

Find your inner FLEXITARIAN

Love the idea of a vego lifestyle but can't give up meat? Now you can lose weight, get healthy and even enjoy steak

It's the new food movement that has celebrities such as Kate Moss, Denise Richards and Megan Fox all swapping out meat in favour of salads and fresh greens.

But far from making meat the enemy, the flexitarian diet is about working more vegetarian meals into your diet while also enjoying the occasional lamb roast – like going vego on flexitime.

So whether you're watching your weight or just curious about going vegetarian, find out why the flexitarian diet is every meat lover's dream.

What is it?

"The word flexitarian is obviously a combo of the words 'flexible' and 'vegetarian,'" says

US dietitian and author Dawn Jackson Blatner. "What sets this diet apart is that it's pro-plants but not anti-meat. It celebrates the health benefits of a plant-based diet but recognises that eating meat is a huge part of socialising and having a good time – and says it's OK to have both," says Dawn.

What's more, lean meat is also a rich source of protein, energy and iron, so cutting it out could deprive our health.

How does it work?

There's no doubt a vegetarian diet is packed with health benefits, too. Studies have shown going vego can help you slim down, lower cholesterol, reduce blood

pressure and cut down your risk of chronic diseases.

But giving up meat isn't easy, so if you're not ready to take the plunge into going full



Jess Simpson

The curvy singer has embraced the flexitarian way.

vego, a flexitarian diet means you can have the best of both worlds.

"The easiest thing to do is re-portion your plate," says Dawn. "Don't give up that hamburger – just go for a smaller patty.

"Don't change your favourite meals, just reinvent them.

"For example, rather than adding beef mince to tacos, try a filling of half meat, half lentils."

Stop counting kJs

Along with taking a flexible approach to food, flexitarians are also laid-back about counting kilojoules. "The flexitarian way of eating is about visual wisdom, not rules," says Dawn.

"Just look at your plate before every meal and check that it contains 25 per cent grains, such as brown rice and quinoa, 25 per cent protein through non-meat sources like lentils or occasional lean meat, 50 per cent fresh vegetables and a little bit of fat through avocado, nuts or cheese."

Flexitarians shopping list

Stock up on these easy-to-source vegetarian staples to fire up your flexitarian diet and set you on a healthier path

- ✓ FRESH VEGETABLES Look for what's fresh and in season to have on hand to supplement your dinners.
- ✓ PRE-WASHED GREENS Spinach and kale make great salad bases for lunch.
- ✓ ROLLED OATS Served hot or as part of muesli for an easy no-meat breakfast.
- ✓ MUSHROOMS Combine with fresh tomato to create a tasty meat-free pasta.
- ✓ POTATOES Use spuds for tasty side dishes and to bulk out veggie burgers.
- ✓ BLACK, WHITE & EDAMAME BEANS Work these bean varieties into meat dishes and salads.
- ✓ ALMONDS, PECANS & WALNUTS Grab a handful for a healthy snack.

Cameron Diaz

The *Charlie's Angels* star grew up almost addicted to fast food before embracing healthier eating. But she says it's about balance. "I don't restrict myself from things that make me happy. I eat pork roast for Christmas, tacos the next day... that's my treat."

Making it work

The best way to find your inner flexitarian is to start small.

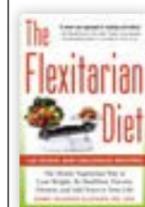
"Look at how many veggie-based meals are already in your diet," says Dawn. "There are 21 meals a week, so start by making five to eight of those meatless and build up from there.

"Stock up on plenty of veggies, beans and nuts, and have them cleaned, chopped up and prepared in clear containers at eye level in your kitchen cupboards so they're ready to go."

Curb meat cravings

If carnivorous urges threaten to throw your diet off course, a simple trick of the tastebuds could make all the difference.

"People think they're missing meat, when it's really the distinct flavour called 'umami' they crave. You can get it from soy sauce, mushrooms and potatoes."



For flexitarian diet tips and recipes, check out *The Flexitarian Diet* (\$24.95, McGraw-Hill).

To get an exclusive Woman's Day reader 20 per cent discount, visit mcgraw-hill.com.au and enter the promotional code DIET20 at checkout.

FAMOUS FLEXITARIANS

Here's what some of Hollywood's most beautiful stars are saying about the benefits of following the flexitarian way of eating...



Megan Fox

The *Transformers* star and magazine covergirl has decided to ditch her very regimented vegan diet in a bid to reclaim her lost curves. "For a year and a half, I followed a strict vegan diet," the 28-year-old actress and mum-of-two says. "But I lost too much weight, so now I eat a bit of everything."



Denise Richards

The 43-year-old actress credits her svelte shape to a diet plan mostly made up of fresh natural produce. "My diet is 80 per cent vegetarian and I eat all day long – I have lots of little meals," she says. "I eat lots of fruit, veggies, egg whites, oatmeal, a little chicken, eggs and rice."



Angelina Jolie

After years of shunning steaks, 39-year-old Angelina has gone back to eating red meat for health reasons. "I love red meat," the *Maleficent* star says. "I was a vegan for a long time and it nearly killed me. I found I was not getting enough nutrition... I joke that a big, juicy steak is my beauty secret."



Beyonce & Jay-Z

The superstar duo went meat-free on a 22-day vegan challenge, munching on meals made of fresh ingredients such as carrots, celery, sweet potato, cabbage, chia, black beans and quinoa. The pair describe their meat- and dairy-free time as a "spiritual and physical cleanse".



Kate Moss

The Brit model convinced her husband and former vegan Jamie Hince to eat meat again. The Kills singer admitted, "The thing that tipped me over the edge was when I walked into the kitchen and saw Kate in underwear making me a bacon sandwich. All my principles went out the window."

TRIED & TESTED

Having been diagnosed with scoliosis in my teens, I've always been mindful of my posture. Over the years I've tried everything to stop myself from slouching: from balancing on exercise balls to sending emails

standing up. You name it, I've tried it. Naturally, I was a little sceptical of the BodyBolster, but within

minutes of using it all my doubts dissolved. Sitting comfortably between my back and chair, the pillow makes it virtually

impossible to slouch. It took a little getting used to at first, but three weeks on, I've noticed a huge difference. My back feels lighter and more relaxed, and I've even started sleeping more soundly than I have in months. The BodyBolster is available at bodybolster.com for \$79.90.

