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## Vegetarianism

Before the coining of the terms “vegetarian” and “vegan” in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, respectively, Americans and Europeans who ate a fleshless diet were widely known as Pythagoreans, after the founder of the first vegetarian society of the West—Pythagoras, the Greek mathematician and philosopher who flourished in the sixth century B.C.E.

### Ancient Period

In Croton, a town in Magna Graecia (a grouping of ancient Greek colonies in the southern Italian peninsula), Pythagoras founded his society for the study of philosophy and mathematics, which served as the prototype for the Platonic Academy and the modern university. As a condition of membership in the order, members were required to take a vow pledging that they would abstain from the eating of animal flesh. The fleshless diet that Pythagoras recommended was based primarily on compassion for animals and opposition to animal sacrifice in Greek civic religion, with health being a secondary consideration.

The Pythagoreans’ commitment to vegetarianism was reinforced by their belief in the doctrine of *metempsychosis*, which held that after death the soul has the potential to transmigrate into the bodies of other animals. Many of the greatest thinkers of Antiquity counted themselves as disciples of Pythagoras; they include Socrates, Empedocles, Plato, Epicurus, Plutarch, Plotinus, and other Neo-Platonists of the late Roman Empire. (One of them, Porphyry, wrote the first history of Pythagoreanism, called *De Abstinencia*.) So closely was Pythagoras identified in the Western world with abstinence from animal flesh that “Pythagorean” became an adjective for describing a fleshless diet. In Antiquity a Pythagorean diet consisted exclusively of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains. Eggs and dairy products were lit-

42 tle consumed in ancient Greece and would have been  
43 avoided by Pythagoreans on ethical grounds.

### 45 **Early American Vegetarianism**

46 The writings of the German mystic Jakob Böhme were  
47 instrumental in converting a young English rustic with a  
48 literary bent to a Pythagorean diet. His name was  
49 Thomas Tryon. In numerous works Tryon advocated a  
50 Pythagorean diet on practical and moral grounds. One of  
51 his books, *Wisdom's Dictates* (1691), which was a digest  
52 of Tryon's voluminous *The Way to Health, Long Life, and*  
53 *Happiness* (1683), found its way into the hands of the  
54 young Benjamin Franklin in the 1720s. For three years,  
55 during his late adolescence, the young printer's appren-  
56 tice embraced the Pythagorean system. In his  
57 *Autobiography* (1791), Franklin acknowledges his debt  
58 to Tryon and, in the same passage, makes it plain that his  
59 reasons for adopting a fleshless diet were chiefly pecu-  
60 niary. By not eating flesh, he found that he could cut his  
61 food expenses in half, enabling him to acquire more  
62 books for his library.

63 Two of Franklin's contemporaries, both Quakers in  
64 Philadelphia, were more high-minded. One of them,  
65 Benjamin Lay, combined vegetarianism with abolition-  
66 ism. He claimed that witnessing the horrors of slavery on  
67 the Caribbean island of Barbados had fired him with the  
68 desire to adopt a Pythagorean diet and become an aboli-  
69 tionist. He was the author of a scathing anti-slavery book  
70 entitled *All Slave Keepers That Keep the Innocents in*  
71 *Bondage Apostates*, which was published by Benjamin  
72 Franklin in 1737. As few of his contemporaries did, Lay  
73 was able to see the connection between human servitude  
74 and animal enslavement.

75 The other vegetarian abolitionist of Franklin's  
76 acquaintance was John Woolman, an itinerant Quaker  
77 preacher whose two-part work *Some Considerations on*  
78 *the Keeping of Negroes* (1754) is credited with having  
79 turned the Quakers against the slave trade. (Franklin, to  
80 his credit, printed the second part of Woolman's work.)  
81 Unlike Franklin, Woolman was an ethical vegetarian who  
82 energetically campaigned against the mistreatment of  
83 animals, particularly horses and oxen.

84 A former British army officer named William Dorrell  
85 founded the first Pythagorean commune in the United  
86 States, on the Vermont-Massachusetts border in the late  
87 1790s. Members of the commune followed a fleshless  
88 regimen and wore no clothing that had been made from  
89

90 animal skin, though they did wear woolen shoes.  
91 Dorrell's was a religious sect that had strong millennial  
92 propensities; followers believed that the Second Advent  
93 (the second coming of Christ) was at hand, and they were  
94 preparing for the new millennium by recreating a utopi-  
95 an paradise in which no animals could be harmed or  
96 exploited, which had been the state of nature in the  
97 prelapsarian world of Adam and Eve in the Garden of  
98 Eden.

