

# The new vegans

From health and taste to ethics and politics, there are many reasons people eat a plant-only diet. Here, seven of them explain their choice



Photographs  
Pål Hansen



*'My energy levels haven't dipped since I changed my diet'*

## Shea Jozana

Personal trainer with Matt Roberts, west London

My primary reason for becoming vegan was health-related. Two years into working as a personal trainer, I came across a fitness collective in west London called Spartanfam. All of their coaches are vegan and they told me about the long-term effects of eating meat, and how they felt better on a plant-based diet. Numerous studies have shown that a

plant-based diet can reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and type-2 diabetes.

When I ate meat, I always felt very heavy afterwards. You associate that with being full, whereas in reality you've eaten really dense food that your body has to fight to digest. Some people complain about not feeling full when they start on the vegan diet, but I find that lightness after I eat really positive. I can get on with whatever I'm doing without feeling lethargic.

My energy levels haven't dipped at all, and in terms of performance and strength I haven't really noticed any difference. Towards the end of the first year, I went from weight training to boxing, so naturally I lost a bit of weight. Then I had a bike accident. Now I'm building myself up again and tracking my muscle gain and performance on a weekly basis. It's too early to say, but I don't think I'm going to struggle to put on muscle mass

– I've already gained a kilo in the first month.

Sometimes, people make a snap decision and don't plan their diet to make sure they're getting the correct nutrition. My approach is this: if you're eating a variety of vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and some grains, then there's little else you need. (An important exception is vitamin B12.)

It's true that your calorie intake is slower than on a meat diet, so you've got to eat more to get the same amount of calories. I would add that the approach should be adjusted to meet your needs – for example, now that I've upped my training I've introduced a plant-based protein shake post-workout to support recovery and boost my calorie intake.

Eating vegan is easier than ever. Tesco has just launched a line of vegan ready-meals. We're seeing new vegan restaurants opening up and you can find vegan chocolate and ice cream. There are so many alternatives now. **KILLIAN FOX** >>