

# Vegetarian Diets for Correctional Facilities

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**M**any people choose vegetarian diets for reasons of health, ethics, environmental concerns, or others.

The American Dietetic Association holds that vegetarian and vegan diets have health benefits and are nutritious when appropriately planned. Happily, planning is easy, and these foods are readily available and often less expensive than non-vegetarian choices.

## The Basics of Vegetarian or Vegan Diets: *The New Four Food Groups*

**U**sing the New Four Food Groups is an easy way to provide complete nutrition. These are the building blocks of each meal:

- Whole grains, such as rice, pasta, bread, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, bagels, etc.
- Legumes, such as kidney beans, black-eyed peas, lentils, split peas, vegetarian baked beans, etc.
- Vegetables (canned, frozen, or fresh), such as green beans, spinach, carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes, broccoli, and collard greens
- Fruit (canned or fresh) of any variety

## A Word about Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>

**V**itamin B<sub>12</sub> is needed for healthy nerves and healthy blood. It is found in fortified foods, such as some breakfast cereals and soymilks. If these foods are not offered on a daily basis, any common multiple vitamin should be provided as a source of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>. (Non-vegetarians derive vitamin B<sub>12</sub> from animal products.)

## Meal Examples

**Good breakfast choices include:** oatmeal with raisins, muffins and toast, cereal with soymilk or rice milk, bagels with jam, and fresh fruits or juices.

**Good lunch and dinner choices include:** pasta with tomato sauce, peanut butter sandwiches, baked beans, beans and rice,

baked potatoes, veggie burgers, veggie hot dogs, bean and rice burritos, veggie chili, bean and veggie tacos, stir-fried seasonal vegetables with rice, and grilled vegetable fajitas.

To make things simple, always offer vegan choices. Vegan (pronounced “*vee gun*”) foods contain no animal products. They are free of butter, milk, other dairy products, eggs, meat, fish, or poultry products, and do not include any hidden animal products. As a result, they are acceptable to all types of vegetarians, as well as to individuals with certain religious constraints.

### Some hidden animal products (all of which should be omitted) include:

- lard or tallow
- mayonnaise
- lactose
- chicken, beef, veal, or fish broth
- whey or casein
- gelatin
- honey

If you do not offer a specific vegetarian option, allow individuals to have double portions of fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, and meat substitutes (beans and nut butters). Offer bags of nuts, seeds, and Clif bars in the commissary as nutritious snacks. Suggestions for adapting existing recipes are included below.

## Adapting Existing Recipes

**Y**ou can easily adapt your existing menu items to meet the needs of vegans. Here are some suggestions:

- Use vegetable oil instead of animal fat to fry and sauté.
- Use vegetable stock or commercially prepared vegetable broth in soups, sauces, rice dishes, and other recipes calling for beef or chicken broth.
- Prepare bean or vegetable dishes, such as baked beans, chili, or sautéed vegetables, without butter, meat, or meat flavoring. These dishes will be popular with vegetarians and meat-eaters alike.

- Offer pasta dishes with a meatless pasta sauce and purchase pasta made without eggs.
- Replace cottage or ricotta cheese with crumbled tofu in lasagna or other dishes.
- Offer and use vegetable oil-based margarine instead of butter. Vegetable margarine or shortening can replace butter or lard in recipes.
- Purchase breads and rolls made without animal fat, eggs, or dairy products, and with little or no added fat.

### **Looking for Commercial Convenience Foods?**

**M**any handy vegetarian products are available that are easy to prepare and store well. The following list will get you started. For additional products and suppliers, check with your distributor or contact the Vegetarian Resource Group (410-366-8343; [www.vrg.org](http://www.vrg.org)) for a comprehensive listing of vegetarian food manufacturers.

#### ***Dairy Alternatives:***

- **Eden Foods**, 800-651-9600: soymilk and/or rice milk blends
- **Hane Food Group**, 310-886-8200: soymilk
- **Healthy Harvest**, 530-894-0900: soymilk and rice milk
- **Imagine Foods**, 800-333-6339: rice milk and dairy-free “ice creams”
- **Rich Products**, 800-818-9261: fat-free and low-fat dairy-free liquid coffee creamers
- **Tofutti Brands**, 908-272-2400: dairy-free “ice cream,” cream cheese substitute, and sour cream substitute
- **Vitasoy**, 800-VITASOY: soymilk
- **White Wave**, 303-443-3470: soymilk and dairy-free yogurt

#### ***Meat Substitutes:***

- **Archer Daniels Midland (ADM)**, 800-637-5850: Harvest Burger, Harvest Burger for Recipes ground meat substitute, and textured vegetable protein (TVP)
- **Boca Burger**, 312-201-0300: vegan burgers
- **Eden Foods**, 800-248-0320: organic seitan
- **Light Life Foods**, 800-274-6001: vegan burgers, veggie hot dogs, meat-free sausage (breakfast and Italian), meat analog cold cuts, and Gimme Lean ground meat substitute
- **Nasoya Foods**, 800-229-TOFU: tofu
- **Northern Soy Inc.**, 716-235-8970: veggie hot dogs, breakfast links, burgers, tempeh, and tofu
- **Vitasoy**, 800-VITASOY: tofu
- **White Wave**, 303-443-347: veggie cold cuts, hot dogs, burgers, tempeh, tofu, and seitan
- **Yves Veggie Cuisine**, 800-667-9837: veggie hot dogs, cold cuts, pepperoni, and burgers

#### ***Other Ingredients:***

- **Dixie USA, Inc.**, 800-347-3494: vegetarian broth mixes
- **Ener-G Foods**, 206-767-6660: egg-free egg replacer mix
- **Fantastic Foods**, 707-778-7801: falafel, hummus, instant black beans, tabouli salad, vegetarian chili, whole wheat couscous, Nature’s burger (original flavor); available in bulk
- **Nasoya Foods**, 800-229-TOFU: egg-free mayonnaise substitute
- **Scenario International Company**, 818-986-3777: vegetarian broth concentrate and bouillon cubes
- **Worthington Foods**, 614-555-9511; chili, cutlets, vegetable scallops, and vegetarian burger; available in bulk