99 The Dorrellites came to grief when Dorrell bragged  
100 that his beliefs had made him impervious to pain. One  
101 day a skeptical onlooker at one of his lectures, one  
102 Captain Ezekiel Foster, decided to put Dorrell's claim to  
103 the test. He mounted the podium and delivered a well-  
104 aimed blow at Dorrell's chin, which floored him. When  
105 Dorrell struggled to his feet, Foster repeated the  
106 fisticuffs until Dorrell cried out that he did feel pain and  
107 that he had had quite enough. Disillusioned with their  
108 leader's braggadocio (to say nothing of his glass jaw), the  
109 Dorrellites disbanded. It would be another fifty years or  
110 so before another millennial group took up the cudgels  
111 for a spiritually based fleshless diet—the Seventh-Day  
112 Adventists, who built their new sect on the remnants of  
113 the failed prophecies (of a Second Coming of Christ in  
114 1843) of the American sectarian leader William Miller  
115 and the Millerites.

116 Pythagoreanism arrived in America as a fledgling  
117 social movement only in 1817. This was the year in  
118 which William Metcalfe and forty-one other members of  
119 the Bible Christian Church set sail from England, bound  
120 for Philadelphia. The Bible Christian Church had been  
121 founded by a Swedenborgian minister with the improba-  
122 ble name of William Cowherd. Cowherd had become a  
123 vegetarian after immersing himself in the mystical writ-  
124 ings of the Swedish philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg,  
125 who asserted that eating flesh was an evil that had  
126 brought about the fallen state of humanity. From his  
127 Swedenborgian pulpit, Cowherd preached vegetarianism  
128 and kindness to animals. He also averred that Jesus had  
129 been a vegetarian. When the Swedenborgian establish-  
130 ment frowned upon the ethical vegetarian tenor of his  
131 sermons, he quit the Swedenborgian Church and in 1809  
132 started his own church, the Bible Christian Church, in  
133 the town of Salford.

134 Much to the consternation of the other churches, the  
135 little Bible Christian church thrived and prospered, so  
136 much so that Cowherd conceived the plan of sending a  
137

138 group of Cowherdites, headed by William Metcalfe to  
139 convert the heathen American flesh eaters of European  
140 descent. On March 29, 1817, they set sail from Liverpool  
141 in the ship *Philadelphia Packet*, and eighty days later  
142 they arrived in Philadelphia. Not all of the Cowherdites  
143 survived the rigors of the voyage as vegetarians. Half, in  
144 fact, had succumbed to the lure of the meat rations. But  
145 Metcalfe and his wife, Susanna, came through the hard-  
146 ships unscathed and untainted to found the North  
147 American branch of the Bible Christian Church—the  
148 first vegetarian church to be planted on American soil.  
149 Despite its detractors' prophecies of a speedy demise,  
150 America's first vegetarian church survived into the early  
151 twentieth century.

152 Although his reception in Philadelphia by the ortho-  
153 dox Swedenborgian Church and other denominations  
154 was decidedly chilly, the Reverend Metcalfe was  
155 undaunted. The first public vegetarian advocate in the  
156 United States, Metcalfe continued to preach vegetarian-  
157 ism from the pulpit and to write essays on moral dietet-  
158 ics in the newspapers. In 1821 Metcalfe penned a pam-  
159 phlet called *On Abstinence from the Flesh of Animals*  
160 (echoing Porphyry) that won to the cause two converts  
161 who would play an indispensable role in launching the  
162 vegetarian movement in America.

163 His first convert was America's first vegetarian physi-  
164 cian, Dr. William A. Alcott, cousin to the transcenden-  
165 talist philosopher and teacher Bronson Alcott; William,  
166 in turn, converted Bronson. Not long after hearing  
167 Metcalfe's sermons, William gave up eating flesh. In the  
168 course of his long career he wrote numerous works adv-  
169 cating a vegetarian diet, including his best-known book,  
170 *Vegetable Diet* (1838). Bronson Alcott, father of the nov-  
171 elist Louisa May Alcott, founded the first ethical vege-  
172 tarian commune in America, Fruitlands, near Harvard,  
173 Massachusetts, which was financed by Alcott's neighbor,  
174 Ralph Waldo Emerson, another transcendentalist.

175 Not since the time of Pythagoras had there been a  
176 more ethical vegetarian commune. No draft animals were  
177 used to help plant the crops, because that would have  
178 meant enslaving them. None of the communards wore  
179 wool, because clothes made from wool were exploitative  
180 of sheep. Dairy products and eggs were shunned, since  
181 they were taken from animals without their consent. Out  
182 of respect for bees, the use of honey was forbidden. A  
183 strict Pythagorean diet was observed at all times.  
184 Unfortunately, the communards had waxed conversation-  
185

186 al and contemplative when they should have been plant-  
 187 ing crops. Come autumn, there was scant food to be har-  
 188 vested. So the commune disbanded, and in the end the  
 189 Fruitlands experiment proved to be as fruitless as it was  
 190 short-lived.

