



2021 Issue 4

The Vegan

The Vegan Society magazine



AFRO VEGAN

Incredible recipes from Zoe Alakija

VEGANISM AND ISLAM

Reflections on faith and animal rights

A FAIRER FOOD SYSTEM

Our transformative vision

The London Walker

A versatile and very comfortable shoe from EVS



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EDITOR'S LETTER



Happy World Vegan Day! November 1 provides an opportunity to highlight the incredible progress of the vegan movement and raise awareness of pressing issues. This year, we are using World Vegan Day to highlight the vital role of a plant-based food system in combating the climate crisis. Read about our plans, and find out how you can get involved, on page 3. You can also follow us on social media to stay up to date with World Vegan Day activities.

In this issue our feature article is all about veganism and Islam. Aiysha Younas reflects on the topic from the perspective of a vegan and lifelong Muslim, drawing on the experiences of others in her community.

You can also find an excerpt from Zoe

Alakija's stunning book *Afro Vegan*, in which she introduces family recipes from her British-Nigerian kitchen. Zoe says, "This book is born of my versatility. It is an integration of my mixed heritage, of merged cultures and diverse influences. It's the story of how I found home through food."

As ever, keep reading for updates on Vegan Society news, volunteers, new trademarked products and much more. Share your thoughts with me by emailing editor@vegansociety.com – you could be in with a chance of winning the Star Letter prize.

Elena Orde, Editor

Elena

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FROM THE CEO

As many of you will know, this has been a challenging period for The Vegan Society. I have been extremely heartened and grateful for the messages that some members have sent in support. In July we held a staff away day which was the first time we all saw each other as a team in almost 18 months. At that meeting I gave assurances to staff that whilst I'm CEO I will be doing all I can to ensure that we become an anti-racist organisation; that we are open and transparent; and that we remain focussed on our objective to reject animal exploitation. I would like to share those assurances with you, our members, and remind you that you can always contact me with your concerns, questions or ideas at ceo@vegansociety.com.



Despite these challenges, we have plenty of successes and updates to share with you. November 1 marks World Vegan Day and this year coincides with the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) taking place in Glasgow. We will use our presence at this momentous event to highlight the fundamental importance of a transition towards a plant-based food system in tackling the climate emergency – both in our conversations with policymakers and our communications with the general public.

We recently launched *Planting Value in the Food System*, our holistic report on what a fairer, kinder and more sustainable food system would look like and the steps to take us there. I introduced this report at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Vegetarianism and Veganism, where I spoke alongside report authors Dr Alex Lockwood and experts Ali Clarke and Helen Harwatt.

Meanwhile we ran the first Vegan Society active fundraising challenge throughout October, attended political party conferences and awarded our first grants supporting vegan outreach in economically developing countries. All the while, the Vegan Trademark continues its incredible work improving vegan options and awareness in the UK and internationally, with exciting plans forthcoming to register some of your favourite products.

Louise Davies, Interim CEO

Staff updates

Sophie Glenn, Chloe Edwards and Neneh Buswell have left their positions in the Trademark Team, while Mark Banahan has left his position as Campaigns Manager. We thank all of them for their hard work.

Chloe Martin and Phaedra Johnstone have joined the Business Development Team as our Trademark Sales Executives. Joseph Flynn has started as Trademark Services Manager. Andy Barnes has taken on the role of Campaigns Project Manager, while Emily Quinton has joined the team as our Event Manager for the UN Climate Change Conference. Brittany Holt has joined The Vegan Society as our Office Administrator.



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HIGHLIGHTS



Vegan Society staff talk to Labour MP Tan Dhesi about sustainable food production

Championing veganism for sustainability

The momentous UN Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, takes place this year in Glasgow from 1–12 November. Coinciding as it does with World Vegan Day, this is an unmissable opportunity to get veganism on the agenda and highlight the fact that we cannot tackle the climate emergency without changing our diets.

To kick off the conference and create a buzz around our COP26 activities, we are running fun activation events on November 1 – World Vegan Day – outside the SECC and Glasgow Science Centre. We are also hosting a stand in the Buchanan Galleries shopping centre throughout the whole conference, where we will encourage members of the public to sign up to the Plate Up for The Planet 7-day challenge.

In collaboration with Bluedot, The Vegan Society are running a three-day festival at vegan venues across Glasgow, featuring live music, comedy, panel discussions and more. Visitors who have signed up to the Plate Up challenge will receive free drinks coupons on the door.

On Saturday 6 November, join us for the 'People's March', where we are hoping over 100,000 demonstrators will come together to bring awareness to the climate emergency.

We are also hosting an exhibition stand in the Glasgow

Science Museum COP26 Green Zone on November 12, which is open to the public. Here we will be promoting Plate Up for the Planet and outlining the changes in policy needed to fix the broken food system.

You can attend our virtual COP26 exhibit throughout the duration of the conference at ukcop26.org. To add your voice to the sustainability conversation, and help us to promote veganism for the good of the planet, we have a pack of environmentally-themed placards to be printed at home plus images to be shared on your social media at vegansociety.com/take-action/campaigns/climate-emergency.

Political party conferences

This year we have taken the vegan message to political party conferences in a bid to get vegan solutions on the political agenda. Our Campaigns team attended the Labour, Conservative and Green Party conferences, highlighting the environmental benefits of vegan diets and speaking to parliamentarians, councillors, and party members about the need to transform our food and farming systems.

Our Senior Campaigns and Policy Officer Tim Thorpe spoke at a panel event alongside MP Kerry McCarthy and Baroness Jones of Whitchurch. The event, hosted by Labour's environment campaign SERA, focused on the need to support dietary change in government policy.



our stand at the Labour conference



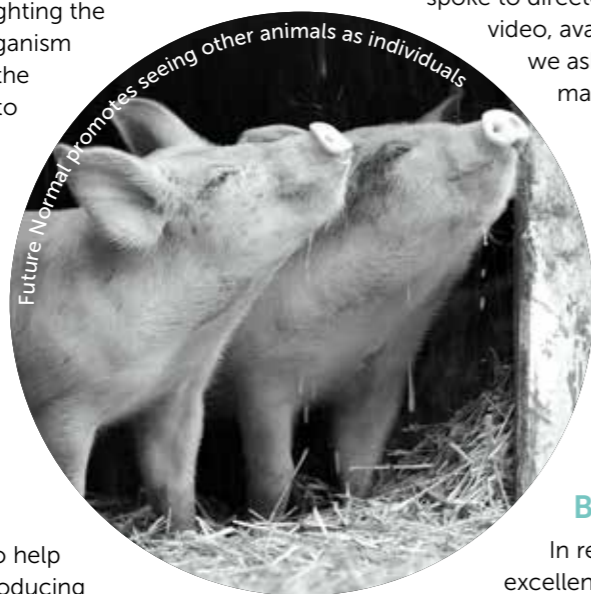
Plate Up for the Planet encourages environmentalists to go vegan to reduce their impact on the world around them

Plate Up for the Planet

As vegans we know the food we eat has an enormous impact on the world around us. Plate Up for the Planet brings this message to the public and encourages them to cut their food-related carbon emissions in half by adopting a vegan diet, starting with a week-long challenge.

Now in its fifth year, we're highlighting the headline facts which show that veganism is one of the best ways to protect the planet – and encouraging people to follow the science when it comes to finding ways to reduce their personal impact. Whether you want to tackle greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, biodiversity loss, water usage or water pollution – going vegan is one of the very best ways to have the greatest possible impact.

If you have friends or family members who are environmentalists who haven't yet gone vegan, now is your chance to help them make the connection by introducing them to Plate Up for the Planet. Take a look at the campaign website at plateupfortheplanet.org. With new videos, recipes and interactive graphics it is something you can share with a friend to encourage them to take the 7-day challenge.



Future Normal

The Future Normal campaign encourages non-vegans

to reflect on their attitudes regarding other animals and take positive steps towards a vegan lifestyle. As part of the campaign, we were excited to work with the team behind *Gunda*, a beautiful film following the lives of animals living at a sanctuary. The team gave Vegan Society members a discount to watch the film online, and Editor Elena Orde spoke to director Viktor Kossakovsky for an exclusive video, available only to our members, in which we asked your questions about the film-making process.

Touching on topics such as the minimalist style of the film, the future of vegan activism and the unique personalities of the stars of *Gunda*, the interview is available online through the members' area of the website. If you have used the discount code to watch the feature film, email editor@vegansociety.com to let us know what you thought.

Blogs

In recent months we have shared some excellent blogs on our website, relating to topics including nutrition, lifestyle, sustainability and more. Some of our favourite blogs included the difference between allergen and vegan labelling, how to make your home vegan and repurposing your VEG 1 tins. Find all of our blogs at vegansociety.com/blog, and do get in touch with any areas you would like us to cover in the future.



