

# Surviving College as an Herbivore

College is this whole new world that you have never discovered before. So many choices, decisions, and things to be responsible for. There are lots of things that a college kid worries about, and for some that includes a special diet. One of those special diets may be vegetarianism, which can be a major challenge living on a college campus. Being vegetarian is so much more than just not eating meat. This article covers the struggles of being a vegetarian on a college campus with an emphasis on: types of vegetarianism, why people may choose to be vegetarians, the importance of educating yourself, some essential nutrients to consider, options that are offered at The Rock Café and The Quad on campus, and some tips for success. Ferris State University also offers the unique services of an on campus Registered Dietitian, Brenda Walton. Her job is to help students with questions or concerns they may have with their diet restrictions and eating on campus, more specifically in this case vegetarians. With the help of Brenda and Ferris' online nutrition resources they can set you up for success as a vegetarian living on a college campus.

## Types of Vegetarianism

As stated earlier, vegetarianism is so much more than just not eating meat. Although the concept of it is very simple in nature, there are actually quite a few different kinds of vegetarians regarding the strictness of their diet. Some of the types of vegetarianism are explained here:

<b>Types of Vegetarianism</b>	
<b>Type:</b>	<b>Does NOT consume:</b>
Vegan	Meat Meat By-products (gelatin, animal broths) Animal By-products (eggs, dairy, honey)
Lacto-Vegetarian	Meat Meat By-products (gelatin, animal broths) Certain Animal By-Products (eggs) <i>*Does consume dairy</i>
Ovo-Vegetarian	Meat Dairy By-products (milk, cheese) <i>*Does consume eggs</i>
Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian	Meat <i>*Does consume eggs and dairy</i>
Pollotarian	Red Meat (beef, lamb, pork, venison) Fish and Seafood <i>*Does consume poultry, fowl, eggs, and dairy</i>
Pescatarian	Red Meat (beef, lamb, pork, venison) Poultry and Fowl <i>*Does consume fish, seafood, eggs, and dairy</i>

## Why Choose Vegetarianism?

There are a lot of different reasons for why someone might choose to be a vegetarian. Some of the most common ones are: health, religion, preference, animal rights, and even the environment. With more and more awareness of animal cruelty and the conditions in which they are cared for, people are picking up vegetarianism. There have also been negative effects associated with eating the meat supply, so some may choose to do it if they believe it is better for their health. Some religions refrain from eating meat as well. Whatever the reason a person may choose to be vegetarian, it is important to always respect their choices and be open-minded. The same should be like-wise for how vegetarians should treat those who eat meat.

## Education is Key

The main point I want to stress in this article is the importance of educating yourself on vegetarianism before you choose to become one. The last thing you want to do is follow some sort of fad or trend just because it is popular at the time. This is a decision in which you should take some time on and do your research. It's likely that people will ask you why you chose to become a vegetarian and of course you want to be able to give them a definite answer.

## Essential Nutrients to Consider

While educating yourself on vegetarianism you may find that your nutrition is affected. The main nutrients affected are **vitamin B12, iron, and protein**, which in large part come from meat. Of course meat is not the only possible source of these nutrients, but it does play a significant role when it comes to nutrition. By educating yourself you will find that, depending on the type of vegetarianism, you could be missing out on some key nutrients. All of these nutrients for example come naturally from meat, but a plant based diet can have the same nutrients as well. **Iron and protein** are naturally found in some plants, but **B12** is essentially only found naturally in meat. It is, however, in some fortified products. It's very important that vegetarians pay attention to what they are consuming because they want to make sure they are getting enough of all their nutrients. An additional step that some vegetarians might want to consider is a **multivitamin or supplement** to ensure they are getting all of their essential nutrients, but of course nutrients are always best when taken in naturally from the diet. They can do this by checking food labels, researching better dietary sources of the nutrients they could be missing, and by talking with the Campus Dietitian, Brenda Walton, for further guidance. Her contact information is below.

## FSU Dining Centers' Vegetarian Options

Both The Rock Café and The Quad Café offer quite a variety of vegetarian-friendly options. Some of those options include: the salad bar, deli station, cheese pizza, and even some soups. Other options can be found at some of the other stations as well. At The Rock, the Mongolian grill can be done vegetarian style by simply informing the workers of the grill that you would like them to use a different set of swords to cook your meal because you are vegetarian. Vegetarian burgers are available upon request at Woody's grill at The Rock and Riverside Grill at The Quad. Other options may be vegetarian friendly as well, depending on what is being served that day. Menus can always be viewed online in order for you to check ahead of time what your options that day are.

## Tips for Success

Being a vegetarian isn't as simple as it seems, especially when you have limited options. Considering this, it is essential to educate yourself first before committing to such a lifestyle. Educating yourself not only means knowing about the vegetarian lifestyle, but also the nutrients that the body needs that are affected by such a lifestyle. If you don't educate yourself on the proper nutrition your body needs, and what your diet could lack from such a lifestyle you could actually harm your body in the process. There are lots of websites available for you to begin educating yourself on vegetarianism, but if you're on campus and have some questions it may be wise to stop and pay Brenda Walton a visit or consult your family doctor.

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## Citations:

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