191 Although Fruitlands failed egregiously, one vegetari-  
 192 an commune that was notable for its financial success  
 193 was the Oneida Community in Upstate New York.  
 194 Founded by John Humphrey Noyes, a Dartmouth gradu-  
 195 ate and Yale Divinity School dropout, the community  
 196 effectively started in 1847, thirteen years after the  
 197 momentous day on February 20, 1834, when—in an  
 198 event called the “High Tide of the Spirits” by his follow-  
 199 ers—Noyes declared himself to be free of all sins. If  
 200 Fruitlands was an ethical vegetarian community, Oneida  
 201 was just the opposite. The vegetarian communards sup-  
 202 ported themselves by manufacturing fur traps! By the  
 203 1850s they were turning out more than 100,000 traps a  
 204 year.

205 Metcalfe’s other illustrious convert was himself a  
 206 Protestant minister and no mean pulpit orator—the  
 207 Reverend Sylvester Graham. Although people tend to  
 208 think of vegetarianism as a secular movement, that  
 209 Graham, a Presbyterian minister, launched the health  
 210 food reform movement in America and that his mentor,  
 211 Metcalfe, started the first religious vegetarian society in  
 212 America are suggestive of an underlying connection  
 213 between diet and religion.

214 Outraged that commercial bakers were removing the  
 215 vital nutrients from the bread and using stretchers such  
 216 as plaster of Paris, slaked lime, and alum, Graham called  
 217 for bakers to put back the bran and other nutrients.  
 218 Invoking Genesis 1:13, he also denounced the butchers  
 219 as fiends and the doctors as vampires. Despairing of  
 220 being able to reform the milling industry in his lifetime,  
 221 he marketed his own flour and breadstuffs. Graham flour,  
 222 Graham bread, Graham crackers, and Graham gems  
 223 found a ready market among his followers, who were  
 224 legion. To enable Grahamites to eat a vegetarian meal in  
 225 public without being gawked at, Graham founded a net-  
 226 work of vegetarian boardinghouses throughout the coun-  
 227 try.

228 Although his nutritional theories, as set forth in his  
 229 books *A Treatise on Bread, and Bread-making* (1837)  
 230 and *Lectures on the Science of Human Life* (1839), were  
 231 derided by the medical establishment of his time, his  
 232 theory that dietary fiber is a vital force in human health  
 233

234 has been vindicated by such pathbreaking medical  
235 researchers of the twentieth century as Dr. Peter Cleave.  
236 Cleave's theory of the saccharine disease, propounded in  
237 the 1960s, holds that all modern degenerative diseases,  
238 such as diabetes, heart disease, and diverticulitis, stem  
239 from a lack of sufficient dietary fiber. With any justice,  
240 Graham would be remembered for far more than the  
241 Graham crackers or the breakfast cereal that bear his  
242 name—both of which have been adulterated beyond  
243 recognition.

244 Graham also spawned not a few vegetarian converts of  
245 his own, notably, Asenath Nicholson, an accomplished  
246 vegetarian cook. Her cookbook *Nature's Own Book*  
247 (1833) is replete with vegetarian recipes and tributes to  
248 Graham. In 1844 she set sail for Ireland, where she  
249 chronicled the Great Hunger in her book *Annals of the*  
250 *Famine in Ireland in 1847, 1848, and 1849* (1851). For  
251 almost a decade she ministered to the famine-stricken  
252 poor by cooking them vegetarian meals that she had first  
253 learned to prepare as a chef in the Grahamite boarding-  
254 house that she had run with her husband in New York.

255 Sometime in the early 1840s in England, the term  
256 vegetarian was coined. No one knows exactly when or by  
257 whom. The story that it was first coined by a vegetarian  
258 classical scholar from the Latin word *vegetus* is appar-  
259 ently apocryphal. What is historically attested is that on  
260 September 29, 1847 at a hydropahtic clinic in Ramsgate,  
261 the first Vegetarian Socceity was formed. The outmoded  
262 term "Pythagorean" was officially replaced by the neolo-  
263 gism "vegetarian." Implicit in the word "Pythagorean"  
264 had been the notion of abstaining from animal flesh and  
265 animal products for ethical reasons. The coining of the  
266 word "vegetarian" seemed to legitimize the adoption of a  
267 fleshless diet for other than moral reasons. Consequently,  
268 a chasm opened between ethical and health vegetarians  
269 that has only widened and deepened. According to cer-  
270 tain surveys, 37 percent of animal rights activists are not  
271 vegetarians, and 85 percent of vegetarians are not pri-  
272 marily impelled by animal rights concerns. Perhaps it  
273 was not coincidental that the same year in which the  
274 term "vegetarian" was first officially adopted saw the  
275 founding of the Oneida commune, in which the vegetari-  
276 an communards supported themselves by manufacturing  
277 fur traps.

