

## Raising Vegan Children in a Non-Vegan World

Many non-vegans will ask, "What does your child eat." I always smile and say a lot of things, replying, "He eats vegetables, fruits, grains, beans, and such." They always give me a funny look or shrug at the shoulders. As a vegan mother I am very reluctant to let my child stay with others while I am away. I find myself writing a list and stating firmly that he can only eat the foods and drinks I leave with him. Many non-vegans do not understand what foods are vegan or considered a whole food. Most will not see the harm in giving the child some juice with red 40 coloring, artificial flavors, and corn syrup. I have been asked how my child is going to adapt when around "normal" kids when he gets older.

A "normal" life for vegan children is possible. My son is only 2 –years-of-age, but already he has attended birthday parties with traditional cake and ice cream. I simply bring snacks, food, and juice for him to drink. One party he attended actually had vegan cake and ice cream because the birthday girl was lactose intolerant. Vegan children can attend non-vegan parties. Vegan cakes are available for sell in many vegan markets and major health food chains such as the Whole Foods Market. I recommend leaving vegan snacks with the teachers for times when there are surprise events at school. Parents can keep in contact with their child's teacher to find out when children may have parties in class, so they can send their child to school with vegan treats. They can begin explaining the vegan diet to their child early on, making the vegan diet a source of pride. Children need to know the importance of not sharing foods with their peers. Parents must emphasize the importance of their child's diet to school staff and daycare providers to make sure their child is eating only vegan foods.



Vegan Strawberry Shortcake!

There are many great vegan lunch box ideas:

- Soups and stews in a thermos
- Pitas stuffed with sprouts, avocado, couscous or bulgur wheat
- Cold pasta salad (noodles, broccoli, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and natural Italian dressing)
- Hummus on flatbread or a pita
- Burritos with beans, rice, lettuce, and tomato

- Seed/nut butter and natural fruit spread/jelly on whole grain bread
- Falafels on a pita



Vegan Pizza!

Vegan parents should travel with vegan snacks when away from home. Vegan food options are not always readily available. Parents should make veganism comfortable. Keep quick travel foods such as healthy bake goods, veggie chips, popcorn, trail mix, fruits, sandwiches, etc. Not only, should veganism be comfortable but fun. Include children in the preparation of food. Parents should give children a variety of foods so dinner time does not get boring. Instead of only making rice and pasta, use other grains such as couscous, millet, and quinoa. The grains can be livened up by adding lentils, peppers, tomatoes, onions, and more.

#### Dinner Time Ideas:

- Whole grains pasta, tomato or garlic and lemon sauce, vegetables, and mushrooms
- Vegetable gumbo
- Vegetable chili
- Greens beans and red potatoes
- Sautéed vegetables with either rice, couscous, or millet
- Vegetable peanut stew served with millet
- Curried(Jamaican) spinach and potatoes
- Collards/kale, beans, and sweet potatoes

#### Breakfast Ideas:

- Whole grain pancakes or waffles with pure maple syrup
- Tofu scramble
- Fruit salads

- Fruit smoothies
- Oatmeal
- Polenta
- Whole grain cereal with non-dairy milk

### Vegan Nutritional Chart

Vitamin A	Dark green leafy vegetables, carrots, sweet potatoes, broccoli, cabbage
Vitamin B 12	Nutritional yeast, Sublingual B-12 supplements, fortified foods
Vitamin B 1	Whole grains, brown rice, navy beans, kidney beans, oats, nuts, seeds, wheat germ
Vitamin B2	Green leafy vegetables and nuts
Vitamin B 6	Raw fruits, plantain, bananas, hazel nuts, spinach, potatoes
Vitamin B 9	Beans, whole grains, legumes, dark leafy vegetables
Vitamin C	Broccoli, oranges, papaya, guava, tangerines, kale, collard greens, kiwi
Vitamin D	Sunlight, torula yeast, fortified foods
Vitamin E	Wheat germ, spinach, broccoli, kiwi, almonds, green leafy vegetables, sweet potato
Vitamin K	Alfalfa, parsley, spinach
Protein	Nuts, beans, tofu, potatoes, wheat germ, oatmeal, kelp, duce, Irish moss, nori and spirulina
Iron	Blackstrap molasses, yellow dock, alfalfa, nettle, figs, watermelon, raisins, dark leafy green vegetables (kales, collards, spinach, etc.)
Omega 6	Safflower oil, sunflower oil, vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grains, soybean
Omega 3	Spirulina, flax seeds, green leafy vegetables, hemp seed, pumpkin seed,

	avocado
Omega 9	Avocados ,peanuts, olive oil, sesame seeds, peanuts, pecans, cashew, macadamia nuts
Calcium	Kale, collard greens, okra, Blackstrap molasses, tofu, broccoli, oatmeal, parsley

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