

# My Story - Why I'm Vegan

I've always acknowledged the simple truth that in order to be happy, one must be kind. Although I agreed with this concept in theory, it wasn't until recently that I was able to put this principal into play and be gifted by the many rewards that come with making compassionate choices.

Before becoming vegan, I was a vegetarian for 12 years; and a bad one at that. I was a cheese addict, a goodie girl and an Egg Head. I wore the milk mustache.

Then, last December, I picked up the most unlikely book to jolt me into action: *Skinny Bitch* by Kim Barnouin and Rory Freedman. The excerpts they included from Gail Eisnitz's novel, *Slaughterhouse*, devastated me. I couldn't sleep the night after reading about the systematic cruelties and confinement associated with animals raised for food. I knew instantly that I wanted to

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become vegan and that if I was going to be a success, I needed to start looking at this new chapter in life as an adventure rather than a sacrifice.

I started by restocking my pantry



by Nikki Jefford

and ordering a mini-library of the best rated vegan cookbooks on Amazon. I went all-out in the kitchen making delicious new dinners several times a week that reawakened my love of cooking and food. Reading up on health issues and factory farming played an important role in establishing my new beliefs.

I never asked my husband, a Frenchman, to be a vegetarian, but several weeks into my lifestyle change, he stopped ordering meat at restaurants. A week after that he began using rice milk in

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his morning cereal. His support and participation has been one of the most touching gestures a man could make.

Likewise, my sister, mother and her boyfriend not only supported me, but quickly became participants in this journey. I feel lucky to be surrounded by people with such big hearts.

For the first time, I've started taking my health seriously and I've never felt better. Without counting calories or denying myself the new foods I love, I lost 12 pounds within the first month and a half of

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eating vegan. The best moment occurred when I walked through Nordstrom's and decided to try on the cute summer dress displayed on a mannequin. I couldn't stop staring at myself in the mirror when the size medium not only fit, but looked cute. Having not worn a dress in six years, this was a moment of pure bliss. I couldn't wipe the smile off my face all afternoon.

Most importantly, I discovered you don't have to be a monk to respect all forms of life and that this compassion brightens all areas of your life,

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including a heightened kinship towards people and the planet. Rather than feeling deprived, I have rediscovered pleasure and a renewed sense of pride in myself and my choices. Besides that, the food is just so darn good!