278 In 1850, three years after the vegetarian society in  
279 England had begun to call their diet "vegetarian,"  
280 Graham, Metcalfe, William Alcott, and Dr. Russell Trall  
281

282 founded America's first secular vegetarian society, the  
 283 American Vegetarian Society, at Clinton Hall in New  
 284 York City. Now defunct, the society continued to hold  
 285 meetings until 1922.

286 Another influential figure during this period was Dr.  
 287 James Caleb Jackson. Employing the latest techniques of  
 288 hydrotherapy, which he had imported from Germany, he  
 289 founded America's first successful health spa, Our Home  
 290 on the Hillside, in Dansville, New York, in 1858. His  
 291 patients would proffer their ailing anatomical parts to be  
 292 healed, and Jackson or his partner, Dr. Harriet Austin,  
 293 would slosh the offending organ with water, swathe the  
 294 patients in wet sheets, and put them on a diet of fresh  
 295 fruit, vegetables, and Graham mush. Like many promi-  
 296 nent figures in the vegetarian movement in the early  
 297 nineteenth century, Jackson was a fervent abolitionist.  
 298 He was also a feminist. Many leading feminists of the  
 299 period were frequent guests at the spa; some of them,  
 300 such as Amelia Bloomer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan  
 301 B. Anthony, and Clara Barton, were vegetarians or were  
 302 sympathetic to the cause.

303 Although his health spa was a highly lucrative enter-  
 304 prise, Jackson made his fortune from selling Grahamite  
 305 food products along with a few food inventions of his  
 306 own, such as Somo, a "coffee" made from cereal, and  
 307 Granula, America's first ready-to-eat breakfast cereal  
 308 (which was made from crumbled Graham bread). Both  
 309 products were later pirated by a visitor at Our Home—  
 310 none other than the noted Seventh-Day Adventist physi-  
 311 cian Dr. John Harvey Kellogg.

### 312 **Cornflake Crusaders**

314 Through Ellen White, founder of the Seventh-Day  
 315 Adventists and a former patient of James Caleb Jackson's  
 316 at Our Home, the early Adventists became acquainted  
 317 with the latest in health-care procedures. Sister White,  
 318 as she was affectionately dubbed by her followers,  
 319 absorbed her immense health knowledge partly through  
 320 divine revelation and partly through a close reading of  
 321 the works of food reformers like Graham and Jackson.  
 322 She was an avid reader of Jackson's *Water-Cure Journal*.  
 323 She also saw, in one of her visions, that God had fash-  
 324 ioned the human body as his temple, so that any abuse of  
 325 the body was a violation of God himself. Alcohol, tobac-  
 326 co, and meat were detrimental to the body, so she round-  
 327 ly denounced them and declared them to be proscribed  
 328 foods. Eventually, through her prophecies and teachings,  
 329

330 the Seventh-Day Adventists became strong advocates of  
331 a vegetarian diet.

332 As sedulously as Ellen White had studied Jackson's  
333 methods, so did her protégé, the young John Harvey  
334 Kellogg. In one of her visions White saw that Kellogg was  
335 destined for great things as an Adventist physician.  
336 (Despite her prescience, she did not foresee that one day  
337 Kellogg would grow so agnostic in his views that he  
338 would question White's infallibility and be expelled from  
339 the Adventist Church.) White and her husband, James,  
340 financed Kellogg's education through medical school. In  
341 1876 her husband prevailed upon the young doctor to  
342 become head of the Western Health Reform Institute—  
343 renamed the Battle Creek Sanitarium—which became a  
344 sort of laboratory for Kellogg's food inventions. At the  
345 sanitarium Kellogg developed into the most successful  
346 abdominal surgeon of his time. He attributed his suc-  
347 cess, in large measure, to putting patients on a vegetari-  
348 an diet before surgery, which often obviated the need for  
349 surgery.