School discrimination case resolved

Vegan Rights Advocate and legal expert Dr Jeanette Rowley supported a vegan dad whose five-year-old daughter was banned from bringing plant milk into school. Paul Roberts was also told that his daughter Sofia could only have dairy through the school's milk scheme, even though she had been vegan since birth. Paul questioned this decision informally and then followed the school's complaints procedure, which was also unsuccessful.

After contacting Jeanette at the Vegan Society, Paul submitted a complaint to the school's governing board, outlining the legalities of the situation. The school ultimately ruled in his favour.

Paul said, "Getting in touch with The Vegan Society and working closely with Jeanette was the best thing we ever did. Not only does my Sofia get to have her soya milk but the school are even subsidising it too. It's been a really emotionally draining nine months, but I just hope others can benefit from our fight and parents and children in the school understand that they have freedom of choice."

thoughts on issues such as bone health and teenagers, managing osteoporosis on a plant-based diet, exercise and more.

The video is available on the 'bone health' page of our nutrition hub at vegansociety.com/nutrition.

Vegan and Thriving

We had some great successes with our health and nutrition campaign, Vegan and Thriving, this summer. Over May, June and July almost 17,000 people visited the new webpages, where they found information on how to feel your best on a vegan diet along with high-production new recipe videos and stories from inspirational vegan individuals. Vegan and Thriving posters and leaflets are available at over 3000 GP surgeries across the UK and are available to anyone interested in the links between veganism and wellbeing.

Following on from the summer's activities we launched the Vegan and Thriving 77 Challenge to tie in with The Vegan Society's 77th anniversary. The challenge ran over the course of October and encouraged participants to choose an active challenge which linked to the number 77 – such as running 77km over the course of the month – and to use it as a fundraising opportunity. Read more on page 37.

Nutrition outreach

Our work with the Royal Osteoporosis Society (ROS) has continued as we seek to create reliable, useful information about how vegans can best look after their bones.

Dietitian Heather Russell appeared in a video with Sarah Leyland, Clinical Advisor at the ROS, to answer some of your questions about this topic. Thanks to everyone who responded to our social media callout asking for suggested areas of discussion. Sarah and Heather provided their



Our amazing fundraisers had many creative ideas for active challenges

IN THE NEWS



Going for gold

The summer Olympic Games in Tokyo inspired some of our recent work with the Vegan and Thriving campaign. This health and nutrition campaign shows that vegans can not only survive on a vegan diet but truly thrive – and our Olympics-inspired survey proved just that.

We discovered that many of those who have gone vegan since the last Olympic Games in 2016 feel faster, fitter and stronger since making the switch. Team GB's Lisa Gawthorne acted as spokesperson for this news piece, sharing her personal experience of excelling as a plant-based athlete.

Vegan Society supporter Andy Salmon, who cycled from London to Paris, spoke on BBC West Midlands radio about his experience smashing outdated stereotypes about veganism and health. Meanwhile, Amy Milford-Wood represented The Vegan Society at the London Marathon. Amy took up running during the first lockdown, and shared this story with several local publications.

We also made our debut in Leisure Kicks, the annual guide to getting active and playing sport, with a feature on Vegan and Thriving which included a diet comparison of world-record holding athlete Kate Strong with Josh Kian, who earlier this year challenged himself to cycle 2000 miles through every UK national park in the world's first fully emission-free challenge.

Fashionably late

While initially slow to start, interest in our 15-page report about changing consumer attitudes towards the use of animals in the fashion industry soon picked up. Encouragingly, the *Rise in Vegan Fashion* report found 95% of British shoppers want to see more vegan-verified fashion, such as pleather bags, shoes and belts, on the high street and online.

Unsurprisingly, the report proved hugely popular with vegan publications as well as fashion desks with 14 write-ups to date, including features in The Vegan Kind, Plant Based News and Vegconomist as well as Retail Gazette and Fashion United.

Meanwhile, we landed several broadcast interviews with Senior Insights and Commercial Policy Officer Louisiana Waring discussing the report on Latest TV Brighton and Norwich's Future Radio. Head of Communications Sam Calvert was invited on to Wycombe Sound. Following Sam's interview, we've secured a monthly slot on the station.

Disappointing decision

In August the Advertising Standards Authority ruled in favour of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board's 'We Eat Balanced' adverts that ran through Veganuary. Despite our disappointment with the decision, we were fast to publish our response to the ruling, including a quote from CEO Louise Davies. This quote was referenced in numerous national publications, including Mail Online, Daily Star and Metro and ensured the society's views, and those of the other 485 complainants, were fairly represented.

Podcasts

It's been a busy few months for podcast requests with Dr Alex Lockwood, Senior Lecturer at the University of Sunderland, appearing on the Bloody Vegans podcast to discuss the *Planting Value in the Food System* report. Shortly after his episode aired, Senior Campaigns and Policy Officer Tim Thorpe was invited on for further discussions about the landmark report. Meanwhile, Vegan Trademark Marketing Manager Ericka Durgahee made her debut on the Global Cosmetics News Podcast to discuss the growing demand for vegan cosmetics and beauty products.

CHANGE THE WORLD

FROM YOUR KITCHEN TABLE

**"CRAFTED BY OUR
FAMILY FOR YOURS"**

Tammy — 2nd Gen Fry Family



30 years ago we started making meat from plants. People really did think we were crazy! We were on a mission to change the world from our kitchen table. And now, we'd love for you to join us and enjoy delicious plant-based meals from your own kitchen table.



FRY'S CHICKEN-STYLE BURGERS AVAILABLE AT TESCO, SAINSBURY'S, ICELAND AND OCADO.

VEGANISM AND ISLAM

Aiysha Younas explores the links between veganism and her religion

I have been a Muslim my whole life, but my vegan journey started six years ago when I was 21. As a journalist I have been interested in exploring the connection between these two important aspects of my identity, which both have a powerful influence on my lifestyle. Of course I am not alone in living this way – many other Muslims have turned to veganism and I was keen to hear their thoughts and experiences.

Ethical beliefs

The driving force behind veganism and Islam is compassion, and so they have the same core ethical beliefs regarding other animals and the environment. For many years I was incredibly confused by seeing the cruelty of the animal product industries and the terrible treatment of animals in the videos I had seen online – I just couldn't comprehend how this could be seen as compassionate in the eyes of God. Reading, researching and being in tune with my personal beliefs helped to solidify in my mind and heart just how intertwined veganism and Islam are.

The driving force behind veganism and Islam is compassion, and so they have the same core ethical beliefs regarding other animals and the environment

“



Mansoor Clarke

The meaning of 'halal' cannot be ignored when it comes to this discussion. As explained by Imam Mansoor Clarke, "Halal quite literally means *that which is permissible to Muslims*. Muslims believe the things that are given to us in this world, be they for us to wear, for us to enjoy, for us to eat, they are all given to us as sustenance from God and are a blessing from God. As with all things given to us by God, they come with responsibility. They come with certain conditions that must be met and a certain level of respect that needs to be upheld."

Imam Mansoor Clarke adds, "The pure concept of halal means a Muslim eats



Rakin Akhtar

moderately in a way which is sustainable for the environment and their own health, and in a way that is not injurious to themselves or the animals or the environment around them.”

Inner confusion

Despite this, anytime I ate with my extended family someone would always bring up that I am disrespecting God by ignoring the blessings he bestowed upon us. They would tell me that by not eating meat, I am not truly following my religion. This caused inner confusion because I couldn't shake the feeling that there is no way God would accept the treatment we are condoning for these pure and innocent animals. I would get laughed at and mocked, and people would make jokes about the food I ate, when I had done what God asked. This reaction from close family left me feeling frustrated and incredibly isolated.

I was told that if a product was halal certified then I could trust that there had been no cruelty. No other research was needed, as long as there was a halal sticker. When I questioned this, no one I asked had researched the certifiers or checked the conditions that counted as halal in their eyes.

I spoke to vegan activist and Muslim revert Duke McLeod about this topic. He says, “The certifications are money-making machines. They are what brings money into Muslim communities and organisations. So, they are certifying all these products and operations and businesses that really should not get any labels.”

Traditional dishes

In many cultures, including my own, meat and dairy are included in so many dishes. When it comes to the celebrations of Eid day, I am grateful to have a mother who understands why I do not consume anything from animals. She creates a vegan version of every dish she makes so I do not miss out. Some family favourites include lamb pilau with chicken curry, rice pudding and mince samosas, and my dad likes to jump in and make the chutney. Sadly, not everyone has someone to support them and be so understanding.

Moroccan activist Mohammed Simo, who has now been vegan for eight years, talked to me about his struggle to be accepted. “Being vegan, I have had plenty of problems with my family. My mum told me that I am a vegan atheist because I didn't follow what God has sent down for us.”

Familial support

However, Rakin Akhtar, who has been vegan for three years, experienced much more familial support after they saw the health benefits a plant-based diet was having on his skin. Rakin explains, “I had really severe eczema to the point where showers would be really painful. I was on steroid creams all my life, but I switched to a vegan diet and my skin got better within a month. My family saw that and were telling me this is good.”

