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The Flexitarian Diet: Being vegetarian & carnivore

Vegetarian

flexibility

Michele Thompson, MS

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Are you one of the many health-conscious people who want to follow a vegetarian diet but can't imagine life without meat? Good news: You can reap the many health benefits of following a plant-based diet without completely giving up your carnivorous cravings. *The Flexitarian Diet*, written by spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD, LDN, gives you the skinny on how to improve your health with a mostly vegetarian diet that includes meat. It's the best of both worlds.

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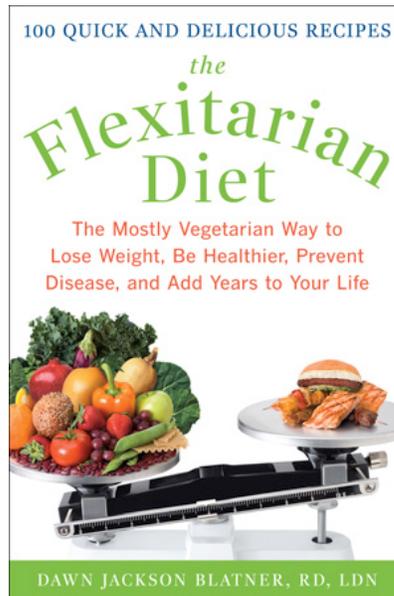
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What is a flexitarian diet?

Unlike the many fad-diets, which have little long-term benefits, flexitarianism is a sensible approach to incorporating more plant-based meals and minimizing meat without eliminating it altogether. Blatner's book [The Flexitarian Diet](#) is the first book to guide readers to be flexitarian or flexibly vegetarian.

The benefits of being flexitarian

Many people turn to vegetarian diets because they want to improve their health and/or lose weight. However, a meat-free diet can be challenging to stay on and can result in people giving it up because they'd rather eat meat than feel guilty for it.



It is this guilt that inspired Blatner to write *The Flexitarian Diet*. "I've been a vegetarian for over 15 years but ate meat on rare occasions. Every time I ate meat I felt like I was being a bad and lazy vegetarian. So I developed this style of eating for people who know that vegetarianism is one of the healthiest and smartest ways to eat but just don't want to sit at a BBQ in the corner with an empty bun," she explains.

Even better, research shows that a flexitarian diet delivers long-lasting health benefits. The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health recently released the findings of a study which concludes that eating a full day of vegetarian meals *just once a week* can reduce the average intake of saturated fat by up to 15 percent. This can also dramatically reduce the risk of heart attacks, strokes and cancer.

In addition, Blatner says, "Flexitarians weigh 15 percent less, have a lower rate of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, and live 3.6 years longer than carnivores."

Flexitarianism is also ecologically-friendly since plant-based diets produce less carbon emissions than a typical meat-heavy diet. Good for you and good for the environment!

5 Easy tips to become more flexitarian

Incorporating more plant-based meals into your diet is simple with Blatner's flexitarian tips.

1. Do the 50/50 swap

Decrease the meat in your meals by half and swap in plant proteins such as black beans, pinto beans, white beans, kidney beans, garbanzo beans and lentils. [Note: Swap in 1/4 cup beans for every one ounce of meat.]

2. Round out and fill up

Make your current meals extra nutritious and satisfying with adding extra fruits, veggies and whole grains.

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Try at least one new vegetarian recipe each week to build up your meat-free cooking repertoire.

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4. Try vegetarian restaurant foods

The majority of restaurants offer vegetarian fare so try something new when dining out to expand your palate and inspire your culinary creativity at home.



5. Buy The Flexitarian Diet

It comes with over 100 recipes – many of which have Flex Swap options to add meat – and an easy to follow guide to becoming flexitarian. ([Click for three easy flexitarian recipes.](#))

Being flexitarian will not only boost your health, it will give you the freedom to sink your teeth into a piece of meat without feeling guilty. *The Flexitarian Diet* will help reduce your diet stress, eat a variety of your favorite foods, and live a delicious lifestyle.

More on healthy plant-based diets

- [The Anticancer Diet](#)
- [Mediterranean diet: Heart-healthy recipes featuring olive oil](#)
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By ThirstyApe Feb 17, 2009

I could not recommend this book more highly! The author's website is really cool too! <http://www.dawnjacksonblatner> . I have downloaded many more recipes from her website that are really delicious.

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