350 In the kitchen of his wife, Ella, Kellogg and his broth-  
351 er, Will, discovered the cereal-flaking process that yield-  
352 ed Granose Flakes, the precursor of cornflakes—those  
353 golden flakes that gave rise to the modern breakfast cere-  
354 al industry and the uniquely American practice of eating  
355 cold cereal for breakfast. Kellogg was a Promethean  
356 inventor of an array of other food products that helped  
357 many Americans effect a smooth transition to a vegetar-  
358 ian diet. Among these foods was America's first meat  
359 analogue, Nuttose, which was made from flour, water,  
360 and steamed peanuts. Kellogg's other popular ersatz  
361 meats, such as Protose, Battle Creek Skallops, and Battle  
362 Creek Steaks, were made from varying combinations of  
363 peanuts and wheat gluten. Kellogg, in fact, claimed to be  
364 the inventor of peanut butter. Whether or not he actually  
365 concocted this goober paté is still a matter for conjecture,  
366 but there is no doubt that he was instrumental in its  
367 adoption as a vegetarian food all over the country.

368 Although Kellogg's primary emphasis was on the  
369 health aspects of a vegetarian diet, he was not unmindful  
370 of the ethical arguments. In perhaps his best-known  
371 book, *The Natural Diet of Man* (1923), he marshals com-  
372 pelling arguments in favor of adopting a meatless diet out  
373 of compassion for animals.

374 In an ironic turnabout, just as Kellogg had pirated the  
375 cereal-based coffee Somo and the ready-to-eat breakfast  
376 cereal Granula from James Caleb Jackson, a malingering  
377

378 patient at Kellogg's sanitarium, Charles W. Post was  
 379 accused by Kellogg of having pirated several of the san-  
 380 itarium's foods. It is thought that Post took three recipes  
 381 with him: Caramel Cereal Coffee, which he turned into  
 382 Postum; Kellogg's Cornflakes, which became Post  
 383 Toasties; and Kellogg's Malted Nuts, the basis for Grape  
 384 Nuts. Whether Post was guilty of this theft remains  
 385 unconfirmed, but he parlayed these foods into a person-  
 386 al fortune so vast that it enticed unscrupulous cereal  
 387 makers to imitate his methods. The result was that  
 388 America was soon being deluged with copycat krispies,  
 389 krumblied, toasties, and flakies with quaint-sounding  
 390 names like Vim Wheat Flakes, Rippled Wheat, Sugar  
 391 Smiles, Malt-Vita, Maple-Vita, Norka ("Akron" spelled  
 392 backward) Oats, and Trya-bit. The first of the cereal  
 393 kings to spend lavishly on advertising that made extrava-  
 394 gant health claims for his products, Post was also inno-  
 395 vative in being the first to put a premium inside each  
 396 cereal box to boost sales. In each box of Grape Nuts, for  
 397 instance, Post inserted a copy of his inspirational leaflet,  
 398 *The Road to Wellville*.

399 Unfortunately, Charles Post—who like Kellogg was an  
 400 Adventist but unlike Kellogg was not a vegetarian—took  
 401 a permanent detour on the road to Wellville. At the com-  
 402 paratively young age of sixty, plagued by a stomach ail-  
 403 ment, he ended his life with a hunting rifle. His rival,  
 404 Kellogg, died in his sleep at the ripe age of ninety-one.

405 Since 1939 Worthington Foods, an Adventist-run  
 406 company, has been supplying vegetarian Adventists with  
 407 meat alternatives that are based on the pioneering work  
 408 of John Harvey Kellogg. From its humble beginnings,  
 409 Worthington Foods has grown into the world's largest  
 410 manufacturer of meat substitutes and other health prod-  
 411 ucts. In an ironic turn of events, in 1999 Worthington  
 412 Foods was acquired by the Kellogg Company, a publicly  
 413 traded company that no longer has any affiliation with  
 414 Dr. Kellogg's family or with the Seventh-Day Adventists.

#### 415 **Modern American Vegetarianism**

416 Although Dr. Kellogg carried his vegetarian crusade into  
 417 the 1940s, during the early decades of the twentieth cen-  
 418 tury a triumvirate of self-appointed food authorities were  
 419 helping to change the way Americans viewed the meat on  
 420 their plates. The first of these was Upton Sinclair. A nov-  
 421 elist and social reformer, Sinclair became a food  
 422 reformer quite by accident. His novel, *The Jungle*  
 423 (1906), which he had intended to be a diatribe against  
 424  
 425

426 capitalism, was so vivid in its portrayal of the horrors of  
427 the meatpacking industry that it gave the country a case  
428 of national dyspepsia. It was influential in the passage of  
429 the Pure Food and Drug Act (1906), and one year after  
430 its publication, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
431 was formed (1907). Sinclair himself became a vegetari-  
432 an, albeit for only three years; however, there is no doubt  
433 that many Americans were stirred by his book to swear  
434 off meat eating altogether.

