

**Food
Buddies**



General food tips

Shopping tips

Eating at home and eating out tips

Getting the right support tips

Ideas and recipes

Tips for older vegetarians and vegans

Introduction

Welcome to the Food Buddies Tips for people who are vegetarian or vegan – and for everyone else who likes to eat this type of food.

We are hearing from older people and families who feel it is very important that people have the choice to enjoy vegetarian or vegan food even when they have health problems or are getting care and support.

These tips are for:

- Older people, including people who are living with dementia or another health problem.
- Families and friends who are helping someone to eat well and have the food they want.
- Community groups such as lunch clubs.
- People who work in care services who are helping people around shopping, cooking or eating.

These are practical tips that make life easier. They come from people who are vegetarian and vegan and from other

people who care that everyone can have choices and a healthy diet.

In this set of tips we have:

- Tips for food shopping.
- Tips for cooking and eating at home.
- Tips for eating out.
- Tips for getting the support you want.
- Easy recipes.
- Sources for vegetarian and vegan food, and for more information.

Food Buddies has more helpful tips from other people's experience – please ask us or look at our website.

Why it matters

Many people find that the food they want to eat changes as they get older, or they want to have easier ways of cooking.

Living with dementia adds some more changes and challenges. If you are a vegetarian or vegan it can be harder to get information and advice that is helpful for your situation.

People have the right to choose the food they want to eat.

- Some people do not eat meat, eggs or dairy products for religious reasons.
- Some people feel strongly about the political and ethical aspects of food.
- Some people prefer this type of food.

People's choices and beliefs are important – they are our human rights. But some people find that once they start getting support, their food choices are not always respected.



“I’ve been healthy as a vegetarian all my life. Why does anyone think that changes now?”

“Some of the care workers who do mum’s shopping don’t check. She either eats what is in the fridge and gets very upset, or she goes hungry.”



We hope that this booklet will help people have conversations about the food that matters to them.



Vegetarians do not eat any meat, poultry, fish, shellfish or animal by-products (such as gelatin).



Vegans don't eat any food products that come from animals, including suet, honey, dairy products and eggs.

People who are vegan and vegetarian may eat:

- Grains, including rice, and food made from that such as bread and pasta.
- Beans, peas, lentils chickpeas and pulses.
- Vegetables and fruit.
- Nuts and seeds.

Some vegetarians also eat tofu, meat substitutes such as, Quorn and soya mince as well as eggs and dairy products such as milk and cheese.

In this booklet we have shared vegetarian and vegan recipes.

Thanks

Thank you to all the people who shared their stories, recipes and suggestions.



Tips for shopping

When you have dementia or other health problems you can need help around shopping

Shopping for food can become more difficult when you live with dementia or other health problems.

- Getting around shops and finding what you want is hard when your sight is not so good or you can't remember where things are - or find them when they get moved!
- It is harder to reach the high shelves and the ones at the bottom when stretching and bending are not easy.
- We can forget what we are looking for, or find it hard to work out something new if they don't have an item on our list.

It is ok to ask for help.

Local shops have a lot more vegetarian and vegan food than they used to.

- You can explain to the staff what you are looking for, or what you want to avoid.
- If you go regularly to a smaller shop the staff there can get to know you and know what you want.

Supermarkets have vegetarian and vegan food. Sometimes it is in a special section, along with other food that other people want for their reasons.

- If you do your shopping in a supermarket just ask one of the staff where they keep the food you want.
- The websites have sections that list all the vegetarian and the vegan food.
- You will also get lists for other types of food, such as gluten-free or for people who are diabetic.
- You can use the websites if you want to order food on-line and get it delivered to you.
- They are also handy when you want to plan your shopping or when you want ideas.

Most packaging has wee symbols to show food that is vegetarian as well as lists of what the ingredients are.

- You can take a slip of paper in your purse or wallet to remind you of the symbol you are looking out for.
- Often the writing is small, which lots of people find awkward. You can take along a magnifying glass to help you (you can get these at an optician's).

- Ask the staff to help you read the packaging if you want to check something.
- You can go with a friend who can help with reading the packets and making sure you get the food you want.



