

The Happy Herbivore



GUIDE TO

Plant-Based Living

LINDSAY S. NIXON

THE

Happy Herbivore
GUIDE TO
Plant-Based
Living

**Other books in Lindsay S. Nixon's
Happy Herbivore Series**

The Happy Herbivore Cookbook

Everyday Happy Herbivore

Happy Herbivore Abroad

Happy Herbivore Light & Lean

Coming Soon:

Happy Herbivore Holidays & Gatherings

**THE
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Lindsay S. Nixon



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Send feedback to feedback@benbellabooks.com

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To my parents, Richard and Lenore Shay, I love you.

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A Word from Lindsay

After writing five cookbooks, I looked around to see what I'd left uncovered. I'd tackled comfort foods with *The Happy Herbivore Cookbook*, fast "weeknight" recipes with *Everyday Happy Herbivore*, internationally inspired recipes with *Happy Herbivore Abroad*, low-calorie recipes (complete with workout plans) in *Happy Herbivore Light & Lean*, and recipes for holidays and every occasion in *Happy Herbivore Holidays and Gatherings* (November 2014). What was left? I'd covered it all, hadn't I?

The answer finally came to me and it couldn't have been more obvious: Day in and day out my fans (called "Herbies") were sending me dozens of questions via e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, etc. I also kept hearing the same questions over and over, and couldn't figure out why. Then it hit me. My cookbooks weren't answering the most basic question: how to *live* the happy herbivore lifestyle I was encouraging.

Sure, I'd created recipes for how to cook and eat healthy at home, but this isn't a diet, it's a *lifestyle*, and it extends far beyond what you're cooking next.

What do you do in social situations outside of the home, for example? At restaurants? Potluck? Weddings? When you're camping? What about traveling and vacation? How do you deal with negativity and naysayers? When and how do you talk to your family and friends about your new way of life? And what dishes can you make that even your most skeptical and carnivorous friends will enjoy?

I realized I had taught you how to cook but not how to *live*.

So with this book I decided to tackle these topics and create a "Herbie handbook," a practical guide to transforming your life through plant-based eating. You've got questions and I'm going to answer them! *Viva herbivore!*

Getting Started on Your Plant-Based Journey

“We must get away from the ‘diet’ mentality that promotes heroic and unsustainable spurts of healthy eating. Instead of ‘dieting’ we must change our lifestyle to include a diet that promotes health.¹”

—Dr. T. Colin Campbell, author of *The China Study*

Make a Commitment

Don’t go on a diet. *Change* your diet. From my own personal experience, as well as my experience working with hundreds of clients, I can attest that there has to be a serious commitment to see real, lasting results. Make a lifelong commitment to thriving. Choose yourself. Choose yourself over convenience. Choose yourself over peer pressure. Choose yourself over the ease, familiarity, and comfort of deep-rooted, bad habits. Choose to believe that you are not a helpless victim. Appreciate and understand that you can vote for health with every bite (that fork is mighty powerful!) and that this year can be your best yet!

By the end of this book you’ll be well on your way—off on your own marvelous plant-based journey. Because it *is* a journey. (More on that soon!)

Just Begin

Nike got it right: Just do it. Don’t overthink it. Just do it! Make the next thing you eat, whether it’s a snack or a meal, a plant food. Don’t wait for the perfect moment or a surge of inspiration—just do it. You don’t need to get your ducks in a row. You don’t need to finish eating what’s in the freezer (throw it away or gift it to a friend—your health is a greater investment). You don’t need to do *anything* else. You just need to start eating plants. Today is your day! With each baby step you build momentum. Fuel that healthy fire!