Now Rakin's family all consume fewer animal products and make small positive changes. “In terms of religion today we have more options, and it comes down to making a choice. If we can spare animals, we are sparing souls. Choosing not to kill is the most peaceful option.”

Rakin enjoys veganising meat-based traditional meals, specifically dishes like curry, keema (minced meat) and samosas. Simo creates vegan versions of his traditional food as well. He says, “Moroccan traditional food is based around meat like tagine or pastilla, but it is very easy to veganise this food.”

Important questions

As many more people open their eyes to veganism and a compassionate life, it is important to remember that the key thing is to learn, take your time and do what you can. Many traditional dishes can be veganised as the options for alternatives are endless when cooking at home or even eating out.

Halal is compassion but the way things are done these days, it is important to question whether this can still be considered compassionate in the way God intended for us.

Visit Aiysha's website at aiyshayounas.journoportfolio.com.

TRADEMARK CORNER



Check out some of these Trademark-registered products from a selection of businesses, including Muslim-owned companies.

Sauces, chutneys, pickles, curry pastes and flatbreads

from Geetas (geetasfoods.com)

Snacks and south Asian flatbreads

from Shana Foods (*found in the frozen aisle of Asda and Morrisons*)

Dates to break the fast during Ramadan

from Asda (groceries.asda.com)

Alcohol-free cocktails

from Elan Mocktails (elanmocktails.co.uk/shop)

Cosmetics including luminous pressed powder, bronzing powder and cheeky vegan blush powder

from GloWish by Huda Beauty (*find at Boots, Selfridges, ASOS*)

Halal and permeable nail varnishes

from Vivien Kondor (vivienkondor.com)

Alcohol-free hand sanitiser

from Mydis (mydis.com), Aroma (aromacaresolutions.co.uk), and PHB Ethical Beauty (phbethicalbeauty.co.uk)



Mohammed Simo

PEOPLE TO FOLLOW

If you struggle with meal ideas or just want to see more Muslim vegans on your Instagram feed, try looking up the people below.

- @khaledalwaleed** The Saudi Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed posts about his vegan lifestyle on his Instagram feed
- @ghanim92** Ghanim AlSulaiti is the founder of Evergreen Organics, the first vegan café in Qatar
- @diyana.eco** Diyana is a hijabi dancer and blogger who writes about experiences as a vegan Muslim
- @nombeah** Nabeah is a Muslim recipe creator and food photographer

... or if you're looking for someone to follow on TikTok, **@nira_nyc** shares posts you will enjoy!

“
In terms of religion today we have more options, and it comes down to making a choice.
”



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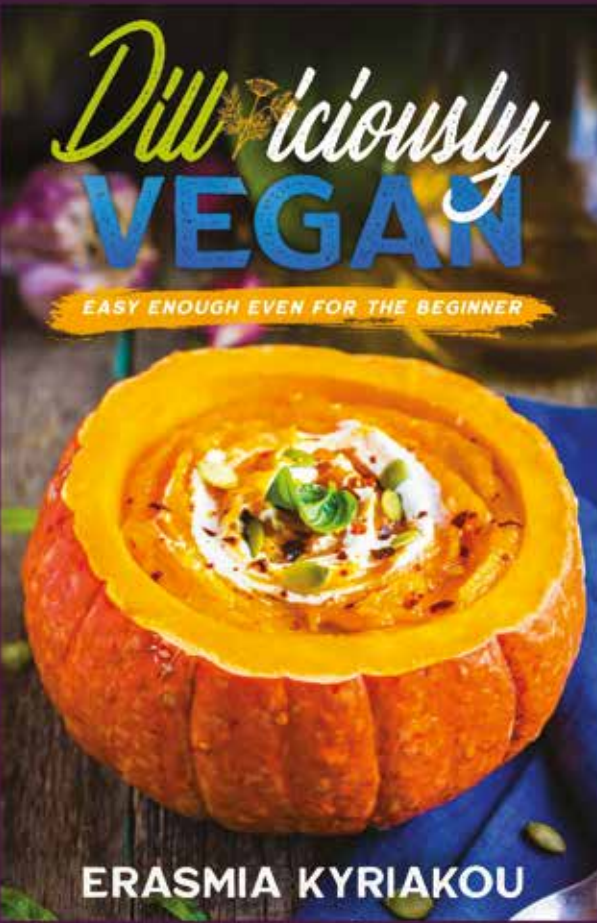


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**Dilliciously
VEGAN**

EASY ENOUGH EVEN FOR THE BEGINNER

ERASMIA KYRIAKOU

Easy Enough Even For The Beginner by Erasmia Kyriakou from the vegan cafe, Hungry Cat Cafe, is the new vegan cookbook filled with 60 mouth-watering recipes to suit every occasion.

The book is available now on Amazon or in the cafe.


See all the dishes on Instagram @dilliciously_vegan

Easy Recipe from the book, Enjoy

Strawberry & Mint Mousse
Makes 2-4

Ingredients
110g Fresh strawberries, extra for garnish
4-6 leaves fresh mint, plus more for garnish
349g silken tofu
1/3 cup Caster sugar
Pink food colouring & Maple Syrup optional

Method Mix all the ingredients in a food processor or blender till well combined and smooth. Pour into ramekins and let them set overnight in the fridge. Pour maple syrup over the mousse before serving and garnish.



A top-down view of a light-colored, textured bowl filled with a rice-based dish. The rice is yellowish-orange, likely from saffron or turmeric. It is topped with shredded purple cabbage, small red tomatoes, and a generous amount of white, flaky crumbs, possibly fried onions or breadcrumbs. A single lime wedge is placed on the left side of the bowl. Another lime wedge is visible in the top left corner of the frame, outside the bowl. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

AFRO VEGAN

*Zoe Alakija's family recipes from
her British-Nigerian kitchen*



COCONUT RICE (Image on page 13)

Serves 6

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour

Ingredients

- 400 g/14 oz jasmine rice
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 2 ½ tbsp coconut oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1½ cm/½ inch ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 red peppers, deseeded and diced
- 1 Scotch bonnet, deseeded and diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 260 g/9 ¼ oz can full-fat coconut milk
- 260 ml/8 ¾ fl oz vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp sugar (optional)
- ½ small red cabbage

“There is rice at home,” is a phrase many Nigerians have a love-hate relationship with. It can mean, “Be thankful for the tasty food we have!” But it can also mean, “No, we are not going out! There’s always rice at home.” It’s also a reminder that rice, although humble, is as homely, comforting and reliable as any meal. For those of us living abroad, it’s a bridge back home. This dish goes well with pretty much any stew, but feel free to gorge on it straight from the pot with lots of lime and chilli sauce.

Directions

Gently stir the rice in water to remove the starch, then drain and repeat until the water stays clear.

Sauté the onion in the coconut oil in a large pan over a medium-high heat for 10 minutes. Add the garlic, ginger, red peppers and Scotch bonnet and cook for a further 2 minutes. Stir in the bay leaf, curry powder, thyme, nutmeg and salt.

Pour in the coconut milk and stock (and add the sugar if you want to sweeten the rice). Bring to the boil, then tip in the rice. Cover and turn down to a rapid simmer, leaving to cook for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, finely shred the red cabbage; a mandolin helps. Reduce the heat again and place the red cabbage on top of the rice. Don’t stir it in. Cook, covered, for a further 15 minutes.

Remove from the heat and let it sit (don’t stir) for up to 10 minutes, then fluff, scraping any delicious crispy rice from the bottom of the pan (the best part!)

You could garnish, if you like, with some toasted coconut flakes, chilli flakes, lime zest, lime wedges for squeezing or chilli sauce.



GROUNDNUT STEW WITH SWEET POTATO

Serves 6

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 3 tbsp groundnut oil
- 1 white onion, finely chopped
- 1 or 2 Scotch bonnets (to taste)
- 2 tbsp fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp ground white pepper
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 400 g/14 oz can chopped tomatoes
- 1 kg/2 lb 3oz sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 3 cm/1 in chunks
- 180 g/6 ¼ oz smooth natural peanut butter
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 1 vegetable stock cube, crumbled
- 150 g/5 oz unsalted peanuts
- 250 g/9 oz fresh spinach, washed
- 160 ml/5 ½ fl oz coconut cream
- 3 limes (1 juiced, 2 to garnish)

My mom doesn’t cook – except for this. And, boy, does she cook it well. We ate this spicy groundnut (the word Nigerians use for peanut) stew all the time as kids and never tired of it. Enjoyed throughout West Africa as ‘mafé’, and usually made with chicken, it has an unequalled palette of flavours: sweet tomatoes, aromatic cumin, smooth peanut butter and fiery Scotch bonnets, tempered with creamy coconut. Serve with brown rice as pictured here, or just as it is.

Directions

Heat the oil (red palm or vegetable oil work too) in a large pan, over a medium heat. Brown the onion for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, deseed and finely chop the Scotch bonnets, then add them to the pan along with the ginger. Cook for 2 minutes, then add the garlic, stirring for another minute. Tip in the cumin, cayenne pepper and white pepper and cook for 1 minute more, stirring to avoid any burning.