“Mum likes to nibble biscuits and sweeter things these days, more than she did before. My sister and I and the grandchildren had a day when we looked through all the biscuits in the local shop and bought every packet that had no dairy in it. There are lots of things that are ‘accidentally vegan’ like bourbon biscuits! Then we had a taster session – it was for mum but we all joined in. Then we stuck the packets of the 3 types of biscuit that she liked best onto the pin board at the front door, where we all leave the messages for rest of the family and the care workers. Now when any of us do mums’ shopping they know what to get her.”





“There is a neighbour who has helped dad with the shopping and cooking ever since mum passed away. She got mum’s old cookery books, like the Cranks one that was held together with Sellotape, and that helped her understand the food they enjoyed.”

“We often get vegetables and other nice food from farm shops and the like. But people living in towns can get food from a farmer’s market. You could go along to stock up on healthy produce and know where it has come from. There are also local places that deliver vegetable boxes right to your door.”

“It can be hard explaining that people who are vegetarian do not eat fish. It is not just avoiding meat. I’ve had care workers who have friends or know of a pop star who says they are vegetarian and eat fish. No. It is not right and not what my mum wants to do.”



Tips for cooking and eating at home

You can get lots of tips from other people who sometimes find it harder to manage with cooking. Here are some of them.

- Stock up with tins and packets of cooked beans and similar things to save the effort of preparing and cooking your own.
- Look for ways to make your recipes simpler and easier to cook. We have ideas in the recipe section of this booklet to get you started.
- You can get other people to help with parts of cooking, such as getting family and friends to chop vegetables for you.
- There are some good home delivery services that have vegetarian and vegan food, if you want this sometimes.
- Local shops, catering firms and restaurants may be able to provide vegetarian foods that you can eat at home. It is worth asking them about this even if it is not something they advertise.

There are also ways to make eating easier.

- Some people who live with dementia find it easier to eat when sitting at a table with no distractions. It also helps to have a good contrast between the table and the plate, such as a white plate on a wooden surface, or white tablecloth and coloured plates.
- It can be easier to have more frequent smaller meals, rather than 3 main meals in a day.
- Some people like to have wee snacks through the day. There are suggestions in the recipe section of this booklet.
- Watch that you drink enough water.

Watch the calories in nuts and seeds. Lots of people find that it is nice to nibble on food like this, especially when they do not want to sit down for traditional meals.

- Nuts have high calories for a small amount of food. This makes them great for people who are not eating much, as this is very good quality nutrition.
- But the high calories can be a problem for people who are putting on weight because they are eating more or are becoming less active.

- Also watch whether the nuts are salted. The packets that come from places like health food shops and vegetarian ingredients sections are unsalted. Nuts that you find in most shops alongside crisps usually do have salt, but you can rinse them and dry on a paper towel to get rid of most of the salt.

Many people who live with dementia find they want stronger tastes or sweeter tastes. This is because the way your brain is registering and recognising tastes is changing.

- Stock up with foods like coconut milk, vegan or dairy yoghurts and dates. You can use these to add sweetness to savoury foods as well as puddings.
- Take your time and find out what tastes you like now. You might find you like mixtures of things that might have seemed strange before, but that's ok.

Someone may start wanting to eat foods such as meat, fish or dairy that they did not want before.

- There can be several reasons for this, such as our sense of taste changing, or going back to foods we ate when we were younger.

- It can help to take time to talk about it and get someone you trust to help work out what the reason is for you. That makes it easier for you and for the people around you to know what to do.
- This is something that can be upsetting for the person and people close to them. It can be hard, but try to put what is in the best interests of the person living with dementia at the centre of how people respond.



“I’m finding it harder these days to remember to do things ahead of when I need them. I got caught out by not soaking the dried beans a couple of times. I get the lovely organic cooked ones now – nice and easy to use and the pictures on the packets mean I don’t get muddled with the names of them.”





“We had cashew nuts listed as a food mum likes – to us that is a good source of protein and is part of a main meal. The care workers were buying her packets of salted cashews and leaving them out for her to nibble on. She had lots of problems with being too thirsty and feeling out of sorts before we noticed.”

“We met when we were students and the Kalpna in Edinburgh was our place. Indian food has always been a special treat for us. We can’t go there now as the journey is too far for Andy, he can’t manage that long in a car. But we now have a Take Away in the town. Since last winter I’ve had a standing arrangement with them and they deliver something each week. The people there are really helpful and make up smaller portions and packages of vegetarian snacks that will keep for a few days. They completely understand what we need.”



