

# 6 WAYS TO NAVIGATE THE HOLIDAYS AS A VEGAN

[Elizabeth Kovar](#) // [Nutrition](#) // 12/12/2016



The holiday season can be stressful. From shopping to controlling one's diet and exercise regimen, everyone experiences some form of stress this time of year. Vegans, for example, may find holiday parties particularly challenging as many holiday favorites contain both dairy and meat.

Fortunately, there are plenty of meat and dairy-free alternatives that vegans can enjoy throughout the holidays. Navigate your way through the holiday season with these six tips and tricks.

## DEFINE YOUR BOUNDARIES

Veganism is a lifestyle that eliminates the use of animal-based (or testing) products, while vegetarianism is a diet that does not include meat. Most vegans choose the complete dairy-free approach, although some vegans who frequently travel for work are vegan at home and are O.K. with eating vegetarian on the road if they cannot find vegan-friendly food. They don't actively seek out dairy, but find it acceptable if a soup or pastry has dairy in it. They consider themselves "flexible vegans."

While most vegans might disagree with the previous statement, choosing to be vegan is an individual choice. Thoughts and ideas about food vary amongst urban and rural landscapes, and families not exposed to mainstream veganism may have questions. Vegans who go home for the holidays should define and express their eating boundaries, which helps families prepare for the big meal.



# HOST A POTLUCK

Do you want a dairy-free holiday celebration? If so, host a potluck. Hosting a vegan potluck is a fun way for people to explore a new method of cooking. The host can provide attendees with specific recipes. Or they can create a meet-up or an online discussion that looks at recipes from vegan books or food blogs.

# EDUCATE PEOPLE

Use the holidays as a time to educate your friends and family about why you have chosen veganism. Avoid being condescending about other people's lifestyles, but share the positive notions about veganism such as feeling healthy, having more energy or helping the ecosystem. At the end of the day, everyone can benefit from eating more fruits, vegetables and whole foods, which contributes a large part to the vegan diet.

Navigating the holidays takes time, planning and education. Don't feel guilty about your choices, but offer to help out or share your favorite recipes so everyone has an enjoyable holiday experience.



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