Shopping List

BREADS & DRY GOODS

- brown rice
- couscous
- lentils
- quinoa
- red lentils
- yellow split peas

CANNED GOODS

- black beans
- chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- coconut milk (lite)
- green chilies (4 oz)

kidney beans

pineapple (crushed, diced)

pumpkin (pure, *not* pumpkin pie filling)

refried beans (vegetarian)

tomato paste

tomato sauce

tomatoes (diced)

white beans (e.g., navy beans, cannellini beans, butter beans)

CONDIMENTS & DRESSINGS

apple cider vinegar

balsamic vinaigrette (fat-free; optional)

barbecue sauce

Dijon mustard

hot sauce (e.g., Cholula, Tabasco)

hot sauce (Asian; e.g., Sriracha)

hummus (optional)

ketchup

miso (yellow or white, *not* brown)

pineapple salsa

salsa (regular)

soy sauce (low sodium)*

sweet red chili sauce

Worcestershire sauce (vegan; optional)

yellow mustard

SOY & NONDAIRY

nondairy milk (e.g., soy, rice, almond)

tempeh

tofu (firm and extra-firm)

yogurt (vegan; plain and flavored)

FRESH PRODUCE

apples

avocado (optional)

baby spinach

bananas

basil

bell peppers

blueberries (or frozen)

broccoli (or frozen)

cabbage

carrots

celery

cilantro (optional)

cucumber

garlic cloves

ginger root

grapes

green onions

greens (e.g., kale, collard greens, spinach)

jalapeño

kale

lemons

lettuce

limes

mango

mint

mushrooms

onions (red and yellow)

oranges

oregano

potatoes

spaghetti squash

strawberries (or frozen)

sweet potatoes

thyme

tomatoes

zucchini

FREEZER

corn

edamame

fruit (e.g., blueberries)

greens (e.g., spinach)

mixed vegetables

peas

pineapple chunks

stir-fry vegetables

PANTRY

almond extract
apple cider vinegar
applesauce (unsweetened)
artichoke hearts
balsamic vinegar
black olives
brown rice vinegar
dates
green olives
kalmata olives
liquid smoke
macaroni
noodles (whole-grain; e.g., buckwheat)
nuts (optional)
oats (instant and rolled)
pizza sauce or marinara sauce (optional)
pure maple syrup
raisins
roasted red peppers (in water, *not* oil)
smooth peanut butter
tofu (soft, shelf-stable; e.g., Mori-Nu)
vegetable broth (low sodium)

SPICES & DRY HERBS

allspice
bay leaves
black pepper
black salt
cayenne pepper
chili powder
chipotle powder
curry powder (mild)
dried oregano
garam masala
garlic powder (granulated)
ground cinnamon

ground coriander

ground cumin

ground ginger

ground nutmeg

Italian seasoning

nutritional yeast

onion flakes

onion powder (granulated)

paprika (regular and smoked)

poultry seasoning (granulated, *not* powdered)

pumpkin pie spice

red pepper flakes

rubbed sage (*not* powdered)

salt

taco seasoning (packet)

Thai green curry paste (jar)

Thai red curry paste (jar)

turmeric

BAKING

agave nectar (optional)

baking powder

baking soda

banana extract (optional)

brown sugar

chocolate chips (vegan)

chocolate extract (optional)

confectioner's sugar

cornmeal

cornstarch or arrowroot

mint or peppermint extract

molasses (*not* blackstrap)

pure maple syrup

raw sugar

unsweetened cocoa

vanilla extract

vital wheat gluten*

white whole-wheat flour

*GLUTEN-FREE SUBSTITUTES

gluten-free all-purpose flour blend

Orgran's Gluten Free Gluten Substitute

gluten-free tamari

*SOY-FREE SUBSTITUTES

chickpea miso

coconut aminos

Why Choose a Plant-Based Diet?

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.

—Seneca

What Is a Plant-Based Diet?

Before we dive in, let's first address what a plant-based diet is (and what it's not). As the name suggests, a plant-based diet is focused around plant foods: fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds—and zero animal products. That means no meat, fish, butter, milk, eggs, cheese, gelatin, or other animal by-products.

Due to the lack of animal products, some people assume plant-based is the same thing as vegan or vegetarian, but that's not necessarily true. Depending on the context, the difference between the two may be subtle or vast.

Vegans (n.) not only eschew animal products from their plates but also from their entire lives. For example, vegans (n.) don't wear leather, fur, wool, or silk, or use products tested on animals due to their ethical beliefs. For this reason, a person who follows a plant-based diet is not necessarily a vegan (n.).