Tips for eating out

Going out for a coffee or meeting friends over a meal is a good way to enjoy ourselves and keep up social connections. But it can be harder for people who are vegetarian and especially for people who are vegan. Many places away from the cities have fewer customers asking for this food and are not yet stocking a range of foods that work for people who are vegan.

Look for places where someone living with dementia will feel welcome and safe. The people we know have mostly found it best to go to places that have the right attitude and then explain about the food that the person likes if need be.

Talk to the staff and explain what food you eat and what you want to avoid. They may be able to tell you the ingredients and make suggestions.

Be ready for the person seeing food they don't normally get at home and wanting to have what other people are eating. This sometimes happens for people as their dementia progresses. Some people are ok with this but for others it is upsetting as they know this is not what the person

would have done before and is not what they would have wanted to happen.

- Suggest food that you know they do like and would have eaten before, or say what you are having and ask if they want the same. That takes away the need to make a decision or remember the words for foods.
- Suggest something that looks similar but is vegetarian or vegan.
- If the person does eat something that is not what they would have done before, accept that it has happened this time and plan what to do next time.



“We never ate out much locally as people here did not really do vegetarian food. We ate at home or took picnics or went into Edinburgh. But nowadays lots of places do cater for people who are vegetarian. So check out the places near you if travel is not so easy now.”





“Mum and I often go to a tea shop in the town near us where they have a lot of cakes. She wants things that are sweeter now and is looking at them - something in her head and body is telling her to eat this, but she can't get to the decision part. So I now say: 'look, there is your favourite chocolate cake', because I know that is made with oil and not butter. I scrape off as much as I can of the butter cream icing and we're fine. She's happy, we can chat to people at the next table who don't know or care that it is the same things she's said a dozen times today, and we're as close as we're going to get to staying with her principles.”

“The staff at the local hotel steer dad to the soup with vegetable stock. They help look out for him when he comes in with his friend for their pub lunch.”



Tips for getting the support you want from care and health services

Some people get good support from the people who deliver any care services. Other people find that it is difficult to get people to support them to have the food they want.

Explain what sort of food you, or the person you care about, likes to eat.

- Try to be as clear as you can. If you have been vegetarian or vegan for all or most of your life it will all seem really obvious to you. But other people may not understand about different types of food or where food comes from.
- Explain that it is not just the main ingredients that matter but also the other ingredients.
- Some people find it helps to explain why they want this. It should be all about the person's choice and not matter why they want this, but it can help when the care service understands that this is really important to you.

Remind people that this is your choice and that the official rules for care services say that your choice must be the starting point.

- It can help to explain at the start of conversations about you, or someone you care about needing services, that being vegetarian or vegan is something that is important for you.
- If a service is not getting this part of support right, talk to the manager about it.
- If it is still a problem, go back to the social worker you met at the beginning or to that team, and tell them about the problem. There are various ways of organising support and they can talk over options with you to give you the choice and flexibility you need.

Remember that most care services will have more than one person working with you.

- If you work mostly with one care worker or personal assistant, you can explain to them what you want and work out together how to do this.
- If there are several people in a care team, or new staff coming in at holidays, then you may need to have a different way to remind or tell people what you want.

- Ask if one person will spend time to understand the food you want and then explain that to their colleagues.
- Expect to have to go over it again when the first staff leave and new people come.
- Talk to the manager of the service about this at the start. You can go back to them if there are problems later on.
- You can offer to help them if they are finding it hard to know how to support you to have the food you want. For example, you can tell them about the recipes and food you like. Or you can give them this booklet and suggest they look at the sources for more information.

Hospitals should have a system for people who live with dementia – and everyone else – explaining how they want to be cared for at the start of a hospital stay.

- This is for any type of care and treatment, so also for conditions that have nothing to do with your dementia.
- You can explain about the food you prefer along with other aspects of you.

- The Alzheimer’s Society has a useful checklist that they developed with the Royal Society of Nursing that makes it easy for people to list what they need. It is called ‘This is me’. There is a copy on the Food Buddies website page.