Stir in the tomato puree, then add the tomatoes, sweet potatoes, peanut butter, salt and stock cube with 1 litre/1 ¾ pints boiling water. Bring to the boil, before reducing to a simmer. Cover the pot three-quarters with a lid and cook for 50 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, preheat your oven to 180 °C/350°F (160 °C/325 °F fan) for the roast peanut topping.

Blitz the peanuts in a food processor for just a few seconds, so you still have chunks and a variation of textures. Spread them out on a tray and bake in the centre of the oven for about 15 minutes, or until dark brown in colour, before setting aside.

When the stew’s had its 50 minutes, mash a few of the sweet potatoes, leaving some chunks, and stir in the spinach, coconut cream and lime juice.

Serve topped with the oven-roasted peanuts and the remaining limes, cut into wedges. Crispy onions or chilli flakes, for extra heat, also garnish well.







NUTTY PLANTAIN BROWNIES

Makes 12

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour, plus cooling time

Ingredients

150 g/5 oz coconut oil, melted, plus extra for greasing
 100 g/3 ½ oz cocoa powder, sieved, plus 2 tbsp for dusting
 2 ripe yellow plantains (the skins will be splotchy black), peeled
 125 ml/4 ¼ fl oz full-fat oat milk
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 150 g/5 oz plain flour, sieved
 200 g/7 oz caster sugar
 1 ½ tsp baking powder
 ¼ tsp fine salt
 125 g/4 ½ oz hazelnuts, roughly chopped
 125 g/4 ½ oz cashews, roughly chopped
 150 g/5 oz vegan dark chocolate, chopped into small chunks
 140 g/4 ¾ oz smooth peanut butter

These brownies are everything good brownies should be: decadent, moist, fudgy and absolutely delicious to sink your teeth into. Most people think I'm joking when I say there's plantain in them, but this ingredient is actually the key to the lushness and makes the flavour all the more caramelly.

The selection of nuts balances the sweet softness with a satisfying crunch for the ultimate rich treat – but you can get endlessly creative and load them up with your favourite goodies.

Directions

Heat your oven to 180 °C/350 °F (160 °C/325 °F fan). Use a small amount of coconut oil to grease and line a 20 cm/8 inch-square tin with baking parchment, then grease the parchment. Sprinkle the tin with the 2 tablespoons of cocoa powder, shaking and tapping it to make sure it's spread evenly. Set aside.

Tip the plantains, coconut oil, the oat milk and vanilla extract into a blender or food processor and blitz until smooth, then pour into a medium bowl.

Sieve the flour, cocoa powder, sugar, baking powder and salt into a separate bowl, and tip into the wet mixture, combining well into a batter. Once smooth, stir in the nuts and chocolate, reserving a small handful of each for the topping. Pour the batter into your prepared tin and spread the mixture out evenly using the back of a spoon.

Drop the peanut butter in nine roughly equal dollops across the tin and use a knife to marble it lightly into the batter, without mixing it too much. Scatter the reserved hazelnuts, cashews and chocolate chunks over the top, gently pushing them into the mixture.

Bake in the centre of the oven for 30–45 minutes, checking the brownies after 30 minutes, until the mixture is set but with a definite wobble in the centre. Leave in the tin to cool completely, then slice into 12 equal pieces for serving.



Afro Vegan by Zoe Alakija is published by Hoxton Mini Press: hoxtonminipress.com.

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A FAIRER FOOD SYSTEM

Our new report outlines our vision for transforming UK food and farming



The Vegan Society recently released a new report called *Planting Value in the Food System*. The report outlines our vision for food and farming and explores ideas to help us move towards a fairer and more sustainable plant-based future.

The report was written by Dr Alex Lockwood from the University of Sunderland, in consultation with The Vegan Society’s Policy Team. Alex interviewed farmers and experts in the areas of health, environmental and food policy to understand the food system from their perspective.

In her foreword to the report, CEO Louise Davies explained why it was important to present this vision for the future of food. She says, “We’re not calling for just any vegan food system, but a specific, fair and equitable food system and we needed to think through how to make



Dr Alex Lockwood



it so. That’s why this report was commissioned, to help to move vegan issues out of an insular space, and to continue The Vegan Society’s role as leaders in providing solutions and policy to support transition.”

Planting value

As its name suggests, the report asks how we can get more value from our food system, both for those who work in it and for the rest of society. It also invites people to look at the food system through the lens of fairness for all – including the farmed animals who are so often invisible in debates around food policy.

Food reaches into all aspects of our lives and any successful food policy must consider the impacts of our food system in all these areas. In the post-war era, food policy has prioritised productivity at the expense of all else. To address this imbalance, the report considers four key criteria:

- Health
- Climate and ecosystems
- Economy and just work
- Social and cultural value

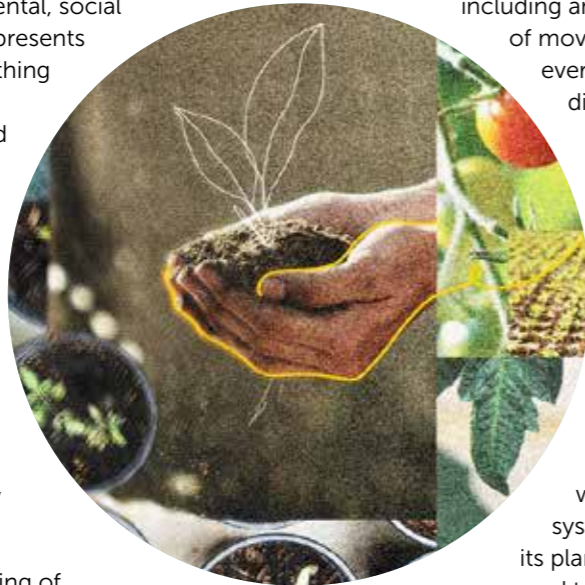
The report was published in two parts. In *Part 1: The Research* Dr Lockwood draws on research in food policy and extensive interviews with farmers and experts to find solutions to the challenges in all these areas. It also shows that the liberation of farmed animals from our food system can support other environmental, social and health goals. *Part 2: Our Vision* presents practical legislative proposals, something which could be adopted by the government now to put UK food and farming on a different path.

The first of these proposed legislative changes is a Food Sustainability Bill. This would create new legally binding targets for government in areas ranging from food security to animal and climate justice. This bill would also create new governance mechanisms, such as a National Food Sustainability Council, to provide oversight and ensure progress towards these targets.

The report also proposes a Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill, to support more long-term decision-making in food. And finally, it looks at the question of how to legislate for an end to the farming of animals – something that would be possible, and indeed necessary, once changes in public diets and attitudes towards other animals reach a tipping point.

Changing attitudes

While this may seem like a long way off, it's important that a vegan stance – which takes animal rights and freedoms seriously – is represented in food policy. With changing public attitudes, and recent developments in food production and manufacturing, the unthinkable could soon become the inevitable.



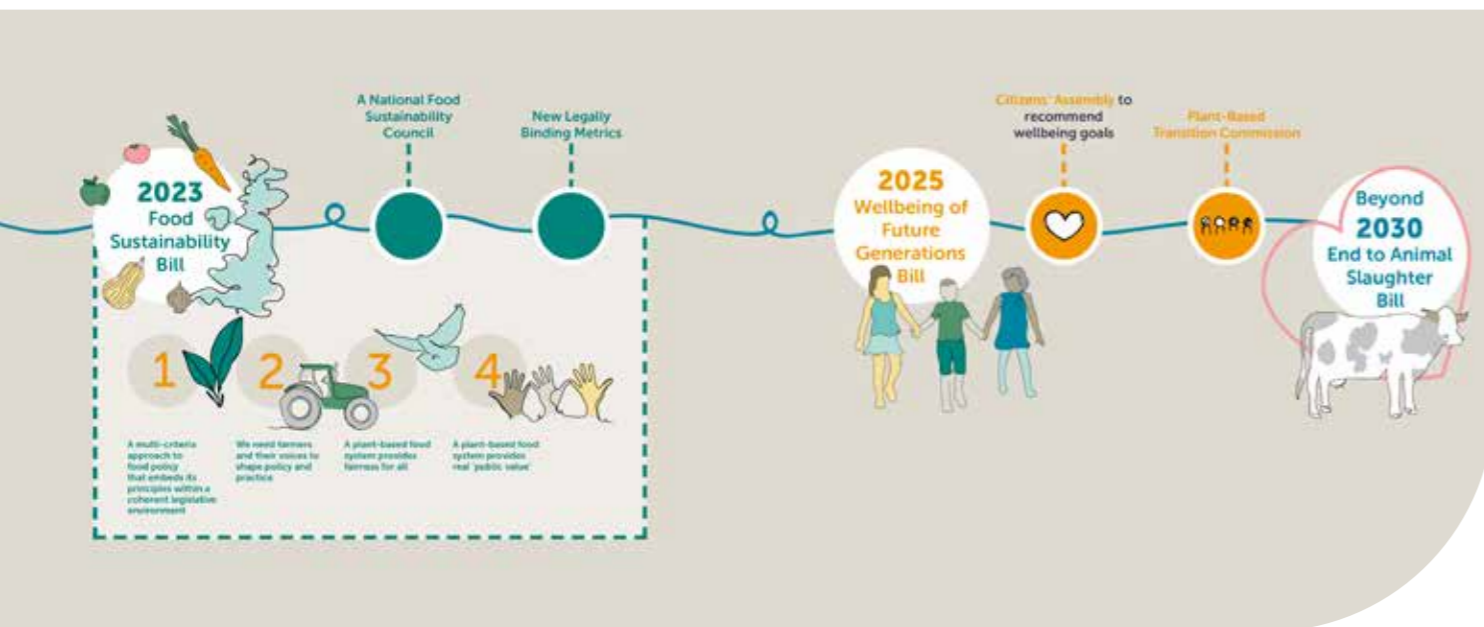
Sir David Bell, Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Sunderland, gave his reflections on the approach and recommendations in the report. He says, "The recommendations also highlight the need to give the policy debate around food matters a higher national profile, including an open debate about the desirability of moving to a plant-based system. Not everyone will necessarily support that direction of travel, but this report provides the basis for an intelligent discussion on the matter."

