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Opposite: Vegans can get stuck into a cashew-based cheeseboard at Beetroot Sauvage in Edinburgh. Below: Black rice and roasted vegetables. Bottom: Vegan fare at Bali's Yoga Barn.



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Where to go when

When picking travel dates, you might find yourself balancing the best weather conditions and festival dates against the agricultural calendar. Here's an overview to help you decide how to plan your trip according to climates or your appetite.

JANUARY-MARCH

- It's best to scale Argentina's Andean peaks between December and February, during the country's summer months (p48).
- No matter when you visit Vietnam (*below*), it will be raining somewhere. Your best bet is to go in early spring if you want to visit the northern mountains (p60).
- India can be unbearably sticky during the summer monsoon. Try to plan your trip for winter, when it's also *chikoo* (sapodilla) fruit season (p92).
- It's beach weather down under in eastern Australia from January to March, so expect crowds of sun-worshippers (p152).



APRIL-JUNE

- Go to Japan (*below*) in April, when the island's spring bounty is harvested. Look for pickled plums, cherry-blossom *mochi* (sweet, sticky rice) and fresh bamboo-shoot rice (p72).
- You'll probably still need some cold-weather clothes to visit eastern Europe in early spring, but pre-Easter Lenten fasting in orthodox areas makes it the best time to find meat-, dairy- and egg-free foods (p52).
- The mild South African autumn is in April and May, which coincides with AfrikaBurn – the continent's version of Burning Man festival (p122).



JULY-SEPTEMBER

- Summer is the best time to go cloudberry, juniper, blackcurrant and lingonberry picking in Nordic countries, while also avoiding frigid temperatures (p76).
- Visit Brazil's Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetland, during dry season (July through September). Birdwatching is also best during these months (p108).
- Fully blooming cherry blossoms and the Vegan Vibes festival make New Zealand a great September destination (p118).
- Catch the last of surfing weather during dry season in Bali (*below*) in September, right after most of the tourists have left (p66).



OCTOBER-DECEMBER

- An excellent time for hiking (*opposite*), you'll also avoid the crowds by travelling to Taiwan in its shoulder season towards the end of the year (p56).
- Jamaica (*below*) is mild in November and December, and local okra, callaloo and chocho crops are still available (p136).
- It's still beach weather in Israel's autumn season, when prices are lower and persimmons and pomelos flood the markets (p96).
- The 40 days leading up to Christmas (7 January in the Ethiopian calendar) are meatless for members of the Ethiopian Orthodox church (p52).



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Local vegan communities

A growling tummy is the worst soundtrack for your adventure away from home. Food may or may not be the focus of your trip, but to make sure you're adequately fuelled to maximise your travel time, ask a local.

BEFORE YOU GO

Set yourself up for gastronomic success before your trip by connecting with local vegan communities online. Google vegan bloggers who are from your travel destination, since plant-based foods are literally their bread and (non-dairy) butter. If your search isn't turning up any bloggers, look for vegetarian or vegan societies – there may even be events or festivals happening during your travel dates.

Lots of locations, including Berlin, Cambodia and South Africa, have designated vegan Facebook groups. Search for the country or city you'll be staying in, plus 'vegan'. Vegan Travel is a near 30,000-strong Facebook group of plant-based food lovers who like to eat well abroad, and it's a great resource for finding people living in your destination (or who have recently travelled there).

Couchsurfing (www.couchsurfing.com) and Meetup (www.meetup.com) are also good ways to get some face time with local vegans. Check whether any Couchsurfing hosts are vegan (regardless of whether you choose to crash on their couch), or if any vegan Meetup events are happening while you're in town.

And if you're travelling solo, check Veg Travel Buddies (www.vegtravelbuddies.com) to see if any other vegans have similar travel plans and want to occasionally share a table.



You'll find hubs of veganism across the globe, from food trucks on America's East Coast (left) to Berlin's Veganes Sommerfest (below left) and culinary tours in Iran (below).

WHEN YOU'RE THERE

It's usually a major faux pas to ask your waiter where best to enjoy your next meal. As a vegan traveller? Go for it! At most destinations, all you need to do to ensure a satisfying succession of meals is identify one recommended vegan restaurant in advance and head there on your first day. The staff are often vegans themselves, or at least plugged in to the plant-based scene. As a tourist, don't be shy about asking a restaurant to kindly refer you to their competition – let your waiter or waitress, or the diners sitting at the next table, tell you where else they like to eat vegan-friendly meals in town.



