

# MEATLESS FOOD HABITS

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I gave up on red meat quite a few years ago. There is a tragic story to it. I was particularly fond of a goat back at our village home. One summer, however, there was no sign of Ninni, my favourite animal. There was mutton though on the dining table. I threw up almost instantly. I'm lucky to not have bonded with chicken or fish similarly and I can still enjoy fried ilish and grilled chicken.

The recent ban on beef in Maharashtra, India got us talking. While in Bangladesh, there is no restriction on eating beef or mutton, a lot of the younger people have started to include less of it in their diets. Consumption of chicken is on the rise definitely. CP is everywhere, c'mon! Reasons behind this trend include increased awareness about staying in shape for the youth, prohibition of saturated fats especially for the elderly and the upsurge of blogs and cooking shows that somehow prove that vegetarian recipes can be versatile too.

Two most popular concepts in this aspect are veganism and vegetarianism. Although we use them interchangeably, they are not the same. Neither vegans nor vegetarians eat meat. However, while vegetarians are open to the consumption of dairy products and eggs, a vegan avoids ALL animal products, including eggs and dairy and often animal-based lifestyle products such as leather, wool, and silk. Vegetarianism is usually a diet, while veganism is a way of life. Vegetarians often choose their diet based on its reported health bene-

fits or for religious causes. Typically, vegans have much robust opinions regarding their diet, with some believing animals should be protected under many of the same laws that humans are.

Realistically speaking, with almost 700 taka per kilogram of mutton and 400

what I understand, fruits and vegetables are fibrous and clean your gut. In the process, they help your vital organs to function better and help you stay in shape. On the other hand, if you are trying to gain weight or take on body building, you should be extra careful. Meat is well recognised

in many countries of the world and Bangladesh is no exception. People who follow Meatless Mondays may consume meat on other days of the week. This practice may have several benefits. Clean eating for a day can leave you refreshed and help flush toxins out of your body. On a global scale, not eating meat for a day every week by thousands of people can help restore the dwindling population of the animals. Samiha Khan, a 22 year old, says, "I urge my family to follow Meatless Mondays. I personally don't eat meat on other days as well.

Some older relatives find it 'offensive' but my vegetable platter is just what it is, a dietary choice."

For many out there, avoiding meat could be a matter of simple preference just like a lot of us might not eat pumpkin or radish. Someone doesn't have to hold strong beliefs associated with veganism to make such a choice. Such concepts are pretty new in the context of Bangladesh.

What I have discovered is that it is possible to be on a vegetarian diet and still have an interesting menu to choose from. MasterChef India has taken on a vegetarian spin this time and it is fascinating to see people try out such innovative vegetarian dishes. Yam mousse, who thought? Besides, it's not like people who don't eat meat remain undernourished in any way. Pulses and nuts can be good protein sources. Dishes made from soy and mushroom can be as satisfying as meat dishes. And potatoes, don't they solve around ninety percent of the problem? Fry, mash or sauté, they are all yours. Haters will hate and potatoes will ... keep us happy.

## FALAFEL

*Falafel – a deep-fried ball or patty made from ground chickpeas – is a traditional Middle Eastern food, commonly served in pita bread. The falafel balls are topped with salad, pickled vegetables, and/or sauce. Falafel is found around the world, and is a delicious vegetarian option.*

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup dried chickpeas
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 3/4 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons flour
- Oil for frying

## HOW TO

Mash chickpeas, making sure to mix ingredients together. You can also combine ingredients in a food processor. You want the result to be a thick paste. Form the mixture into small balls, about the size of a ping pong ball. Or you could slightly flatten them. Fry in 2 inches of oil until golden brown (2-5 minutes). Serve falafel by itself, or with hot pita bread with veggies and sauce.

taka per kilogram of beef, it's not a surprise that most families consider them occasional treats rather than regular menu on the table these days. There are other benefits to this as well. Health benefits. Don't believe me? Fine. Google or ask your doctor. From

as a body building food, high in protein and rich in minerals like zinc and iron. Creatine, mostly found in meat and fish can be required for improving exercise performance and increasing muscle mass. 'Meatless Mondays' are practised

