



Catering for Vegetarian and Vegan Guests

As a host with Australian Homestay Network (AHN), you will receive requests to host students with varying dietary requirements, including guests who are vegetarian or vegan. Below are some misconceptions about providing these meals, as well as a few tips on how to cater for guests who follow a vegetarian or vegan diet.

COMMON MYTHS

Making vegetarian meals is boring, it's all salad:

Quite the opposite! Curry, lasagne, and burgers can all be made vegetarian. There are many resources online to help prepare simple (or extravagant!) and yummy vegetarian foods. [Check out these 40 Easy Vegetarian Meals for Beginners.](#)

Vegan diets are expensive to maintain:

Pre-packaged options might be, but if you cook from scratch, it's actually really affordable. Considering you're not buying meat – one of the most expensive grocery items – you will see savings just from that!

Providing vegan meals is restrictive:

Avoiding animal products can be tricky to start with, considering we are so used to using them. However, once you sit down and plan with the products you can use; such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, rice and legumes, you'll realise it's not restrictive at all; you just have to be creative. Here is a great blog with tips about [How to Start Eating A Plant-Based Diet.](#)

Eating a vegetarian or vegan diet is unhealthy:

Firstly, it's important to respect the choices one makes about their diet; it may be a choice, or it may be for health reasons. Vegan and vegetarian diets are healthy if they are planned correctly. A common issue we hear is that hosts are worried about not getting enough protein because their guest doesn't eat meat. There are many versatile plant-based options that provide a healthy amount of protein, you just have to do your research. But if you're worried you or your family are not getting enough protein, simply cook some and add it to your plate/s only.

BONUS TIPS

- **Be cautious when dining out with your guest:**
When eating at restaurants or ordering takeout, most places offer vegetarian options now and some cater to vegan customers.

If they don't have visible indicators that they have vegetarian or vegan dishes, just be careful that you and your guest are provided with correct information from the kitchen regarding ingredients and how the food is prepared.
- **Check food additives and ingredients at home:**
Some food additives, such as gelatine, enzymes, and emulsifiers, may be derived from animal products. Always check the ingredient lists on your products.
- **Offer vegetarian and plant-based options:**
To accommodate a wider range of dietary preferences, consider including vegetarian and plant-based dishes in your menu.
- **Educate your whole household:**
If you're providing a vegetarian or vegan diet as part of your homestay packages, make sure your family members are aware of the dietary requirements too and understand the importance of avoiding cross contamination.
- **Communicate with your guests prior to their arrival:**
We touched on this earlier but it's so easy and important. Ask your guests in advance about their dietary needs and preferences, what they like to eat, and their recommendations on how best to cater for them. This will help you plan and prepare accordingly.

Contact AHN

For General Support / Feedback
Contact your local AHN office
homestaynetwork.org/contact-us

 24/7 After Hours Emergencies
Within Australia: 1300 69 7829
International: (+61) 02 8905 0321

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