Get involved

There's never been a better opportunity to have this discussion. The National Food Strategy for England is an independent review chaired by Henry Dimbleby, co-founder of the restaurant chain Leon, tasked with setting out a vision for the food system in England. In July it published its plan, and the government is expected to respond to this with draft legislation by January 2022.

The COP26 climate conference is being held in Glasgow in November. At this event it is essential that we push the food system up the agenda and get our report in front of the right people. You can help raise this issue, and add your voice, by sharing *Planting Value in the Food System* with your local MP. Ask them to hold the government to account on this issue and show leadership by supporting a transition to a vegan future.

To download the report and watch our short film visit plantingvalueinfood.org.



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“

It is good that this education has reached many citizens

GRANTS

The Vegan Society Grant is open to individuals and grassroots organisations. It exists to support projects which will encourage non-vegans to go vegan and stay vegan. Here you can read about two of the projects which the grant has funded this year.

Radio programmes in Sengerema district, Tanzania, by Mohammed Hammie

About the project

My project was to run 10 radio programmes aired on Sengerema FM radio in Tanzania, to educate local people about veganism. We chose to use local media because radio in Tanzania plays a crucial role in people's lives.

Where it all started

I reached out to The Vegan Society because I wanted to help my community with their excessive meat consumption.

In January 2021, Minister of Livestock and Fisheries of Tanzania Mr Mashimba Ndaki instructed the people of the Sengerema district in Mwanza region not to eat meat, especially pork, and instead to focus on vegan products to support their health. As a journalist, the minister's statement opened my eyes, and I decided to try to educate my community.

I found The Vegan Society, who inspired me to change my eating habits. When you go vegan, you can still eat all your favourite foods. 'Meat is not environmentally friendly' was my slogan for the radio programmes. This idea is something new I brought to my country.

How it went

During the airing of the radio programmes, listeners got a chance to call and send text messages and contribute their thoughts. The listeners who provided a testimony or made a fabulous point about veganism got a gift of a T-shirt. This helped to encourage others to participate. The project managed to interview 47 citizens in different villages in the Sengerema district and reached 650,000 listeners.

Getting help from volunteers

Most of the volunteers I recruited were local journalists. After talking to radio station manager Mr Mahuba, I conducted a one-day session for teaching these four journalists about the importance of having radio programmes that encourage people to go vegan.

These journalists helped raise awareness of the slogan in their daily shows, reminding people to listen to the radio show every Saturday and documenting key points from the calls and texts that focused on veganism.

What volunteers and listeners thought

"Ever since I started working as a journalist and a radio presenter, I have never heard of veganism. It is good that this education has reached many citizens. I hope these radio programmes will educate the people of the Sengerema district as many believe that eating meat is a pride." *Joyce Manga, Journalist and Volunteer*

"In terms of what can be done to move people from non-vegan to go vegan, the government through the Ministry of Health and Nutrition must provide continuous education in collaboration with stakeholders. More educating initiatives are needed as for many people eating meat is their habit." *Joseph Kitwale, listener*

Vegan awareness campaign in poor neighbourhoods of Bujumbura, Burundi

Jean-Paul Luesso Amuri

About the project

This project was about raising awareness of what a vegan lifestyle involves and using innovative ways to reach more people, especially youth, in Burundi. We reached our audience by holding seminars, conferences, video shows and by radio broadcasts.

Right now, most people view eating more meat as an entry into a higher class and therefore many people aspire to eat more meat as they think it shows that they are wealthier. We wanted to show that we should aspire to greater health for ourselves and the planet and that this will bring more enjoyment than eating meat. In Africa, people do not think about plant-based diets as a way to improve their health. They think of it only as a sacrifice. We showed that, on balance, it is a sacrifice worth making.

Veganism in Burundi

In Burundi, talking about veganism is quite a new concept. This means that it's a long fight just to raise awareness on this matter. There is still a lot to do just to make veganism known in Burundi and to see change in people's behaviour.

I'm talking about veganism and its benefits so that young people may know and decide by themselves the right path to choose. They may decide to quit meat or reduce their consumption depending on the good information they received from us.

I'm convinced that by talking about this issue we contribute to environmental protection, we reduce the danger of sicknesses due to excessive meat consumption and we show love, care and compassion for animals.

Who was involved

More than 200 people were directly involved in this project, through seminars about topics including veganism and sport. When youths heard about this topic they were delighted and, on that day, more than 30 came. We also reached more than 2000 people through radio broadcasts.

The future

Young people are the most interested and are requesting more information and more vegan activities. More than 50 people have understood the benefits of being vegan. We hope they will make the right decision at the right time.

Find out more about the Grants Programme at vegansociety.com/grants.



Volunteer Joyce Manga





KT Varga speaking at a Greens for Animal Protection event

MEMBERSHIP

Letters

KT (Karen) Varga RIP

In the early hours of World Environment Day, Sat 5 Jun 2021, KT (Karen) Varga – beloved mother, friend, school librarian, comrade and colleague – was suddenly taken from us. A committed vegan, KT’s life was devoted to liberation for humans and non-humans alike. They worked and volunteered for The Vegan Society in project support and campaigning, including countless hours on outreach stands encouraging everyone from passers-by to political party leaders to actively oppose our oppression of animals. KT also devoted years to the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW) Animal Protection group (GAP), shaping consistently anti-oppressive policies, including pressing for GPEW Conference catering to be 100% vegan. Everything KT did was done with love, compassion, kindness and the heartfelt conviction that each of us can change for the better. KT was laid to rest in a young woodland burial site, and is deeply missed. - AC Baker

Veganic gardening

Veganic gardening [as discussed in Issue 3] is a big part of my family’s life. We offer lots of opportunities for our toddler to explore nature and learn how food is grown through growing on our allotment and attending a local community vegetable farm. Now Ayla knows that seeds grow into plants and loves nothing more than watering the tomatoes in our community polytunnel. We use peat-free, organic vegan compost on our allotment and encourage wildlife through permaculture principles, growing wildflowers and encouraging natural habitats. - Rebecca

Star Letter

Fortified food supplements on prescription

I am aged 79 and have always opposed the exploitation and use of animals as food. I believe that a well-planned vegan diet is the healthiest of diets, but of course even vegans are not immune to illness. I myself have recently been diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer which has spread to other parts of my body. I am now recovering from recent surgery and awaiting radiotherapy treatment.

Readers may be interested to know that a fortified vegan food supplement is available on prescription via the NHS and GPs, for people suffering from diseases such as mine. It is called Aymes Actasolve, and is effectively a delicious and nutritional smoothie. The product carries the official Vegan Society Trademark. I was delighted to find such a vegan product available to me on the NHS. With escalating numbers of vegans year on year, largely due to the efforts of charities like yours, it is so very encouraging. - Chris Pope



Thank you, Chris, for your heartfelt letter and bringing attention to an aspect of our work which you have found beneficial at a very difficult time. Your Star Letter prize is on its way, and everyone at The Vegan Society wishes you all the best.



The Star Letter Prize for Issue 1, 2022 is one for the foodies! Mr Lee’s Noodles are giving away: 1 x Vegan Mixed Case Noodles, 1 x Mixed Case Porridge and 1 x Original Congee rice porridge case for one lucky winner! All prizes are registered with the Vegan Trademark.

Youth Membership

In October we relaunched our Youth Membership category for those aged 25 and under. We are encouraging existing youth members to renew and for new youth members to join for just £5 a year. Do you know someone who would like to receive Youth Membership as a gift? All renewals and sign-ups during the first month of the relaunch will be entered into a prize draw!

