

Veggie Vibes

TEN TIPS FOR EASING INTO
A PLANT-BASED LIFESTYLE



Hi Friend!

Welcome to Veggie Vibes, where we celebrate all things plant-based! I'm super excited to share with you my top *Ten Tips for Easing into a Plant-Based Lifestyle*.

Plant-based essentially means consuming a diet without animal products which include meat, dairy, and eggs. At first this may seem like a huge challenge, but don't worry, I've got you! Within these pages you will find a number of very useful tips to successfully transition into a plant-based lifestyle. You may find it helpful to pull out a journal and write about how you're going to achieve and maintain success as you transition into a plant-based diet.

After being plant-based myself for a number of years, I am well aware of the benefits and the challenges that this lifestyle brings. I have no regrets on being plant-based, aside from the fact that I wish I would have done it sooner!

I wish you much success on your plant-based journey! And remember, it's not a vibe without the veggies!

XOXOXO
Radia

Let's Connect!



#1 KNOW YOUR WHY

Prior to going plant-based it's very important that you determine your *why*. What is the reason why you want to consume more plants and less animal products?

The top reasons why people decide to go plant-based generally fall into three categories:

1. For the animals due to animal cruelty and factory farming practices
2. For their health
3. For the environment

Sometimes it's a combination of all three reasons. In my case even though my why is for the animals, an added benefit is that I am very healthy due to my diet!

One of the most common reasons I see people consume a plant-based diet is for their health. As a family nurse practitioner, I have seen amazing results once patients consume a plant-based diet. There's also a number of studies out there on all the health benefits of going plant-based.

So what is your why? Getting clear on this will help you when you're encountering challenges. Your why is your North Star, so get clear on this, as it will help guide you along your journey.

2 CREATE A ROAD MAP

Now that you know your *why*, it's time to figure out *how* you're actually going to transition to a plant-based diet. Being intentional will help you figure out where you're going, and how you're going to get there. Here are a few questions for you to consider when creating a road map to your new plant-based lifestyle.

- Are you going to eliminate all animal products at once? Such as going plant-based overnight.
- Is eating plant-based going to be a gradual change? Meaning you slowly incorporate more plant-based foods into your diet, while simultaneously reducing animal products.
- Are you going to be plant-based for every meal and everyday of the week? Or do you plan on eating plant-based on certain days only?

By creating a road map of how you're going to actually do this, you're setting yourself up for success. So what does your road map to transitioning to a plant-based look like? You may want to use a calendar or planner to help you visualize what your plant-based journey will look like. Remember, we're all individuals and our needs are different. So if you find what works for you, chances are you will have an easier time sticking with it.

3 FIND A SUPPORT SYSTEM

Unfortunately, not everyone in your circle is going to be wild about the fact that you're changing your diet. Food is a very personal topic, and once you start changing your diet, others are forced to look at themselves and their diet as well. This is why knowing your why is so important, as it will help you when you are questioned about your new lifestyle.

Currently, none of my close friends are plant-based. However, they are all very supportive of me and I'm very grateful for this. Hopefully your inner circle will also support you, but if not, you may want to join local or online plant-based groups where you can find a supportive community of like-minded people.

As a side note, avoid pushing your *why* on others. Now that you've discovered this amazing way of living, you may want to shout it from the rooftops! I've found that people do not respond well to being told what to do. Instead, I choose to show others by living as an example of how a plant-based lifestyle can be successfully done. And if they ask why I'm plant-based, I'm more than happy to share my reasons. But I don't push my beliefs on others, because if I did, I wouldn't have any friends!

4 CREATE A HOME PLAN

Eating plant-based at home can be relatively simple if you live alone. However, if you have roommates, a partner, and/or children whom you live with, you will need to determine how your new diet will fit into your home life. Here are a few questions to consider when creating a plan for eating plant-based if you live with others.

- If you're the cook in your home, will you be cooking two different meals? One for you and one for your family?
- If your partner is the cook, will they be willing to cook you plant-based foods?
- Will your partner go plant-based with you?
- Will your entire family go plant-based?
- How will you explain to your children (if you have them) why you have decided to change your diet?