435 The next was Horace Fletcher. A corpulent American  
436 businessman, Fletcher lost weight by developing a sys-  
437 tem called Fletcherism, whereby each morsel of food was  
438 to be chewed from fifty to sixty times. When he found  
439 that meat offered the greatest resistance to being lique-  
440 fied through chewing, Horace stopped eating meat and  
441 recommended that earnest followers of his regimen do  
442 likewise. When Americans found that they could lose  
443 weight simply through vigorous mastication, Fletcherism  
444 swept the country. Dr. Kellogg even posted a big sign in  
445 the dining room of his sanitarium that urged his patients  
446 to “Fletcherize!” Americans continued to masticate their  
447 food well into the 1940s.

448 The third reformer, Bernarr Macfadden, was a rags-to-  
449 riches physical-culturist, turned publishing magnate and  
450 a charismatic public health figure. Macfadden published  
451 a plethora of popular magazines among them, *Physical*  
452 *Culture*, *True Romance*, *True Confessions*, *True Story*, and  
453 a sleazy but successful tabloid, the *New York Evening*  
454 *Graphic*. Amid the lurid articles on sensational murders  
455 and scandalous divorces, he would run pensive essays  
456 promoting a vegetarian lifestyle. As one of America’s  
457 richest young tycoons, he could have indulged his  
458 appetite on a Lucullan scale, but he lived chiefly on raw  
459 vegetables and fruit. (Later in life, he became a bit of a  
460 backslider and included some meat in his diet, but in his  
461 heyday, he lived mainly on raw vegetarian food.) On rare  
462 occasions when he fell ill, he cured himself through fast-  
463 ing. In 1902 he opened one of New York’s first vegetari-  
464 an restaurants, Physical Culture (named after his fitness  
465 magazine), where for a nickel one could dine on an  
466 entree like “Hamburger Steak,” which was made from  
467 nuts and vegetables. By 1911 twenty vegetarian Physical  
468 Culture restaurants had sprung up in Philadelphia,  
469 Chicago, and sundry other locations.

470 In 1936, Bernarr Macfadden ran for the presidency of  
471 the United States as a republican candidate, and even as  
472 an octogenarian continued to attract publicity (into the  
473

474 mid-1950s) with stunts like parachuting onto the  
475 grounds of his health hotel, the Macfadde–Deauville in  
476 Miami Beach, in order to exhibit his undiminished phys-  
477 ical vigor.

478 In 1927 America’s longest continuously running veg-  
479 etarian society was founded in Washington, D.C., by  
480 Milton Trenham, with strong Seventh-Day Adventist  
481 backing. The Vegetarian Society of the District of  
482 Columbia is the oldest vegetarian organization in either  
483 North America or South America.

484 Out of the social and cultural ferment of the late  
485 1960s arose America’s largest and most durable vegetar-  
486 ian intentional community. Established in 1971 and  
487 located in Summertown, Tennessee, it is called the Farm  
488 and is still flourishing three decades after its founding.  
489 One of its many cottage industries is the generically  
490 named Book Publishing Company—the largest and most  
491 successful publisher of vegetarian and vegan books in  
492 the world.

493 One of America’s most effective vegetarian organiza-  
494 tions is EarthSave. Founded in 1988 by Baskin &  
495 Robbins ice-cream heir, John Robbins, it advocates a  
496 plant-based diet and promotes awareness of the ecologi-  
497 cal destruction that results from the rearing of animals  
498 for food. There are forty EarthSave chapters throughout  
499 the United States.

500 In 1971 the landmark book *Diet for a Small Planet*  
501 helped put vegetarianism on the American map, as did  
502 the founding of the North American Vegetarian Society  
503 (1974), the monthly journal *Vegetarian Times* (1974), and  
504 the Vegetarian Resource Group (1981). Other books like  
505 *The Vegetarian Resource Book* (1983), *Diet for a New*  
506 *America* (1987), *Judaism and Vegetarianism* (1988),  
507 *Famous Vegetarians and Their Favorite Recipes* (1994),  
508 *Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs* (1996), *Vegan: The*  
509 *New Ethics of Eating* (1998), *Food for the Gods:*  
510 *Vegetarianism and the World’s Religions* (1998), and *Deep*  
511 *Vegetarianism* (1999) have also helped popularize vege-  
512 tarianism in America.