Discounts

In return for becoming a member of The Vegan Society and supporting our work and campaigns, we offer 10% off our multivitamin VEG 1 (now in plastic-free packaging) and over 130 third-party discounts. These include 10% off at Holland and Barrett and 50% off *Vegan Food & Living* magazine.

This autumn why not:

- Treat yourself to a warm hoodie, with 10% off at ETHCS clothing, or some winter boots with 10% off at Veenoffs clothing.
- Cut back on your plastic bottle purchases and try a shampoo bar with 15% off at Friendly Soap or Soapnuts. Friendly Soap was the first cosmetics brand registered with the trademark in 1996!
- Treat yourself to a Vitality CBD Bath Bomb from Greenbox to combat the chilly nights, with 20% off your first order.
- Stock up on comforting healthy vegan snacks with 15% off at Pips, who sell snack subscription boxes.

All member discounts can be found in the Members’ Area of our website at vegansociety.com/my-account/shop-discounts. Please contact us through membership@vegansociety.com if you have any problems accessing your account, or if you have any suggestions on ways to improve the discount list.

Members’ Roundup

Have you signed up for our monthly Members’ Newsletter yet? The newsletter allows our members to keep updated with society news, member exclusive competitions and discounts.

Contact membership@vegansociety.com if you would like to sign up.

We value your feedback

Don’t hesitate to get in touch with the membership team with your comments on how you have found the last year of membership with us and any suggestions you may have for improving the membership experience.

2022 AGM and election of Council members

The 2022 AGM will be held at 1pm on Saturday 21 May. We will provide online access but will also have a physical venue if appropriate.

Election of Council members

Applications for membership of the governing Council (board of directors) of The Vegan Society are invited by Tuesday 1 March. The role is voluntary but reasonable expenses can be claimed. Successful candidates will join those automatically continuing on Council: Salim Akbar, David Gore, Mellissa Morgan, Jenifer Vinell and Stephen Walsh (vegansociety.com/society/whos-involved/council-trustees).

The most important qualities for trustees are commitment, enthusiasm and the ability to consider issues thoughtfully, communicate effectively and work well with others. To ensure effectiveness and diversity, members from a wide range of backgrounds and with a broad base of skills and experience are sought. Experience in conflict management, governance reviews, successfully managing expanding organisations, policy development, charity law and audit or risk management are particularly welcome.

Currently, the time commitment is monthly meetings usually lasting three hours. However, this may change if it’s deemed sensible to return to office meetings which would be less frequent but longer. Training would be approximately 1.5 days per year. Emails may at times take a few hours per week, particularly in the approach to a Council meeting or AGM.

Candidates must have been full members of the society for at least a year and be aged 16 or over on the date of appointment. Candidates should support the society’s objectives and mission (vegansociety.com/society/strategy/our-vision-and-mission) and be committed to a vegan lifestyle.

Members’ proposals

We welcome members’ proposals to the AGM. These should:

- Be proposed and seconded by full members
- Not exceed 300 words, including any supporting material
- Propose a single form of action (not be a composite proposal nor simply a statement of opinion)

Proposals must be submitted by Friday 7 January.

For a candidate pack or further information about becoming a trustee or submitting a proposal, please contact the Council Secretary Stephen Walsh, (council.secretary@vegansociety.com) by email or by post (Donald Watson House, 34–35 Ludgate Hill, Birmingham B3 1EH).

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FOOD AND MOOD



The topic of food and mood is fascinating yet complex – with so many factors including environment, sleep hygiene, social and family life, how do we know whether it's what we are eating that is influencing our mood?

It isn't surprising that the more we research this area, the more we realise there isn't a specific 'diet' that benefits our mental health – but there are some dietary patterns to pay attention to. The gut-brain axis determines how our gut and brain communicate with each other, and a key aspect is our gut bacteria. This plays an important role in immune function and nutrient absorption, and can determine the amount of serotonin we produce. Serotonin is the 'feel good' hormone which helps to regulate sleep, appetite and mood, with low levels linked to anxiety and depression.

Helping our gut bacteria thrive

Diets containing too much saturated fat and sugar can decrease health-promoting bacteria, and some research even suggests that this may be linked to a higher risk of depression. Diets containing more whole foods may have the opposite effect.

Fibre

Luckily for us, plant-based diets tend to be rich in fibre, which is an integral part of keeping our gut bacteria well nourished. Dietary fibre can only be found in plant foods, and some of this fibre is fermented by the bacteria located in our large intestine. This process can increase the beneficial bacteria in our gut, which can help with the functioning of our immune systems – after all, 70% of our immune system lives in our gut.

Fermented foods

Fermentation is the conversion of carbohydrates to alcohols, carbon dioxide and organic acids under anaerobic conditions (the absence of oxygen). Some examples of fermented

foods include miso, sauerkraut, tempeh, kimchi and pickles, but we should be mindful of how much of these we eat as some can be quite salty. In some research, fermented foods have been associated with increased diversity of gut bacteria and decreases in symptoms among people with certain conditions like inflammatory bowel disease. Some studies have also highlighted the potential for fermented foods to fall into the category of 'psychobiotics'.

Psychobiotics

Psychobiotics include probiotics and prebiotics, and have shown positive effects on mental health by altering and improving bacteria in the gut. However, further research is needed to form firm conclusions.

Probiotics are 'good' bacteria found in food products or supplements that can improve the balance and function of the gut bacteria. Examples include fermented foods and drinks containing live cultures, although many aren't suitable for vegans. It is difficult to know which products contain beneficial strains of bacteria, and some bacteria may be destroyed by acid in the stomach before they reach the gut. We can help feed our own good gut bacteria by eating prebiotics such as onions, garlic, asparagus, artichoke, chicory and banana.

Prebiotics are carbohydrates that our gut bacteria can feed upon, helping them flourish. With the gut being home to millions of diverse bacteria, ongoing research involving human studies is needed to know more about this dynamic organ, including its relationship with the brain. What remains clear is that the best way we can support our friendly gut bacteria is to include a wide range of healthy fibre-rich foods in our diet.

It's not just about diet

Although a well-balanced diet can help your mood, mental health experiences are different for everyone. Within

our daily routines, and particularly when going through challenging times, it is important to try and get enough sleep, do something active every day like going for a walk outdoors, connect with loved ones and seek professional help if more support is needed.

For more information on well-planned vegan diets including fibre-rich foods visit vegansociety.com/nutrition.

Andrea Rymer, Dietitian

CACAO AND QUINOA ENERGY BALLS



With so much beneficial fibre and a handy protein punch, these snacks are a great mood-boosting alternative to a shop-bought chocolate bar and can be frozen for when you fancy them.

Ingredients

½ cup (70 g) ground flaxseed
2 tbsp peanut butter
6 dates, pitted
2 tbsp cacao powder
½ tsp vanilla essence
100 g puffed quinoa

Directions

Cover the dates in hot water and soak them for 15 minutes, then remove them from soaking and put the water aside.

Blend the dates with the nut butter, adding some of the reserved water if the mixture is too thick.

Once blended into a paste, add flaxseed, cacao powder and vanilla essence and blend together until a dough is formed. Add more of the reserved water if needed.

Use a scoop or spoon to ensure a consistent size and roll the mixture into around 12 balls.

Roll the balls in puffed quinoa and refrigerate. Enjoy!

Nutritional Information per portion (3 balls)

kcal 300 **fat** 16 g **sat fat** 3 g **carbohydrate** 24 g
sugars 9.6 g **fibre** 10 g **protein** 11 g **salt** 0.14 g

*I wish I had purchased
one of these years ago*



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REVIEWS



Feeding Your Vegan Child by Sandra Hood reviewed by Lucy Kendrick (Registered Dietitian)



Sandra Hood is an accomplished dietitian who has been vegan for over 40 years. Throughout her career Sandra has contributed greatly to promoting the efficacy and benefits of plant-based diets. *Feeding Your Vegan Child* provides an overview of veganism and plant-based eating for children. Broken down into easy-to-follow sections, it provides excellent nutritional

advice and guidance from preconception and pregnancy through to teenage years, with recommendations on portion sizes, food groups and necessary supplements. Featuring examples of typical meal plans for different stages of life, the book offers a reassuring way for parents to identify whether they are meeting the nutritional requirements of their child. Easy-to-follow recipes, concise chapter summaries and useful tips on what to look for in foods, such as E-numbers and animal-derived substances, are valuable additions.

Some sections may be less relatable to some readers, for example the featured case studies and suggestions for the use of organic foods where possible. Input from a broader spectrum of families, and a section briefly covering the cost of following a vegan diet, may help address some of the barriers and beliefs that plant-based diets are expensive and not easy to follow for those on a tighter budget or with limited access to a variety of foods.

Overall, the book certainly meets its aim of providing practical and comprehensive nutritional advice for parents who are considering veganism. It is a great guide for anyone considering raising a vegan child, whilst incorporating the benefits not only to health, but the animals and environment too.