Having a candid discussion with those whom you live with about your new plant-based lifestyle may not be easy, but soon this will become a normal way of life for your family.

5 READ FOOD LABELS

Reading food labels is a great way to educate yourself on what's in the foods that you are consuming. You may already be doing this, but if you're not, I highly suggest you start. When I started reading food labels I was so surprised by all the unnecessary items that were placed into everyday foods. These days I'm pretty good about reading food labels, especially with foods I haven't yet tried. But sometimes I still get duped if I don't read a label!

Below are a few examples of the animals products put into into foods that you would think would be plant-based.

- Refried beans will often contain lard.
- Crackers, chips, or bread may contain milk.
- Bread may contain eggs.
- Many candies and marshmallows contain gelatin.
- Certain alcoholic beverages will contain animal products. [Barnivore](#) is a great resource for this.
- Some sauces may contain fish products.
- Soups and boxed stuffing may contain chicken or beef stock.
- Salad dressing may contain dairy and/or eggs.
- Noodles may contain egg.

6 GET TO KNOW BRANDS

Once you start consuming a plant-based diet you will most likely have your favorite go-to plant-based brands. After being plant-based for so many years I have my favorite brands that I know are 100% plant-based and makes my shopping a lot quicker!

Get to know brands that are plant-based and that you can trust. Not all plant-based brands are considered equal! This also includes reading food labels as you start to familiarize yourself with new brands.



7 LEARN SUBSTITUTIONS

This is one of the most fun parts of being plant-based, getting to know substitutions and swaps! There are all kinds of swaps out there from plant milks and butter, to plant-based meats and beyond.

If you enjoy cooking or baking you will find so many different ways to turn your favorite foods into plant-based versions. It's a way to be creative in the kitchen and to think outside the box.

A quick Google search will pull up a plethora of substitution ideas. Dairy is relatively easy to substitute, and there are so many options for egg replacements, especially when baking.



8 DINING OUT

Dining out may be one of the harder elements of going plant-based, but it's not impossible. As I live in NYC, almost every place I dine in will have a number of plant-based options available. However, when I travel to smaller cities and rural areas, this is not always the case. Unfortunately, sometimes the only option is salad and fries, and who wants to eat that each time they go out to eat?

It helps if you have supportive friends and family that you're going out to eat with. These days my friends will always make sure there is a veggie option for me before they suggest a restaurant. I will also always check out the menu beforehand to get a feel for what types of plant-based meals they have.

Once I get to the restaurant I scan the menu for options (oftentimes you will see a V for vegan but this could also mean vegetarian). If I don't see options that I like, I'll talk to the server and usually the chef can create something for me. Also, just because an item appears plant-based on the menu, doesn't necessarily mean it is. I generally tell the server I'm plant-based just to avoid getting a meal that I didn't intend to order.

9 PARTIES, TRAVEL, AND HOLIDAYS

Situations where food prep is out of your control can be the biggest challenge of being plant-based. This is probably the thing I struggle most with, and an area where I sometimes fail.

I hate inconveniencing the host if I'm going to a party or staying at someone's house. But I've found that most of my loved ones are very accommodating and happy to help me out. Many people also enjoy the challenge of learning about plant-based foods so it's a great way to have a discussion about healthier alternatives as well. Below are a few things to consider:

- For parties and holiday gatherings, bring a plant-based dish.
- Let the host know your dietary preferences beforehand so at least it's on their radar.
- When traveling bring your own plant-based snacks so you don't have to rely on what's at the gas station or hunt down a grocery store.
- Research beforehand if the city or country you're going to has plant-based options. Some local foods are naturally plant-based. Again a quick Google search or post in a plant-based group usually can help with this.

#10 BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Transitioning to a plant-based diet is a decision that should be celebrated! So a huge congratulations to you for making this decision. I know from experience it's not easy going against what society considers 'normal', and I want to commend you for your intentions to lead a lifestyle that feels more in alignment with what you want.

With that being said, don't be hard on yourself. If you eat animal products on occasion, or you decide you only want to be plant-based one day a week, who cares? Avoid those who shame you for not being 100% perfect with your plant-based regimen. Remember, it's not about perfection, it's about the intention. Sending you so much love on this exciting new journey!