513

514

### Veganism

515 In 1944 in Leicester, England, Donald Watson and his  
516 wife, Dorothy, coined the word “vegan,” which they  
517 formed from the first three and the last two letters of  
518 “vegetarian.” With this new term the Watsons wanted to  
519 encompass the meaning of “vegetarian” imparted by the  
520 Pythagoreans and Buddhists: one who, for reasons of  
521

522 compassion, abstains from consuming all foods and other  
 523 products of animal origin. It took time for the word to  
 524 catch on in the United States, but now it has become  
 525 almost a competing term with “vegetarian.” To help win  
 526 recognition for the vegan concept in America, H. Jay  
 527 Dinshah started the American Vegan Society in 1960.  
 528 Mr. Dinshah’s wife, Freya, published the first ethical  
 529 vegetarian or vegan cookbook in the United States, *The*  
 530 *Vegan Kitchen* (1966), which remains a steady seller.

### 531 **Impact of Asian Religions**

532  
 533 From the late 1960s to the present the influence of Asian  
 534 religions has played a key role in orienting many  
 535 Americans toward a vegetarian lifestyle. One of the ear-  
 536 liest manifestations of this trend was macrobiotics, a  
 537 quasi-religious food-reform movement with dietary prin-  
 538 ciples based on a yin-yang dichotomy derived from  
 539 Taoism.

540 Indian religions, with their time-honored taboos  
 541 against harming animals, have been especially active in  
 542 persuading Americans to forswear meat eating. Notable  
 543 for their culinary prowess have been the Hare Krishnas  
 544 from the Vaishnava sect of Hinduism. There are Hare  
 545 Krishna restaurants and vegetarian food carts in every  
 546 major city in the United States. The Krishnas also have  
 547 produced the definitive book on Indian vegetarian cook-  
 548 ery, *Lord Krishna’s Cuisine* (1987), written by Yamuna  
 549 Devi (née Joan Campanella), the American secretary to  
 550 Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the Krishna move-  
 551 ment in America.

552 Yoga has also fomented the spread of vegetarianism in  
 553 America. The first precept of the classical yoga systems  
 554 is *ahimsa*—the same ethical imperative that has guided  
 555 the eating practices of Jains and Buddhists for thousands  
 556 of years. Serious students of yoga are taught, according  
 557 to this principle, that in order to make spiritual progress  
 558 they must refrain from eating animal flesh. Buddhism,  
 559 one of the fastest-growing religious denominations in  
 560 America, also has stimulated the growth of vegetarian-  
 561 ism. Buddhist monks hold the first precept, *ahimsa*, in  
 562 the highest veneration and are vegetarians on ethical  
 563 grounds.

564 The Zen Buddhist *roshi* (enlightened master) Philip  
 565 Kapleau founded America’s first vegetarian Zen center  
 566 in Rochester, New York, in 1966, and Buddhist temple  
 567 cuisine from China and Japan has furnished American  
 568 Buddhists with a wide array of mock meats made from  
 569

570 wheat gluten and soy that have found their way into such  
 571 popular American meat analogues as Smart Dogs (simu-  
 572 lated hot dogs made from tofu) and Barbecued Seitan  
 573 Slices (simulated cold cuts made from wheat gluten).  
 574 William Shurtleff, a Stanford-educated physicist who  
 575 became a Zen monk, and his wife, Akiko, wrote a series  
 576 of best-selling books—among them, *The Book of Tofu*,  
 577 *The Book of Tempeh*, and *The Book of Miso*—that helped  
 578 introduce soy foods such as tofu, tempeh, okara, and  
 579 miso to Americans in the 1970s and 1980s.

### 580 **Influence of Animal Rights**

581  
 582 Another significant force for dietary change in North  
 583 America has been the animal rights movement. To be  
 584 sure, individual activists, such as John Woolman; Henry  
 585 Bergh, founder of the Society for the Prevention of  
 586 Cruelty to Animals (1866); J. Howard Moore, author of  
 587 *The Universal Kinship* (1908); Curtis and Emarel  
 588 Freshel, founders of the Millennium Guild, a vegetarian  
 589 group; and Henry Spira have distinguished themselves  
 590 in this fight.

591 Animal Rights did not start to crystallize as a social  
 592 movement, however, until the 1980s, with the founding  
 593 of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals)  
 594 and FARM (Farm Animal Reform Movement), both in  
 595 1981. In 1984 FARM started an annual spring event, the  
 596 Great American Meatout, which is modeled after the  
 597 Great American Smokeout (an attempt to rid Americans  
 598 of their smoking habit). PETA, FARM, and other animal  
 599 rights organizations, along with such books as *Animal*  
 600 *Liberation* (1975), *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983), *An*  
 601 *Unnatural Order* (1993), *Judaism and Animal Rights:*  
 602 *Classical and Contemporary Responses* (1993),  
 603 *Slaughterhouse* (1997), *Rattling the Cages* (2000), and  
 604 *Dominion* (2002), have given enormous impetus to the  
 605 spread of ethical vegetarianism in the United States.

