

Embracing Veganuary

Article by Elisabeth Maxwell

For many people, January can signify a fresh start. As the holiday decorations come down, people often look for ways to reset, make resolutions, and live more consciously in the new year. For the past decade, one movement has captured this spirit of renewal: **Veganuary**.

Since its inception in the United Kingdom in 2014, **Veganuary** has exploded from a small initiative into a global phenomenon. The premise is straightforward: the non-

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profit organization challenges participants worldwide to adopt a vegan lifestyle for the first 31 days of the year. What began with a few thousand pioneers has grown into a massive movement, with millions of people from over 228 countries having officially signed up to take part since it launched.

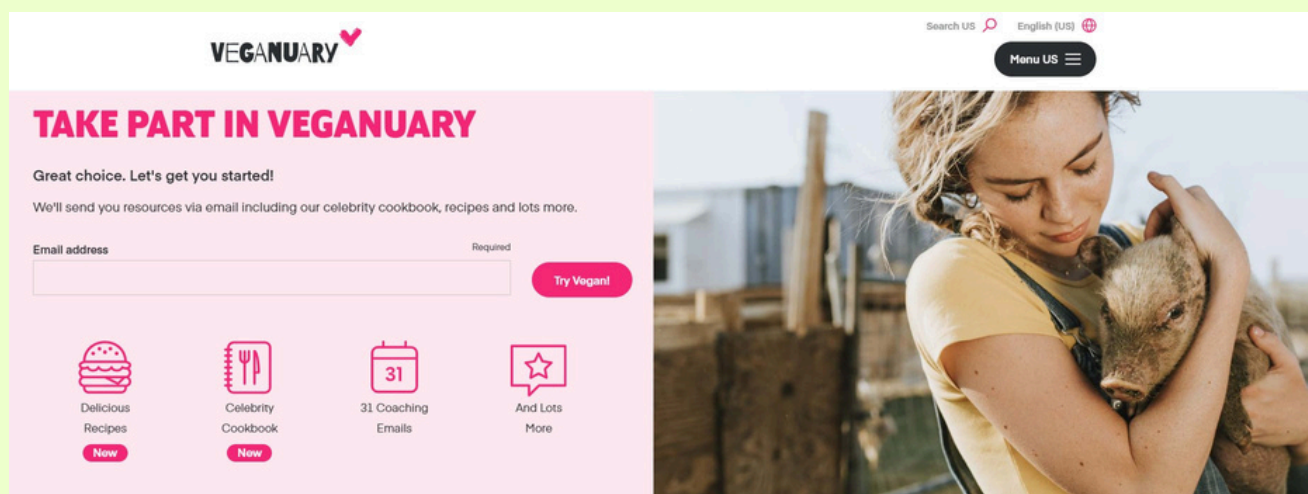
The Purpose and the Tools for Success

The core purpose of **Veganuary** is to inspire and support people in trying a plant-based diet, driving corporate change, and creating a global movement for a world without animal farming. It isn't meant to be a test of willpower or an exercise in deprivation; rather, it is an invitation for exploration.

To ensure participants succeed, the organization provides immense support. The campaign's official website acts as the central hub for resources. By signing up for free, participants receive daily coaching emails, access to hundreds of delicious recipes, and easy-to-follow meal plans. There is even a free celebrity cookbook sent to participants in a pdf format. This support structure takes the guesswork out of the transition, making it accessible even for those who have never cooked a tofu block in their lives.

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The screenshot shows the Veganuary website homepage. At the top, the Veganuary logo is on the left, and navigation links (Home, Blog, Recipes, Eating Guides, Get Involved, About) are in the center. On the right, there are links for Search US, English (US), and buttons for Donate and Try Vegan. The main heading reads "JOIN THE NEW YEAR'S REVOLUTION". Below this, a paragraph states: "Veganuary has inspired and supported millions of people to try vegan since 2014 – with participants from almost every country in the world. We have worked with businesses to drive up vegan options in shops and restaurants, and have made veganism more visible and accessible through our work with national and international media." To the right of the text is a smiling woman with curly hair, wearing a pink headband and a white t-shirt with a large pink heart. Below the text, there are four circular icons representing different resources: Delicious Recipes, Celebrity Cookbook, 31 Coaching Emails, and And Lots More. Each icon has a "Now" button below it. At the bottom, there are two large buttons: "Join In" and "Discover Our Recipes".



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Why Take the Challenge?

People are drawn to **Veganuary** for a variety of reasons, but they generally fall into three main categories: personal health, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability.

For many, the primary driver is a desire to feel better physically. A well-planned vegan diet, rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, and whole grains, is often lower in saturated fat and cholesterol than standard Western diets. Participants frequently report feeling lighter, experiencing better digestion, having clearer skin, and enjoying increased energy levels after just a few weeks. According to **Veganuary's** post-campaign surveys, consistently over half of those who complete the month report noticeable improvements in their overall health. It is viewed by many as a vital opportunity to reset their bodies and potentially lower the risk of chronic issues like type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Beyond self-interest, the ethical and environmental arguments are powerful motivators. For animal lovers, participating means opting out of industrial factory farming and sparing countless lives. Environmentally, the impact of food choices is undeniable. Animal agriculture is a leading contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and water scarcity. Shifting to plant-based eating is one of the most effective ways an individual can reduce their carbon footprint and conserve water and land resources.