Mini Vegan ABC by Stanley Foo reviewed by Alison Pearce



Mini Vegan ABC is a picture book to help children aged two and over to learn the alphabet. I read it together with my children – Jolyon (aged four) and Evalyn (aged seven). The book is written by Stanley Foo, a Yorkshire-based illustrator and author of *Just Like Me* – a vegan-themed book for slightly older children.

The layout of the book is as one would expect, with each page focused on a different letter of the alphabet. In this case, each letter refers to an element which relates to veganism such as 'R is for rescue', 'D is for dairy' and my favourite – 'K is for kind'. Each word has an associated fact which is delivered in a light-hearted way, for example 'D is for dairy: Did you know vegans use milk from plants?'

This colourful and wonderfully illustrated book is full of facts about why it is great to be vegan. The ethical subject matter is explored in a sensitive and child-friendly way, which can help parents overcome some of the challenges of talking to children about subjects such as activism or animal testing.

My son Jolyon loved this book and all its positive messages. His favourite pages featured animals, cake and plant milk. He even asked for a second read. My older daughter Evalyn enjoyed the illustrations for their vibrant colours – and the fact that there is a unicorn picture!

I would recommend *Mini Vegan ABC* to parents as a fun way to explore vegan subject matter with children without fearing causing any upset.

Feeding Your Child Vegan cover photography by Andy Smart

EVENTS

Covid-19 disclaimer: the following information is accurate at the time of printing. Please refer to the website for each event for the latest updates and always follow government advice.

Vegan Diwali Feast

Saturday 6 November (5:30pm–7:30pm)

This event takes place online.

madeinhackney.org/whats-on/event/vegan-diwali-feast

Norwich Vegan Christmas Market

Sunday 7 November (10am–4pm)

The Forum, Bethel Street, Millennium Plain, Norwich
facebook.com/events/s/norwich-vegans-christmas-marke/2980746605492995/

Cirencester Vegan Fair 2021

Sunday 7 November (10am–3pm)

The Corn Hall, Market Place, Cirencester, GL7 2NY

LABL Mini Vegan Fair

Saturday 13 November (10am–4pm)

The Old Police Station, 80 Lark Lane, Liverpool, L17 8UU

labl.org.uk

Newbury Vegan Market

Sunday 21 November (10am–3pm)

Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5AA

www.veganfairs.co.uk

LABL Christmas Fair

Sunday 5 December (11am–6pm)

Mountford Hall, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5TR

labl.org.uk

LABL March Vegan Fair

Saturday 26 March (10am–5pm)

St George's Hall, St George's Place, Liverpool, L1 1JJ

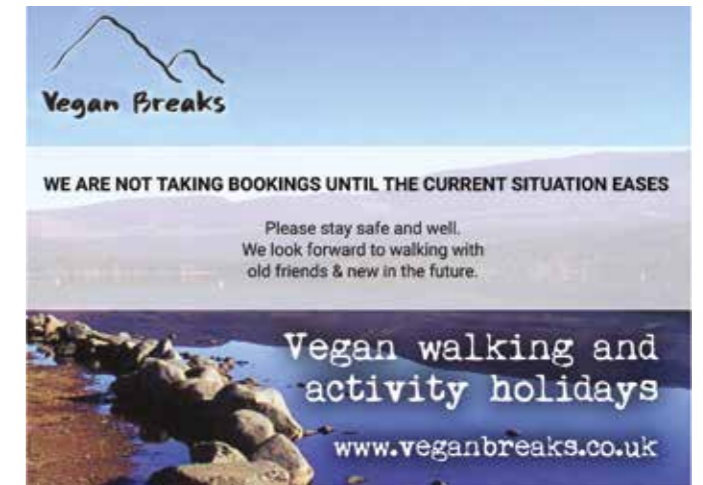
labl.org.uk

Vegan Kids Festival

Friday 22–Sunday 24 July

Moonacre Partyfield,
Dorchester Road,
Sturminster Marshall,
Dorset, BH21 4EU
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Community Network Organiser Saoirse at the National Animal Rights March

VOLUNTEER HUB

Kaya Gromocki
Volunteering and Engagement Officer



Since Covid-19 hit, the way that many of us work, study, travel and socialise has changed enormously. All of this upheaval means that volunteering at The Vegan Society has had a makeover too. It looks like many of the adjustments we have made over the course of the pandemic are here to stay, and that's why in this issue I wanted to

shine a light on what the volunteer programme looks like in our current climate.

What has it been like to keep the volunteer programme running over the course of the pandemic?

At first the outlook seemed a little bleak. How can volunteering continue when we're all stuck at home in a lockdown? It turns out that the first step to solving our problem was the same one that millions of other people around the world were taking – making a Zoom account! Volunteer interviews, inductions and catch-ups could all be done online. Like staff, most volunteers could carry out their roles from home. We also adjusted some of our roles to make them more flexible, which helped a wider range of people to participate.

What is it like now?

Because they are supporting staff members with their work in areas such as research, proofreading, fundraising, PR and web development, many of our volunteers come from professional or academic backgrounds. When they are not directly supporting The Vegan Society, our expert volunteers are editors, professors, students, attorneys, teachers, software testers, translators and business owners, to name a few.

Many aspects of global and remote volunteering which might be seen as a hurdle have actually been beneficial to the programme. For example, many volunteers now work on an ad-hoc basis. This means that they are always available to have a task pitched to them but there is no expectation for them to accept it. Currently we have 33 volunteers working alongside staff, and 260 volunteers in our Community Network, and this number is continuing to grow.

Where are our volunteers based?

Volunteers live and work across the world, residing in the UK, America, India, Australia, Germany, the Republic of Ireland and Switzerland. We'd love to hear from more international Vegan Society supporters who would be interested in volunteering.

How is the Community Network going?

Just as many of us have adjusted to the changing times, so has the Network. Our Organisers and Advocates have stepped up, placed themselves comfortably behind their laptops, and got to



work in sharing, motivating and inspiring others to support our campaigns with a barrage of carefully crafted emails.

This was very much the approach taken for our Future Normal, Vegan Vote and Grow Green campaigns in the first half of this year.

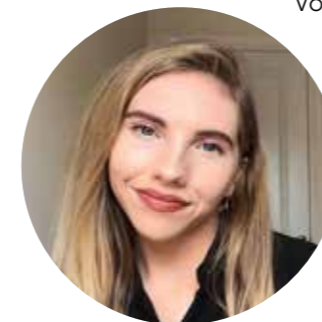
As we enter the second half, the Network has been able to get back into their local communities to share campaign materials on our Vegan and Thriving campaign with great success. Posters and leaflets have been dropped in GP surgeries, community centres, health food shops and libraries as we urge the public to consider the benefits of veganism in achieving good health and wellbeing.

And that's the approach we'll be taking for our Plate Up For The Planet work, which will be the focus of the Network's grassroots campaigning leading into the autumn.

Overall, I think the pandemic has helped make us all better campaigners, through having to be adaptable. In turn, I think this hybrid style of campaigning is here to stay and will certainly make the Network more attractive and accessible to others.

Rich Hardy, Community Network Volunteer Co-ordinator

What do volunteers think?



"Volunteering with The Vegan Society has given me a way of feeling like I'm making a difference about something I care about, even though I wasn't able to go out and physically get involved with any charity work due to the pandemic."

Sian Leigh, Social Media and Digital Content Volunteer

"As a volunteer with The Vegan Society since late 2020, all of my experience with the organisation and other volunteers has taken place during the time of the pandemic. Given that I'm located in Australia, my volunteer work would always have been remote so the fact that I've not met any of the other volunteers in person is no different now than it would have been under 'normal' circumstances.

The opportunity to contribute as a volunteer has been a



welcome distraction from world events and a great way to keep me focussed on the bigger picture. Regular online meetings with other volunteers have given me a sense of connection too, so I've certainly felt like this volunteer work has been a big positive in what can feel like an environment of constant bad news!"

Dr Lee Hawkins, Proofreader and Web Research Volunteer

What do staff think?



Knowing I can rely on the diverse skills of our committed volunteer network is integral to my ongoing and future work.

The volunteers I have worked with on a research basis are highly competent, allowing me to get stuck into my own work and plan more efficiently for the future. I have also connected

with a number of volunteers for proofreading tasks. As someone who

often struggles with spelling and grammar, the volunteer proofreaders give me peace of mind that my work is ready for the public. This benefits me both professionally and personally and I thank Kaya and the volunteers for this!

Louisiana Waring, Senior Commercial Policy and Insights Officer



VOLUNTEER OF THE SEASON

Ritu Awasthi is a wonderful specialist volunteer assisting with the grants programme.



Tell us about your background

I am from India and have been living with my family in the UK for the last two years. I did a PhD in Health Communication and used to teach in an Indian University. I've also worked in radio, made documentaries and written articles for magazines and newspapers. Eight years ago, I had to say goodbye to my comfortable life and job as we got an opportunity to relocate to South Korea due to my partner's job.