“I think some of the care staff thought mum was just being faddy about food. Once I explained how mum felt so strongly about this and had followed this all of her life, they respected it.”

“The staff at the care home were good at understanding this was my husband’s choice but got into a bit of a tizz about would it be good enough nutrition and how could they do this just for him. The Vegetarian for Life people have some very good booklets for care homes with advice for staff and recipes that work well in that setting. That seemed to reassure them.”





“We’ve never described ourselves as vegetarian, we just don’t eat much meat, maybe once or twice a week. I suppose it was a mix of not much money when Mum and Dad were young, and pulses make what you have go a lot further, Dad growing lots of vegetables and us just liking that mix of food. Last year Mum went into a care home for a week to give Dad a break. They asked about special dietary needs but Dad didn’t say anything because it isn’t a medical need and to him it what we eat just seems normal. I’m sure the food was lovely for most people, but Mum was eating far too much meat and dairy. So her digestion went away to pot – miserable for her and a worry for the staff until they talked to us and we all worked out what the problem was. Now we know what to say when we start using any new care service.”





“There are different care workers coming in to help mum each day. I live a long distance away so I can’t check her food each day. We now have a big list on the front of the fridge. It says NO for anything with meat or poultry in it, ONLY IF ORGANIC for eggs, cheese and milk, and YES PLEASE for nuts, fruit, vegetables, soya milk and so on – a good long list to show what we want.”

“The people at the lunch club said that other people wouldn’t like vegetarian food and they couldn’t do something just for me. So I showed them lovely recipes and now lots of people enjoy my food.”



Ideas and recipes

These are suggestions for people who are not-so-confident cooks and for friends who are looking at new recipes when cooking for someone who eats vegetarian or vegan food.

There are more ideas and recipes in the sources at the end of the booklet. These include bigger quantities that are good for places like Lunch Clubs.

Look at the recipes in our other Tips, as there are nice vegetarian and vegan suggestions there too.



“Try the nice soups in the Winter Tips.”



Snacks



Roasted chickpeas

What you'll need

- A tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed.
- 1 teaspoon of olive or sunflower oil.
- 1 teaspoon of garlic powder or any other seasonings you like.
- Half a teaspoon of salt.
- Extra salt or pepper to taste if you need it.

How to make it

Heat the oven to 180C/gas mark 4.

Open the can, empty the chickpeas into a colander or sieve and rinse them with water. Gently pat the chickpeas dry with some paper towel, then put them in a big bowl with the oil, mix them around so all the chickpeas get covered in the oil.

Spread the chickpeas out on a baking tray so there's an even layer of them. Sprinkle well with garlic powder and salt, and any extra seasonings you like.

Roast in the oven for 35-40 minutes, or until crunchy, gently shaking once or twice to move the chickpeas about.

These chickpeas are nice when they're fresh out of the oven, as they have a lovely crunchy and warm texture, but they are also great when they've cooled down too.

Tips To make life easier

- These chickpeas are a great way to add protein to a meal.

To give it a stronger taste

- Use spices like chilli powder and paprika.

To give it more calories, if someone is not eating much

- Salty snacks make us thirsty so you could serve these with a higher calorie drink, like an smoothie.





Sweet potato chips

What you'll need

- 3 big sweet potatoes, cut into wedges or chips, however you like.
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil.
- 1 teaspoon of cumin.
- A pinch of cayenne pepper (you don't have to, but this adds a nice little kick).
- A quarter of a teaspoon of paprika.
- Half a teaspoon of salt or seasoned salt.



How to make it

Put your oven on to 200C/gas mark 6.

Cut the sweet potato into chips or wedge shapes and put the pieces in a large bowl and drizzle them with olive oil. Then, sprinkle the sweet potato wedges with all the seasonings: cumin, cayenne pepper, paprika and salt or seasoned salt.

Gently mix together until the sweet potatoes are covered all over with the oil and the spices. You can add a little more or less oil and seasonings, if you'd like.

Spread out the coated sweet potato pieces on baking paper, if you have it, and bake for about 30 minutes, or until done. Once or twice while you're cooking you can move the pieces about so they get cooked all over.

Tips **To make life easier**

- In some shops you can buy sweet potatoes already cut up.

