massive quantities of grain, soy, and corn now fed to factory-farmed animals were freed up, there would be plenty of food for the world's starving people.

Because more than half of all water consumed in the U.S. is used to raise animals for food.

A totally vegetarian diet requires 300 gallons of water per day, while a meat-eating diet requires more than 4,000 gallons of water per day. *Time* magazine reports, "Around the world, as more water is diverted to raising [cattle], pigs, and chickens, instead of producing crops for direct [human] consumption, millions of wells are going dry."

Because you can't eat meat and call yourself an environmentalist.

Eating meat, milk products, and eggs is destroying the planet. The University of Chicago reports that going vegan is 50 percent more effective than switching to a hybrid car in reducing greenhouse emissions, and a recent United Nations report concluded that a global shift toward a vegan diet is essential to combating the worst effects of climate change.

Because they're defenseless.

Nobel laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer called speciesism the "most extreme" form of racism because animals are the least able to defend themselves and the easiest to victimize.

Because when animals feel pain, they scream too.

If you burn them, they feel it. If you give them electric shocks, they feel it. Animals feel pain in the same way and to the same degree that we humans do.

Because they don't want to die.

Other animals value their lives just as humans do.

Because they feel fear.

Their hair stands on end, they urinate, and they shake, just as we do when frightened out of our minds with the prospect of being hurt or killed.

Because no matter how you slice it, it's still flesh.

Other animals are made of flesh, bone, and blood, just as we are, so "meat" is just a euphemism for a decomposing corpse used as food.

Because commerce is no excuse for murder.

The chicken, pork, and other animal mass-murdering industries are huge, but it's time for them to go the way of the slave trade (which also had strong economic incentives).

Because even prisons aren't this crowded.

Animals on factory farms are crammed into so little space that many of them are unable to stretch their limbs or turn around for their entire lives.

Because this is not what wings are for.

Chickens, turkeys, and other farmed animals never get to breathe fresh air, feel the sun on their backs, build a nest, nuzzle their young, or do anything at all that they were born to do.

Because everyone wants to be free.

We know that it's true of birds let out of a cage and of dogs taken to the park, and it's equally true of farmed animals: They desire freedom, just as humans do.

Because eating fish doesn't make you a vegetarian.

Fish have the same ability to respond to pain that birds and mammals have and are also interesting individuals in their own right. According to a review of the science published in *Fish and Fisheries*, fish are "highly intelligent"—they have long-term memories and learn from one another, use tools, form social hierarchies, and "can even be favorably compared to nonhuman primates." Explains marine biologist Dr. Sylvia Earle, fish are "so good-natured, so curious. You know, fish are sensitive, they have personalities, they hurt when they're wounded."

Because might doesn't make right.

In our moral development as a species, we've reached the point where it's time to recognize that other species deserve consideration, just as we finally recognized that slavery was wrong, that women deserved the vote, and that children should not be abused as a method of child rearing.

**BECAUSE YOU KNOW
THIS IS**

WRONG

Common sense tells us, and we know in our hearts, that our fellow animals have the same kind of feelings and desires that we do and that we should not kill and hurt others in order to eat them.

For more information, and for a free vegan/vegetarian starter kit, visit PETA.org or call 1-888-VEG-FOOD.

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