A Month of Discovery

Ultimately, **Veganuary** is a low stakes experiment with high potential rewards. It doesn't demand a lifetime commitment; it asks only for 31 days. Reportedly 98% of participants would recommend **Veganuary** to a friend. It is a chance to discover

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MOROCCAN-SPICED CHICKPEA STEW

Recipe courtesy of Joy Bauer
(<https://joybauer.com/healthy-recipes/moroccan-spiced-chickpea-stew/>)

Yummy, affordable, healthy, easy to prepare. Love the use of the aquafaba and chickpeas blended to make stew creamy. Great with pita bread or brown basmati rice. For extra nutrition, put a handful of chopped leafy greens in the bottom of your bowl and then ladle the stew on top. So delicious! The first time I made it I followed recipe exactly, and omitted optional cayenne. The second time I upped the spices as seen below, and added the cayenne. Even more delicious!

--Debby Coulthard

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons olive oil (use water or broth instead of oil)
1 medium yellow onion, diced (~1 ½ cups)
1 teaspoon kosher salt
4 garlic cloves, mined (or 1 teaspoon garlic powder)
1 tablespoon tomato paste



Photo by Debby Coulthard

INGREDIENTS (CONTINUED)

2 teaspoons ground cumin (For all four spices, I used 1 ½ times the amount.)
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground coriander
3 14-ounce cans chickpeas; 1 drained and 2 with liquid
1 14-ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
½ cup chopped fresh parsley or cilantro (I used ~ ¾ cup)
Optional: ¼ teaspoon cayenne for a kick (This gives a mild nice kick)
Optional: 1 teaspoon lemon zest for brightness (I used about 1 tablespoon)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large, wide skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the diced onion and salt, and sauté for about 6 minutes, until soft and lightly caramelized.
2. Reduce the heat to medium-low, and stir in the garlic, tomato paste, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, and coriander. Cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly to avoid burning. The mixture will be thick and deeply aromatic.
3. Add the drained can of chickpeas and the fire-roasted diced tomatoes with their juices. Stir everything together and let it simmer for 5 minutes to blend the flavors.
4. While the stew simmers, add the remaining two cans of chickpeas with their liquid (aka aquafaba) into a blender and process until smooth and creamy. If your blender is small, do this in two batches.
5. Pour the blended chickpeas into the skillet and raise the heat to medium-high. Stir everything together to incorporate the pureed chickpea mixture. Once you reach a gentle boil, cover with a lid, reduce heat and simmer for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until it is piping hot. Remove lid, stir in the herbs, along with optional lemon zest (and cayenne for heat). Season with additional salt and pepper to taste.

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new foods, align your daily actions with your values concerning animals and the planet, and potentially feel healthier than you have in years.

Veganuary features participants from almost every country in the world. The organization has worked with businesses to drive up vegan options in shops and restaurants, and has made veganism more visible and accessible.

With the wealth of resources available at **Veganuary**, giving vegan living a try has never been easier. Find out more at: <https://veganuary.com/en-us/>.

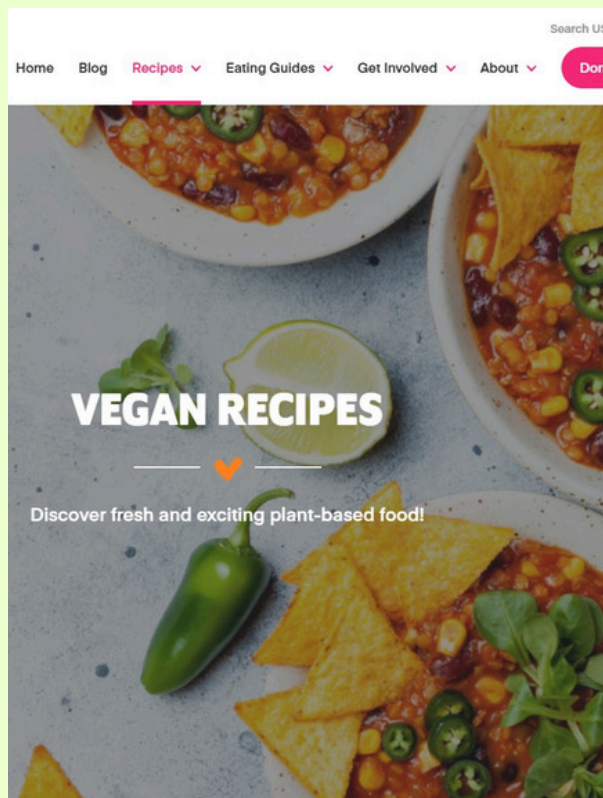
Note

It's worth noting that **Veganuary** is about supporting people to move to a vegan way of eating. The recipes on the site may not all be Whole Food Plant Based (WFPB) (low in fat, salt, sugar, etc.)

If WFPB eating is your goal, some recipes may need to be modified, and all processed foods should be assessed for their fat, salt, and sugar content.

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- Elisabeth Maxwell



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