### 606 **Raw Food Movement**

607  
 608 Within recent years a new vegetarian dietary trend has  
 609 burst upon the scene. The raw food movement eschews  
 610 enzyme-depleted cooked foods in favor of high-enzyme  
 611 raw vegetables and fruits. It would be more accurate to  
 612 say that the trend started back in the 1840s with  
 613 Sylvester Graham, who recommended living on unfired  
 614 vegetables and fruits as the optimum diet. The raw food  
 615 movement was given its greatest public exposure in the  
 616 modern era by Bernarr Macfadden, who for the first four  
 617

618 decades of the twentieth century ran a successful pub-  
619 lishing empire while living ostentatiously on a raw vege-  
620 tarian diet.

621 Systematized by Herbert Shelton as Natural Hygiene  
622 in the 1920s and 1930s, the raw food movement sudden-  
623 ly blossomed into a full-blown social movement.  
624 Although America's first raw foods restaurant, the  
625 Eutropheon, opened in San Francisco in 1917, until the  
626 last years of the twentieth century raw food restaurants  
627 had been rather sparse on the ground. Numerous raw  
628 foods restaurants opened to critical acclaim in the early  
629 2000s in America's culinary capitals of New York,  
630 Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. By 2004 there  
631 were forty raw foods restaurants in the country, and their  
632 numbers were growing.

633 The only foodstuffs to be identified closely with the  
634 raw foods movement are sprouted grains, beans, seed  
635 and nut cheeses, and wheatgrass juice—all the legacy of  
636 Anne Wigmore. Drawing on the knowledge passed on to  
637 her by her grandmother, a village healer in her native  
638 Lithuania, Wigmore concocted wheatgrass juices and  
639 sprouted foods to feed her ailing patients at the  
640 Hippocrates Institutes, holistic raw food health centers  
641 that she opened throughout the United States.

642 Another immigrant to whom the raw foods movement  
643 owes much is Aris La Tham. A native of Panama, he is  
644 considered to be the father of gourmet ethical vegetarian  
645 raw foods cuisine in America. He debuted his raw food  
646 creations in 1979, when he started Sunfired Foods, a  
647 live-foods company in New York City. In the years since,  
648 he has trained thousands of raw food chefs and added  
649 innumerable gourmet raw food recipes to his repertoire.

#### 650 **A Paradigm Shift**

651 Famous vegetarians, such as the Nobel laureate writer  
652 Isaac Bashevis Singer; the entertainer Dick Gregory; the  
653 founder and chief executive officer of Apple Computer,  
654 Steve Jobs; the self-help guru Anthony Robbins; the  
655 techno-music star Moby (née Richard Melville, a  
656 descendant of the writer Herman Melville); and Paul  
657 McCartney and his late wife, Linda, have thrown their  
658 considerable support behind the vegetarian cause over  
659 the years. In fact, in the late 1990s Paul and Linda  
660 McCartney launched a successful line of frozen vegetar-  
661 ian entrees.  
662

663 In freezer cases across America, one can find a vast  
664 array of vegetarian entrees, from the sophisticated to the  
665

666 ordinary. Supermarkets are stocking more and more veg-  
 667 etarian food products, including soy milk and cheese;  
 668 rice milk; a line of frankfurters, cutlets, and patties made  
 669 from fungus; fake bacon, and soy hotdogs and burgers.  
 670 One can even purchase complete meals in a box: break-  
 671 fast burritos, vegan pizzas, vegan enchiladas, “chili non  
 672 carne,” mock-chicken potpie, “un-turkey” with giblet  
 673 gravy, and even mock-spareribs. Nondairy soy ice  
 674 creams, like Chunky Nut Madness and Mint Marble  
 675 Fudge, and rice milk ice creams, like Neapolitan,  
 676 Cappuccino, and Cocoa Marble Fudge, also abound.  
 677 Vegetarian restaurants in such cities as New York,  
 678 Seattle, and San Francisco continue to proliferate. All of  
 679 this suggests that the popular image of vegetarianism as  
 680 an eccentric, cranky, fringe movement has undergone a  
 681 paradigm shift. Among younger generations of  
 682 Americans, it is very much in vogue to be vegetarian, if  
 683 not vegan.

684 [See also Advertising; Boardinghouses; Cereal, Cold; Food  
 685 and Drug Administration; Graham, Sylvester; Health  
 686 Food; Kellogg, John Harvey; Nuts; Peanut Butter; Pure  
 687 Food and Drug Act; Sinclair, Upton; Soybeans; and  
 688 Vegetables

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