

Veganuary: a movement to encourage more people to go vegan.



Veganism is "a *philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude - as far as is possible and practicable - all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment.*" (1).

Veganism embraces all aspects of life and promotes peace and non-violence towards all living beings (including humans) and care for the earth. It is about re(connecting) with nature, with ourselves and with other animals.

Launched in January 2014, Veganuary (pronounced vee-gan-uary) is a charity inspiring people to try vegan for January and throughout the rest of the year. Over 150,000 people registered for Veganuary 2018; a number which has doubled year on year. Many of us will know someone who took part this year, or we may have even signed up ourselves.

Veganuary says that there are so many reasons people try vegan.

"For most, a love of animals is the catalyst. Some people want to feel better about themselves and the impact they make on the world. Others would like to set themselves a challenge, and many combine Veganuary with their 'New Year's Resolutions' and see trying vegan as the healthiest start to the year."

Animals are able to perceive and feel, and experience pain and happiness just as we do. Production of food and clothing causes them to suffer in innumerable ways. At least 150 Billion land animals are killed globally each year by the meat, dairy and egg industries alone, with a further 1-2.5 trillion sea animals for food! (2)

Research shows that **health** is the second biggest reason people go vegan. Cut out cholesterol, lower your blood pressure and reduce the risk of diabetes, cancer and heart disease. The World Health Organisation has recently classified processed meat as carcinogenic and red meat as probably carcinogenic. (3)

Going vegan is the easiest and most effective way to help our **planet**. Make a more positive impact than giving up your car, and halve your greenhouse gas emissions. Animal agriculture is also the leading cause of deforestation, habitat destruction, species extinction, ocean dead zones and most of the worst environmental ills facing our world. (4)

The United Nations has said that we need small-scale, low impact, organic farming rather than large scale mass production or genetically modified crops to tackle global food insecurity. (5) Over 1 billion people go hungry each day, yet we feed over 50% of all grain to farmed animals.

There has been a dramatic surge in veganism over the past decade. Most of us will be able to name a famous vegan; examples include Al Gore, Johnny Marr, Joaquin Phoenix, Lewis Hamilton and Venus Williams.

A recent study by the Vegan Society and Vegan Life Magazine (6) showed that veganism in Britain had increased by 360% over the 10 years from 2006 to 2016. There are now over half a million vegans in Britain and that number is accelerating each year.

As a family, we believe that we should live as compassionately, sustainably and mindfully as possible and cause the least amount of suffering in the world. This philosophy is encapsulated in veganism, which provides the template for how we want to live. For us, it's not a question of what we are giving up or missing but rather what we are gaining by having the peace of mind that we are causing the least amount of harm and suffering as possible.

We are involved in various projects concerned with sustainable and compassionate living and social justice including coordinating the annual Kent Vegan Festival www.kentveganfestival.org

On Saturday, the 12th May, at Canterbury College, we will hold our fourth festival. The aim of the Kent Vegan Festival is to raise awareness about veganism as a compassionate, holistic, healthy and intrinsically non-violent way of life. Everyone is welcome. Our approach is to be supportive, educational, encouraging and positive.

If you missed Veganuary this year, not to worry, there are many other campaigns and pledges throughout the year including Animal Aid's 'Great Vegan Challenge' in November: www.govegan.org.uk and the Vegan Society's '30 Day Pledge', which runs throughout the year: www.vegansociety.com/go-vegan/take-vegan-pledge all of which offer lots of information (including nutrition and recipes), advice and on-going support. And, of course, we would love to see you at the festival in May! So, January is not your only opportunity – maybe try it for Lent 😊



Notes:

- 1) www.vegansociety.com
- 2) <http://bitesizevegan.com/ethics-and-morality/quantifying-suffering-cruelty-by-the-numbers/>
- 3) www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/pdf/Monographs-Q&A_Vol114.pdf
- 4) www.cowspiracy.com/facts/
- 5) http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ditcted2012d3_en.pdf
- 6) <https://www.vegansociety.com/whats-new/news/find-out-how-many-vegans-are-great-britain>