

ORGANIC COOKING FOR VEGANS



Living a vegan lifestyle means eating foods that are not from an animal in any way. This obviously includes meat and fish. But also products made from animals such as eggs, milk, cheese, butter etc.

As vegans are not getting all the nutrients from their food that meat eaters get, it is important that the food they do eat is as healthy as possible. One way to do that is to eat organic food. There is a large selection of organic foods that vegans can eat including vegetables, fruit, beans, pulses plus nuts and of course, seeds. It is important to make sure these come from a trusted organic source.

No More Sweets?

It occurs to people adopting the vegan lifestyle that they may no longer be able to enjoy cakes. This is because the majority of cake recipes contain two animal products – eggs and butter. Margarine springs to mind as a substitute for butter but if you wish to eat organically, margarine is definitely not an option. Fat in cakes is for moisture. In vegan cakes this can be provided by organically produced oils, avocado, nut butters and even sweet potatoes, apple sauce or bananas.

Egg Alternative

Replacing eggs can be a little trickier. But there is a little known replacement known as aquafaba. This is the liquid that most people throw away when using a tin of organic chickpeas. To use it you simply whisk it with your food mixer. It billows up like a fluffy cloud just like egg white do when you whisk them to make meringue.

Aquafaba is also in tinned organic black beans. This gives chocolate recipes a deeper, richer colour. And of course the black beans and chickpeas can be used as a great source of protein in savoury meals.

Adding melted organic chocolate to whisked aquafaba makes a delicious chocolate mousse. A quick pudding idea that can literally be whipped up in minutes.

Another egg replacement for vegan cooking is organic tofu. Tofu is a protein curd made from soya beans. It doesn't have much flavour but it does absorb the flavours of what it is cooked with. To overcome this add lots of herbs and spices to your dishes. For this reason, it is best in savoury foods rather than sweet.

Cheese

While we are talking about savoury foods, cheese is a big stumbling block for people who want to be vegan. This is because cheese is absolutely delicious and there are so many different types. You would think that the delicious flavour and texture might be hard to match. But you'd be wrong.

You can make cheese from nuts such as cashews, almonds and even hemp. Many of the recipes online include nutritional yeast. This can be bought in health food stores and is in the form of dried flakes.

Now I realise that dried flakes don't sound like the regular cheese we know and love. But nutritional yeast can be used to sprinkle on foods such as spaghetti bolognaise. It does not have the texture of cheese but gives that lovely cheesy flavour that we all relish.

Another great thing about nutritional yeast is that it is a great way to get Vitamin B12. This vitamin is hugely important for our health. Unfortunately, this is a vitamin that many vegans don't get enough of as it is mostly in meat.

Meat Alternatives

If you are considering changing to an organic vegan diet you may be concerned that you will miss meat. There are meat substitutes that are widely available. These include 'beef' mince, 'chicken' breasts, sausages, bacon and even fake 'fish'. These can be found organically but many can be soy based.

There is great debate around soy as it is often genetically modified. This goes against the basic principle of eating organically. And you can get protein from so many other natural, organic sources such as beans, pulses, and even many vegetables.

Finally, vegans do not drink milk from an animal. There are many other organic milk alternatives available in all supermarkets. Many of these are made from nuts and are delicious. Some are even really creamy so you can enjoy your barista-style coffee.

So now you know that there are plenty of organic, animal-product alternatives, what is stopping you from giving the vegan lifestyle a try?