



JAN 26

Make more freezer room for ice cream

Samantha Church



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As a dog owner and animal lover, I decided that becoming a vegetarian would be in my best interest, as well as theirs. I understand, Americans don't normally eat dogs, but they are animals just like cows, chickens and pigs. And I love animals.

At the beginning of the year, I decided to drop meat from my diet. Not entirely, though. I'm technically a lacto-vegetarian, meaning I don't eat any meat, seafood, poultry or eggs, but I do consume dairy products.

Weirdly enough, my lifestyle choice is controversial to some. When I brought up my new diet to my dad, he quickly chimed in that he will still be eating meat and will never drop it. Not only was he quick to defend his stance, he then started to ask me questions like where will I get protein and vitamin D. It's important to note that many vegetables and nuts have protein in them, much like meat does.

For me, the reasons for changing my lifestyle seemed almost like common sense. Eating this kind of diet means my meals are usually cheaper. It depends on the meat and the vegetable, but most comparisons show that fruit and vegetables are cheaper than meat.

Each edible pound of fresh fruit and vegetables ends up being about \$1, compared to the average price of meat per pound being \$3.64. The added perk to eating vegetables frequently is that you can cook them or you eat them raw. Besides sushi, it's usually uncommon to eat raw meat since it could make someone sick.

According to the Worldwatch Institute, raising livestock and their byproducts account for 51 percent of annual greenhouse gas emissions. So, not eating meat helps the environment—and of course I want to help the environment.

Traditionally, eating a plant-based diet meant that you would be lacking specific nutrients that meat-eaters get. Recently, dieticians have changed their opinion about it.

According to the American Dietetic Association, diets of vegetarians that are "appropriately planned" can be nutritionally sufficient and can possibly provide health benefits that could lead to the prevention of certain diseases.

Technically speaking, a diet of pop, cheese, pizza and candy is a vegetarian diet. It's easy to find yourself eating junk food when you switch to this kind of diet. To eat a healthy vegetarian diet, you need to include a wide variety of fruits, veggies and whole grains. Many restaurants have vegetarian options on their menu, like black bean burgers or avocado tacos.

Simple ways that you can become a vegetarian include substituting meat with tofu, rice, quinoa or meat substitutes. My favorite substitute currently is quinoa, since it has protein and can take on any flavor it's cooked in.

So get rid of the meat in your freezer. Make more room for ice cream.

opinion, vegetarian



Samantha Church

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