Currently I am working as a digital content creator with an international charity working in the field of public health. I am also studying to be a health coach to be able to help people on their path to better wellbeing.

What do you do in your volunteer role?

I really love my role here as Specialist Grants Advisor. My job is to review the applications received for the grants programme aimed at supporting vegan projects in economically developing countries (EDCs). It's a unique opportunity for me to use my life experience of living in different countries and using that knowledge in deciding the viability of the projects. I enjoy reading people's thoughts and beliefs on veganism. The applications that I liked and found to be sustainable are where applicants talk of exploring their food and cultural heritage and coming up with innovative ideas to integrate that wisdom into their projects.

The way that veganism is practised and understood varies across the world. Could you tell us your views on this topic?

I come from a Hindu family and grew up on a plant-based diet. Lentils and vegetables are part of every meal that is cooked at home. Eating out was never a challenge as India has lots to offer in terms of vegetarian regional cuisine. But after moving to South Korea, I really struggled to find vegetarian food. I had to start cooking more at home and taking my own food with me. It was difficult at first, but I really started to enjoy cooking and experimenting with different cuisines.

I have observed that eating out, takeaways and ready meals are more common in more economically developed countries, while in economically developing countries cooking at home is still the norm. In India, it's easily possible to buy fresh fruits and vegetables without any plastic packaging from neighbourhood vendors but here I have to make a conscious effort to find places that sell fresh produce. I was scandalised by the amount of plastic waste I was generating when I moved here.

What do you think the future looks like for the global vegan movement?

When I moved to South Korea, the difficulty was not only finding food to my liking but also explaining to people why I don't consume animal products. Things have changed and it's not an alien concept anymore. I no longer have to be defensive about my food choices so that's a positive sign. I am hopeful for the younger generation who are already realising the importance of it and making a conscious effort to practice veganism.



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Amy at the finish line after completing the marathon in 5 hours 21 minutes

Vegan and Thriving 77 Challenge

To celebrate The Vegan Society's 77th anniversary, throughout October we asked our supporters to come up with an active challenge based around the number 77. They used their challenges to raise funds to support our work and to be an example of thriving on a vegan diet.

Some of the amazing and creative things that people chose to challenge themselves with across the month included:

- Climbing their stairs 77 times a day
- Running 77 miles over the month
- Completing 77 sit-ups a day

You may remember one of our participants, Akil Taher, from the article in issue 3 of the magazine about his personal health journeys. Akil says, "I was excited to take part in the 77 Challenge because as a septuagenarian athlete, it is my firm conviction that a whole food vegan diet can improve one's preparation, performance and recovery time. I like showing that vegans of all ages can thrive!"

At the time of printing, the count is still out on how many people completed the challenge and received their Vegan and Thriving medal. Watch this space – we can't wait to share the final results with you!

London Marathon

Amy Milford-Wood, our first ever runner in the London Marathon, completed the 26.2 mile run with an amazing finish time and raised a record amount.

Amy smashed her ambitious sponsorship target of £2000,

and we are so proud of what she achieved. Amy organised several smaller events to support her fundraising including a bake sale, a camping challenge and a raffle that raised over £900. She contacted local and vegan businesses to supply the prizes for the raffle and used her network of contacts to sell tickets. She also managed to secure employer-matched funding, which gave her total a fantastic boost.

Amy says, "It really was a no-brainer for me. Both veganism and running helped me so much over what had been a particularly difficult and challenging year for everyone. The Vegan Society have done brilliant things supporting vegans to achieve equal status, for example in the legal case to have ethical veganism recognised as a protected philosophical belief, and in campaigning to have public institutions like schools and hospitals offer vegan options. I wanted to support the important work done by the organisation, while proving a vegan diet can help you thrive!"



Take part in 2022

If you're feeling inspired, you can use an active challenge to raise funds for The Vegan Society at any time of the year. Join an organised run, swim, cycle, overseas trek, or come up with your own challenge and let us know what it is.

We also have places in the Brighton Marathon 2022, which takes place in April next year. The sponsorship target is £450. You can find more details about this on the fundraising pages of our website.

For any queries relating to fundraising, contact Ruby Jones on 0121 728 5841 or ruby.jones@vegansociety.com.

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Honeybuns Bakery Vegan Bakes

Honeybuns make cakes and traybakes by hand in small batches at their dedicated gluten-free bakery in Dorset. They even do a completely vegan range, all registered with The Vegan Society. Choose from their Dark Chocolate Brownie, Millionaire's Slice, Oaty Coconut Bar, Oaty Dark Choc Bar with Coconut, Oaty Raspberry Bar and more. The Honeybuns online shop delivers nationwide and their bakes make for great gifts. Available at honeybuns.co.uk.



Holy Lama Spice Drops

Holy Lama Spice Drops are little drops of liquid magic that transform any recipe by adding authentic taste and aroma. These highly concentrated natural extracts of herbs and spices are not only vegan but gluten-free, alcohol-free and contain no added salt or sugar – just pure, natural, instant flavour. With over 30 varieties in the range, the opportunity for creativity is endless. Unlike dried herbs and spices, Spice Drops retain their flavour intensity for up to three years. Available online at holylama.co.uk, Ocado and Amazon, and in store from selected Whole Food Markets.

The Body Shop White Musk Fragrance

The Body Shop's iconic White Musk fragrance has been free from animal testing since its launch in 1981, and now the fragrance has been reformulated it's free of animal ingredients too! Everything you once loved about it remains the same, but now there's a fresh look, sustainable packaging and three complementary scents to layer; Free, Lover and Radical. White Musk is a blend of jasmine absolute, lily of the valley and sensual musk. Customise your scent using the fragrance toppers, designed to be layered on top of the original White Musk fragrance. Available at thebodyshop.com and The Body Shop stores.



Obvs Skincare Range

Obvs Skincare specialises in handmade, organic, vegan products which approach your skin concerns naturally. They were designed with sensitive, acne or eczema-prone skin in mind; incorporating high-quality, ethically sourced ingredients extracted directly from nature. All products are Vegan Society certified, COSMOS Organic certified, Leaping Bunny approved and plastic free. Check out their hero product: the Intensive Skin Recovery Cream. Suitable for adults, as well as children, it can be used for a range of skin issues, from psoriasis to nappy rash. It can also be used on sore hands, skin prone to dermatitis, rosacea, spots and minor burns. Available at obvs-skincare.co.uk.

Choc Affair Vegan Oat Milk Chocolate Bars

Choc Affair is an ethical, award-winning and independent chocolate manufacturing business based in historic York, North Yorkshire. Pioneers in the industry, Choc Affair have become the first Vegan Trademark-registered business making oat milk chocolate in the UK! Handmade in their chocolate workshop, Choc Affair's first four oat milk chocolate bar flavours come in Classic Milk, Salted Caramel, Lemon & Raspberry and Orange & Rhubarb. The chocolate is sustainably and ethically sourced, is free from palm oil and your purchase will help contribute to a reforestation project in Colombia. Available at choc-affair.com.



The Good Baker Spinach and Pumpkin Seed Pizza

Craving something different? The Good Baker has just the thing. This new, super tasty pizza is topped with spinach, pumpkin seeds, marinated tomatoes, red onions and a vegan cheese alternative, which all sits on top of a long-fermented, stone-baked, thin and crispy base, made with multigrain flour and oats. It's Vegan Trademark certified, provides a source of fibre and has no artificial flavourings. It comes in fully recyclable packaging, with the box itself being made from 100% recycled material and certified by FSC. Available at Ocado, Waitrose, Morrisons, Amazon Fresh and Asda.

Loma Linda's TUNO range

Whether it's a tuna mayo and sweetcorn sandwich or tuna pasta, you can still enjoy these old favourites without harming tuna fish or our oceans with Loma Linda's plant-based TUNO. Vegan Trademark certified and available in four flavours (Spring Water, Mayonnaise, Lemon Pepper and Thai Sweet Chilli), TUNO is low in fat, protein-rich, gluten-free and a natural source of omega-3. It has the light, flaky texture of seafood and is fish-free and ocean safe. Available at Morrisons, Asda, Holland & Barrett, TheVeganKindSupermarket.com, Amazon, and selected independent health stores.



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Explore the range at vegansociety.com/veg1.

The Vegan Society members get 10% off VEG 1! Discount is automatically applied at checkout when logged in to the Members' Area, or quote your membership number when placing orders over the phone (0121 523 1730).

A word on Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a particularly important nutrient for us to consider at this time of year, with the NHS recommending that everyone living in the UK take a Vitamin D supplement between October and March as a minimum. Colder weather and less sunlight mean less vitamin D production, so make sure you get

outdoors as often as you can and consider taking a daily supplement such as VEG 1. A 6-month supply will keep you covered over this winter period, for less than £2.20 per month.

Recycling and repurposing

Our new VEG 1 tins are fully recyclable. You can also repurpose them to avoid buying new items. We recently shared some ideas over on our Instagram page and blog for repurposing your tins – and we'd love to see your creations!

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