To give it a stronger taste

- You could serve with ketchup, barbecue sauce or mustard.

To give it more calories, if someone is not eating much

- Eat the chips with vegan mayonnaise or cover in grated vegan cheese. You'll be able to get these in bigger supermarkets or health food shops.





Other snack ideas



- Instant soup or noodles – make sure you check these are vegetarian or vegan.
- Nuts.
- Popcorn.
- Rice cakes with Tahiti.
- Avocado on toast.
- Bread sticks.
- Yoghurts – either vegan or dairy ones.
- Fruit, either fresh, dried or canned.
- Carrot sticks – you can buy these already cut up if you find peeling and cutting difficult and have them with things like houmous or guacamole.
- Crackers with pesto - please check the ingredients as pesto may contain Parmesan.
- Oat cakes with Marmite or vegetable pâté.
- Crisps with dips.
- Bagels, pitta bread or a small baguette with peanut butter or houmous.
- Seeds.



Soups



Apple, parsnip and potato

What you'll need



- 1 tbsp. of oil.
- 2 onions, or 1 large onion, diced.
- 3 garlic cloves, minced.
- 1 large potato.
- 1 large parsnip.
- 1 large apple (most types of apples will work).
- 400ml of vegetable stock.
- Black pepper.

How to make it

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, and cook the onion and garlic over a medium-low heat for 5-10 minutes, stirring every minute or so, until soft and translucent.

While the onions are cooking, prepare your other vegetables - chop the potato into chunks (we like the skins left on, but you can peel if you want), and peel and chop the parsnip and apple.

When the onions are cooked, add the other vegetables to the pan, and mix well. Add the vegetable stock (it should be almost covering the vegetables - adjust the quantity as needed, depending on the size of your pan), and cover with a lid, leaving just a small gap for the steam to get out.

Simmer over a medium heat for around 25 minutes, stirring every now and then, until all the vegetables are very soft.

When the vegetables are ready, use a hand blender to blend the soup until smooth. Season with a generous amount of black pepper - you probably won't need salt but add some if it is needed.

Adjust the thickness of the soup as desired - if you'd like it to be thinner, just add a little more stock, and if you'd like it to be thicker, cook over a medium heat for a few minutes, stirring constantly.

Tips For a stronger flavour

- Sprinkle with some vegan blue cheese.
- Add some cumin or turmeric.

For more texture

- Add some chopped walnuts.

To add calories

- Add some diary free cream before serving.

To make life easier

- You can buy jars of ready minced or chopped garlic from the supermarket.
- You can buy frozen or prepared fruit and vegetables from the supermarket.





Lentil

What you'll need

- 50g of dried red lentils.
- 1 small carrot cut up into small pieces.
- 1 small onion cut up into small pieces.
- 280ml of soya milk.
- 280ml of vegetable stock - check this is vegan.
- 1/2 teaspoon of mixed herbs.
- Add the amount of salt and pepper you'd like.



How to make it

Put all the ingredients in a pan and cook them on a low heat for 45 minutes. You could have the soup like that or wait a while a let the soup cool down and then blend it up.



Tips for any soups

To make life easier

- Buy vegetables that are already cut up from supermarkets.
- You can also get frozen packs of chopped vegetables.
- All of the soups listed can be frozen too so why not make up a few batches and freeze them so you always have a healthy dinner handy?

To give it a stronger taste

- Add fresh garlic or garlic powder.

To give it more calories, if someone is not eating much

- Serve with bread and spread or houmous for a meal.
- Add thickeners such as soya cream, coconut milk or cream, or yoghurt.



Main courses

Vegetarian chilli with chocolate

What you'll need

- 1 tablespoon olive oil.
- 1 clove garlic, minced.
- 1 small onion, finely chopped.
- 1 green pepper, chopped up.
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes.
- 1 tin of chickpeas, drained and rinsed.
- 1 tin of kidney beans, drained and rinsed.
- 600ml vegetable stock.
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin.
- 1 teaspoon salt.
- 40g of dark chocolate (70% if you can get it).

How to make it

In a large pot, cook the oil, garlic, onion, and green pepper over medium heat, until they are slightly softened, stirring occasionally. This will take about 5 minutes.

Add the tomatoes, chickpeas, kidney beans, vegetable stock, cumin, and salt. Bring to a boil over high heat.

Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened. This will take about one to one and a half hours.

Before serving, stir in the chocolate until it has melted. Just do this nice and slowly.

Serve the chilli with rice, couscous or tortilla crisps.

Tips

To make the food taste stronger

- Add more cumin or some chilli powder.

To add calories

- Sprinkle with some grated cheese.
- Serve with sour cream.



Scrambled tofu

Serves 2

What you'll need

- One block of tofu.
- One or two onions.
- A green pepper.
- A big tomato.
- Peas and sweetcorn.
- Bread.
- Vegan butter.
- Any herbs and spices you like.



How to make it

Cut the tofu and all the vegetables into little cubes. If you're using firm tofu you can just crumble it up using your fingers.

Put a little bit of oil in a frying pan and add the onion and pepper until almost cooked. Add the tofu, peas and sweetcorn and your spices. If you have regular tofu (that isn't the 'firm' type) as you mix everything around squash the tofu in the pan between the holes in the spatula then it should take on more of an egg consistency.

As you cook keep tasting the tofu. It can take a lot of flavour so feel free to keep adding herbs, spices or some soy sauce until you are happy with the taste.

When you're happy with the taste, and all the vegetables are cooked, you are ready to make your toast.

'Butter' your toast and add the scrambled tofu on top.

Tips To make life easier

- Buy chopped vegetables.

To give a stronger taste

- Add more spices like curry powder or add chilli sauce to the tofu.

To give it more calories, if someone isn't eating much

- Have some baked beans with it or some avocado.





Fruit curry with peanuts



Serves 4 – or freeze some of it

What you'll need

- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil.
- 350g of tart apples (like Granny Smiths), peeled, with the core removed and chopped.
- 140g of chopped onion.
- 2 teaspoons of curry powder.
- 2 tablespoons of water.
- 120g of raisins.
- 120g of chopped dried apricots.
- 60g of roasted peanuts.
- Salt and pepper to taste.
- Coconut milk.

How to make it

Heat up the vegetable oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the apple and onion and fry them, while you keep stirring for 6 to 7 minutes or until translucent.

Add the curry powder, water, raisins, apricots, peanuts, salt, pepper and coconut milk.

Stir everything and bring the heat down on the hob; cook for 12 minutes.

You can serve this warm with rice or cold.

Tips **To make life easier**

- Buy packs of ready-made rice that you just need to heat up.
- The curry can also be made before then frozen.

To give a stronger taste

- Add chilli powder and lots of garlic.

To give it more calories, if someone isn't eating enough

- Add more peanuts or different types of nuts and seeds.



Desserts and sweet things



Vegan chocolate pudding

What you'll need

- 340g of Silken Tofu.
- 96g of cocoa powder.
- 100g of sugar.
- 78ml of almond (or any non diary) milk.

How to make it

Put the tofu, cocoa powder, sugar, and almond milk into a food processor or blender. Blend ingredients until they are smooth.

Pour the pudding into cups or small bowls for individual portions or into a bigger bowl for sharing out. Place into the refrigerator. Allow to set for at least 15 minutes.

This can be stored in the fridge for up to 5 days.

Tips To add more calories

- Serve with diary free cream or yoghurt.



Gooseberry crumble

What you'll need

- 500g fresh gooseberries.
- 50ml water.
- 80g white sugar.
- 200g plain flour.
- 100g cold butter or a vegan substitute.
- 100g brown sugar.



How to make it

Put your oven onto 180C/gas mark 4 so it heats up while you prepare the crumble.

Put the gooseberries in a 1.2 litre oven proof dish. Sprinkle over the water and the white sugar.

Pop the flour into a big mixing bowl and rub in the butter with your fingers. Keep rubbing in the butter until the mixture goes into the texture of breadcrumbs. Mix in the brown sugar.

Pour the flour mixture over the gooseberries to create an even layer but don't squash the flour mixture down.

Put the crumble into the oven for 40 minutes, or until the top is a lovely golden colour.

Tips To make life easier

- You can do this with different fruits like apple, rhubarb or plum, to get more variety.
- Make up a few crumbles and freeze them so you have them handy when you.

To give it more calories

- Serve with dairy free ice cream or vegan yoghurt.

