

# CAN YOU BE VEGETARIAN AND PRIMAL?

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**Categories:** [Primal Indian food](#), [Primal Vegetarians](#), [Real food](#)

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If you read various literature on primal living, you'd think the main ingredient in order to lead the lifestyle to perfection is red meat and the likes.

The picture of a caveman hunting down his pray and eating it is the most vividly painted of them all. But for all my friends and readers who are vegetarian (as is very common amongst us in India) there are a few ways to adhere to paleo principles while being primarily vegetarian.

To the loyalists of the lifestyle, this seems completely against everything paleo. But the fact remains that there are those amongst us who want to be on their way to a healthier life but cannot wrap their heads around eating meat due to religious or sentimental reasons, or maybe merely because they've never been accustomed to eating meat growing up in [vegetarian households](#). Another thing to remember while talking about being paleo is that there is nothing set in stone (pun intended). We know a few things about Paleolithic times yes, but not everything. For example there may have been entire populations who didn't have access to meat but ate more fish, or entire populations who ate vegetarian because foraging was easier than finding game where they lived. Basically they ate what they could lay their hands on without worrying whether they ate enough proteins, fat, or carbs.

Here are a few things we can summarize with the little knowledge that we have, through common sense: They did not eat processed, packaged food. They ate fats found in nature without giving two hoots about cholesterol.

They ate foods in their natural state (without chemically altering them).

They did not eat too much sugar (hidden or otherwise).

They did not work out only particular body parts, but did useful functional movements.

They moved fast.

They moved slowly.

They moved.

They slept well. They may or may not have eaten primarily meat. Some of them yes, and some of them no.

Yet the paleo pandits would have you believe that it's impossible on a vegetarian diet. But [eating real food](#) can benefit everyone, not only those who devour his or her bacon. The kind of changes it makes to your body, whether you're vegetarian or not makes it all worthwhile.

The major drawback in embarking on this journey as a vegetarian is not that you may not get the necessary nutrients (you can), but that it cuts down on your food options by that much more. So technically you need to have twice the will.

I did it for [9 months](#). I was primal and 90% vegetarian throughout most of my pregnancy. I ate real food, no grains, and vegetarian fare because I had a horrible aversion to meat throughout pregnancy. Even the smell made me throw up. It was amazing though, no water retention, no swelling, great immunity, no weight gain (except the belly), and all in all super levels of energy till the last day.

In most of our houses in India, a lot of people eat vegetarian food on a daily basis and non-vegetarian is only cooked on certain days of the week. My meals are mostly vegetarian but I do eat

meat when I can (which may be about 4 meals a week).

**Also, when you eat Indian food, most people eat a massive helping of the chapati and rice and meager portions of veggies. Just by changing this around by taking huge portions of veggies (cooked in good oils) and a tiny tiny helping of rice, you can bring your self to consume actual food and not empty calories, that fill you up for a short while and then have you looking for more!**

I feel one of the most important things I've done since going Primal 3 years ago is altered my mindset on what food really is. **I turn up my nose at processed crap and pay attention to the ingredients. If they look like gibberish on the package, I don't eat it. I've also shunned grains. I've embraced good fats and when I eat a meal if I feel it's not nutritious, it's not a meal.** These are probably the biggest steps when it comes to food. (The exercise will be a whole different post and it does not matter whether you're vegetarian or not).

**If the most important thing is to seek real nutrition in everything you eat, then how does it matter whether you're vegetarian or not?**

Here are ideas for food for a vegetarian.

**Breakfast options:** Almond flour pancakes (Almond flour - almonds blended in a mixer to form a flour like consistency- 2 eggs, red pumpkin or sweet potatoes or any veggies thrown in).

Two eggs with paleo bread. Fruits, coffee ,or tea.

Yoghurt smoothies with nuts/ avocado/ berries.

Buttermilk or a bowl of yoghurt with nuts.

**Lunch.** A huge salad with all sorts of leaves, veggies, nuts and [salad dressing](#).

Grilled / pan fried veggies with *paneer*.

Veggies cooked any Indian style with olive oil/coconut oil.

**Evening.** Cheese (make sure you buy a [good quality](#) cheese and not a heavily processed one).

Yogurt with nuts and raw honey.

A spoonful (or two) of coconut oil / coconut butter.

Coconut water.

Smoothies, fruits, tea/ coffee.

**Dinner.** Soups.

Grilled veggies with herbs.

Stir fried veggies with *paneer*.

*Paneer* makhanwala or the likes with white rice/ brown rice (conscious food at Natures's basket) / quinoa.

Primal hot chocolate (coconut milk, cocoa, honey)

**Supplements** : Protein shakes, especially if you work out, vitamin D, iron.

**Dairy:** it's important to eat a whole lot of full fat yoghurt, ghee, butter, cheese, and paneer, especially for vegetarians.

**Fats:** Make sure all the veggies are cooked/ sautéed in natural fats: butter, olive oil, coconut oil, or

ghee. Dairy fats are important too so that you feel full and satisfied and not peckish all the time. More than anything, it's important to eat lots of wholesome nutritious food that fills you up and satiates you. Lots of varied veggies in all different colours do the trick along with lots of dairy fat and protein. In this way you won't feel the need to snack all the time and your craving for junk diminishes. Eating this way – real food, no grain – is still a far better way to live life, which will make you feel more energetic, and less bloated.

I'm no nutritionist, but since I've discovered this lifestyle, it's made such a difference to my energy levels, immunity, and almost every aspect of my health. I've healed my body eating and living this way. And even being primal and vegetarian is something that I know a thing or two about and the benefits are there for all to see.

Again, the important thing here is to keep things simple. One nutrient dense dish per meal is enough. And if you do it right you maybe able to happily skip a meal now and then just for fun.

Are you vegetarian and toying with the idea of going primal? Let me know what you think in the comments. Thanks for reading.

Also read : The South Asian Health Solution by Dr Ronesh Sinha (link on left side panel)