Place your order for a dish that seems vegan. Then make extra sure there are no unwanted ingredients or garnishes:

JAPAN

le katsubushi: Japanese for 'no dried bonito flakes', a kind of preserved fish commonly used as a condiment or for flavour in *dashi* broth.

VIETNAM

Không nước mắm: Vietnamese for 'no fish sauce', a condiment added to many dishes, even when no other animal-derived ingredients are included.

SPAIN

Sin jamón: Spanish for 'no ham', which is scattered as a topping on soups and salads.

GERMANY

Nein speck: German for 'no bacon', which is often diced and included in salads, noodles and other seemingly vegan dishes.

INDIA

Nahin ghee: Hindi for 'no ghee', a clarified butter used in many Indian dishes that otherwise appear wholly plant-based.



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Ask for the closest cultural equivalent to a vegan diet, in terms locals will understand:

JAMAICA

Ital: the Jamaican Rastafarian term for mostly plant-based, unprocessed foods.

ETHIOPIA

Yetsom beyaynetu: the Amharic name for a platter of fasting-friendly Ethiopian plant-based foods, available in the country roughly 200 days a year.

RUSSIA

Postno-ye menyu: the Lenten menus many Russian restaurants offer in the run-up to Easter, featuring vegan foods (though they may include some seafood).

ISRAEL

Parve: a Hebrew term describing foods that have neither dairy nor milk (but may contain fish or eggs), in accordance with Jewish kosher laws.

CHINA

Wo chī quán sù: how to explain in Chinese that you follow a Buddhist vegan diet (this may result in onion and garlic being omitted, too, so do specify).



TOP 20 VEGAN-FRIENDLY CITIES

So you want a no-hassle city break? A relaxing trip where you won't be scrambling for vegan-friendly choices? Don't stress, these 20 cities are more than ready for you.



1 BERLIN, GERMANY

Frequently cited as the vegan capital of the world, Berlin's secret comes down to its thriving population of vegans: at least 80,000 and growing rapidly. This is a city where you'll find not just vegan restaurants but businesses thinking creatively about your everyday needs: animal-free butchers, vegan hotels, vegan bars and Schivelbeiner Strasse, a 'vegan avenue' featuring cruelty-free clothing stores.

2 LONDON, UK

There seem to be vegan options within easy range of every Tube stop in London: fancy Ethiopian, Caribbean, Asian or Japanese vegan cuisine? What about the world's first vegan chicken shop? Even Pizza Hut offers vegan cheese at its London outlets.



3 NEW YORK CITY, USA

Whether you're looking for vegan restaurant chains, fine dining, burgers, crepes or doughnuts, New York City wholeheartedly embraces your needs. Though the Upper West Side may have limited choices, other neighbourhoods have the city's go-get-'em attitude. Where else would you find a 'vegetable slaughterhouse'? Or a cafe with vegan sleeping pods for when you need a nap?

4 TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

Surprised to see Tel Aviv in the top five? Don't be, Israelis have the highest vegan population per capita in the world. Plant-based is a way of life here, so vegans are guaranteed to eat really well, with lots of locally grown produce. Think beyond the hummus and falafels and prepare to be wowed by recent innovations in vegan cuisine.

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5 PORTLAND, OREGON, USA

The vegan dedication is strong in Portland. It has an entire mall that's vegan, hosts a vegan summer camp, sells vegan furniture, there's a vegan punk club, a critically acclaimed fine dining vegan restaurant, even a vegan strip club... you get the picture. Portland also claims to have the world's first all-vegan barbecue.

6 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA

The home of many vegan celebrities (Natalie Portman and Liam Hemsworth, among others), LA not only caters to the cool crowd but respects all those who consider the body a temple. If Los Angelenos aren't following a plant-friendly lifestyle, then they're certainly familiar with it. Musician Moby has a vegan restaurant here, with all profits going to animal rights organisations.

7 UBUD, BALI, INDONESIA

With no shortage of tofu and tempeh on menus, Bali is an easy choice for vegans, but Ubud is your ground zero. As the island's spiritual and cultural nexus, Ubud is all about feeding your soul. There are plentiful raw food options featuring fresh, local ingredients, not to mention a lot of vegan retreats in glorious tropical locations.

8 WARSAW, POLAND

A decade ago Warsaw held little appeal for vegans, but it's making up for lost time with close to 50 exclusively vegan restaurants. Enjoy Mexican fast food, sushi, Italian eateries, ice cream, burgers, French bakeries, Polish comfort food and more.