To give it a stronger taste

- Grate in a little fresh ginger into the gooseberry mixture.



Vegan brownies



What you'll need

- 280g plain flour.
- 225ml water.
- 170g brown sugar.
- 200g white sugar.
- 1 teaspoon of salt.
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla essence.
- 94g cocoa powder.
- 67ml vegetable oil.
- Half a teaspoon of baking powder.
- 67g of nuts - but you don't need them.

How to make it

Put the oven on to 180C/gas mark 4.

Grease and line an oven proof dish approximately 11 by 7 inches with greaseproof paper.

Put the water in a pan along with one cup of flour on a low heat, keep stirring the mixture until it looks like a gluey paste.

Take the mixture off the heat and let it completely cool down.

In a bowl mix the sugar, salt, vanilla, cocoa powder and vegetable oil and then add this to the flour and water mixture and mix this well.

Add in the rest of the flour with the baking powder and the nuts if you're using them.

Spread the mixture into the oven proof dish.

Bake the mixture for 25 minutes or until you can put a knife into the mixture and it comes out clean.

Leave to cool in the dish for at least 15 minutes before removing from the tin and removing the greaseproof paper.





Tips To make life easier

- Use one type of sugar and double the quantity.

To give it a stronger taste

- Drizzle some dairy free dark chocolate on the top.
- Stir in some dried cranberries or fresh raspberries into the mixture.
- Try adding a little chilli to the mixture.

To give it more calories

- Add dairy free chocolate chips to the mixture.
- Serve with dairy free yoghurt or cream.



Vegan banana bread

What you'll need

- 300g plain white flour.
- 2 teaspoons baking powder.
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda.
- 130g light soft brown sugar.
- 3 ripe bananas.
- 120ml almond milk (or dairy free substitute).
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar.
- 50ml agave nectar (or maple syrup).
- 80ml sunflower oil.
- 1 tablespoon water.



How to make it

Preheat oven to 170C/gas mark 3.

Grease and line an 900g loaf tin.

Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda in a large bowl until combined.

In another bowl mash the bananas to a pulp, then gently whisk in the almond milk,

cider vinegar, agave nectar, sunflower oil and water.

Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients bowl and pour in the banana mixture.

Mix together.

Transfer the mixture into the loaf tin and bake for 45-50 minutes.

Leave to cool for at least 10 minutes before removing from the tin.

Tips

- Try adding raisins, dried fruit or nuts to the mixture.



Where to buy vegetarian and vegan foods

Most local shops sell things like pasta, tinned tomatoes and pulses, so you will be able to make a tasty vegan or vegetarian meal from ingredients that you buy there. Smaller shops also sell lots of products that are ‘accidentally vegan’ like bourbon biscuits. Remember that just because something doesn’t say ‘suitable for vegetarians’ or ‘suitable for vegans’ that it isn’t. Be sure to read the labels and you might be surprised by your options.

Your supermarket might not have a free from section but even in smaller supermarkets like local branches of The Co-operative you can find vegan products like apple pies, hot cross buns, couscous and samosas.

The bigger supermarkets have free from sections, including Free From sections in the fridge and freezer sections. You’ll be able to find these in Tesco, Asda,

Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Morrison's. If you use the internet you can go to the supermarket's website and look up their vegan or vegetarian products.

Smaller supermarkets, like Lidl and Aldi, don't have free from sections but have lots of foods that are 'accidentally vegan' like biscuits, spring rolls, strudel and veggie burgers. Both places also sell soy milk at quite a low price.



More information

Vegetarian For Life

Vegetarian for Life is a charity that supports older vegetarians and vegans. They have good resources for care homes and other services as well as tips and guides for older people who are vegetarian or vegan, and their families.



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NHS Inform

This is the website set up by the NHS in Scotland to give people information on how to stay well. This is the section on vegetarian and vegan diets.

www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition/special-diets/vegetarian-and-vegan-diets

Nutrition and Diet Resources UK

This is a charity that provides material developed by dieticians. The material is mostly for other dieticians to use as part of the support they give to patients and clients. They provide information on a range of topics related to nutrition and diet, including a resource on eating well with dementia.

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There is more information from the Food Buddies project at:

www.otbds.org/projects/food-buddies