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9 TORONTO, CANADA

With its very own vegan neighbourhood, nicknamed Vegandale – a dedicated block of vegan food, goods and services with its own touring festival (see p44) – Toronto should definitely be on your travel bucket list. More than half of Canadians, especially those aged under 35, regularly opt for vegan meat alternatives, and Toronto chefs are catering for plant-centric eating like never before.

10 MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Australia's capital of cuisine always has its finger on the pulse, so the rise of vegan dining here is unsurprising. In fact, it's one of the fastest-growing vegan markets in the world: good news for travellers. You'll find vegan choices everywhere, but the popular inner-city suburb of Fitzroy is Melbourne's vegan heartland, thanks to more than 100 vegan-friendly options.

TOP 10 VEGAN FESTIVALS

Imagine the fun of a festival in a new destination but with the added comfort of knowing you'll be among a supportive community of vegans. Wonder no more.

1. VEGANES SOMMERFEST, BERLIN, GERMANY

You want music, games, athletics and a fashion show as well as vegan food? Get yourself to Europe's biggest vegan festival in Berlin's Alexanderplatz in August. Best of all, it's free! There's also a tombola to spin on the way out, so you can leave with a gift from one of the sponsors. www.vegan-sommerfest-berlin.de/en

2. VEGANDALE, USA & CANADA (VARIOUS LOCATIONS)

The vegans of Chicago, Miami, Toronto, New York and Houston eagerly await

this touring food and drink festival. The name stems from a dedicated vegan city block in Toronto (see p37). Expect 100% vegan food, craft brews, wine, spirits and clothing. www.vegandalefest.com

3. VEGGIEWORLD, EUROPE (VARIOUS LOCATIONS)

Europe's oldest vegan trade fair now exhibits in 14 cities, including Paris, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Munich, Brussels and Zurich. You'll find vegan products from hundreds of exhibitors, cooking demonstrations, talks, yoga classes and film previews.

Mingle with fellow vegans at these two-day events. www.veggieworld.de

4. VEGFEST, LONDON & BRIGHTON, UK

Plump for London (October) or Brighton (March, though it's taking a break in 2020). Brighton's VegFest has been going since 2009 but London's attracts the biggest crowds (14,500 people in 2018). All stalls, marketing and speakers are vegan, and you can expect tastings, cookery demos, documentaries, even comedy. www.vegfest.co.uk

5. VEGAN STREET FAIR, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA

Los Angelenos have a choice of two Vegan Street Fairs. First there's the free,

daytime, family-friendly street fair in March with its carnival-like atmosphere. Then there's the paid-entry, more intimate, night-time fair for those aged 21 and over in late August/early September. Both are held across two days/nights. www.veganstreetfair.com

6. VEGAN GOURMET FESTIVAL, NAGOYA, KYOTO & TOKYO, JAPAN

Launched in Nagoya and later expanding into Kyoto and Tokyo, this free festival is the place for gluten-free *ganmodoki* (fried tofu fritter with veg) burgers, vegan *takoyaki* (usually diced octopus balls but here made from *konnyaku*, a gelatinous-like potato), hemp beer and more. www.vegefes.com

7. VEGAN CAMP-OUT, UK

Join vegans from more than 30 countries at the world's largest camping festival in late August and early September. Going strong since 2016 (the location keeps changing to keep pace with demand), its entertainment includes music, talks, workshops, yoga and DJs. Solo travellers are welcome to join the Facebook group to make new mates beforehand. www.vegancampout.co.uk

8. HONG KONG VEG FEST

The people of Hong Kong celebrate

all things vegan at this one-day free carnival in October. Run by volunteers, it features more than 70 outlets offering vegan products, health checks, cooking demonstrations, cruelty-free clothing and more. There's even an animal costume stall and a place that rents reusable containers. www.vegfest.hk

9. VEGAN FASHION WEEK, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA

Debuting in February 2019 at the Los Angeles Natural History Museum, this four-day fashion festival founded by animal rights activist Emmanuelle Rienda was such a hit that designer applications immediately followed for the October 2019 runway show. Products are 100% vegan and, though the event is currently VIP-invitation only, it's worth checking out if you're a designer or fashion follower. www.veganfashionweek.org

10. AUCKLAND VEGAN FOOD FESTIVAL, NEW ZEALAND

This new festival, held in February, is a gathering of vegan food trucks, aka paradise for street-food lovers. With an all-ages, family-friendly crowd, live entertainment, a marketplace and warm, ethically minded hospitality, it's one to watch. www.aucklandfoodtruckcollective.com/vegan-food-festival