On the other hand, when using the term vegan to describe *something* rather than *someone*, I think of it as meaning there is an absence of animal products.

"Plant-based," however, is used to describe something that is not only free of animal ingredients but also made from only whole, unprocessed plant foods. While a plant-based meal would technically qualify as a vegan (adj.) meal, a food that is vegan may not be plant-based. For example, while potato chips, candy, soda pop, soy cheese, and Oreos are vegan (adj.), they are not considered plant-based. See the difference?

Benefits of a Plant-Based Diet for Chronic Disease

"The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison."

—Ann Wigmore

Year after year, we hear that heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, obesity, cancer, and other chronic illnesses are on the rise, but no one—not even the very health-care organizations dedicated to fighting or curing these illnesses—wants to point a finger at the Standard American Diet. Sure, one or two clear villains, like hydrogenated oils and saturated fats, are singled out, and we're told to cut back on this or that, eat more vegetables, and get more exercise, yet here we are, not only failing to improve but sliding further downhill. In just twenty years, the United States went from not having *one* state with 20 percent obesity to not having one state that's *not* 20 percent obese, meaning the population of *every single state* is now at least 20 percent obese. Even scarier, the current risk of being diagnosed with cancer for women is one in three. For men, one in two!²

Most of us think our health is out of our control because we're victims of our genetics, and the organizations say little to make us feel otherwise. You hear almost nothing about prevention, except for costly medical prescreening exams that don't really *prevent* as much as identify problems earlier.

We also hear little about treatment that doesn't involve surgical intervention or medications, or treatments that actually *treat*—and *reverse*—the underlying problems, not just the symptoms, and that do so without awful side effects.

And, most of what we hear about “cures” is only that the medical field is still racing to find one.

The truth is, we aren't hopeless victims to our genetics. We're victims of the Standard American Diet.

“Genes load the gun, but lifestyle pulls the trigger.”

—Dr. Caldwell B. Esselstyn, Jr.

Heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, most cancers, and a laundry list of other chronic illness can usually be prevented, and reversed, through diet.

“Let food be thy medicine and let medicine be thy food.”

—Hippocrates

The populations of the world with the healthiest and longest-living people follow diets that are primarily plant-based: rich in beans, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, with zero processed foods, near-zero animal products, and low levels of oil and sugar.

Numerous medical doctors, completely independent of one another, have also used a plant-based diet to *reverse* life-threatening diseases that plague modern society.

For example, Dr. Caldwell B. Esselstyn Jr. of the renowned Cleveland Clinic has been *reversing* heart disease with a plant-based diet for more than twenty years. Dr. Dean Ornish of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute has also achieved similar results with his cardiac patients.

“When the Nazi troops invaded Norway and took away the local cattle, livestock, and dairy, there was an absolute plummet of death by coronary artery disease in the region.”

—Dr. Caldwell B. Esselstyn Jr.

Dr. John McDougall, a physician and nutrition expert, and Dr. Neal Barnard, a physician, clinic researcher, and founder of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine in Washington, DC, have both been reversing Type 2 diabetes in their patients through a plant-based diet for decades, completely independent of one another.

“When we break the meat seduction with a plant-based diet you reverse heart disease, lose weight, cancer risk drops by 40 percent, blood pressure drops, diabetes improves, and you will eliminate or reduce all medications.”

—Dr. Neal Barnard

In addition, in *The China Study*, the most comprehensive study in nutrition ever conducted, Dr. Colin Campbell, Professor Emeritus of Nutritional Biochemistry at Cornell University, shows how

cancer growth can be turned on and off by simply adjusting the level of animal protein in one's diet. Campbell's findings have also been independently repeated by many of his peers, and numerous other independent studies continue to show a correlation between diet and modern disease.

“There are hundreds of detailed, comprehensive, well-done research studies that show a whole foods, plant-based diet is best for preventing and reversing cancer, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, autoimmune diseases, strokes, Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, and many other diseases and illnesses.”

—Dr. T. Colin Campbell

In fact, none of the ultra-expensive high tech advantages of the past fifty years have made a dent in overall rates of death and disease in first-world countries. While today's medical advancements are much better equipped to save someone's life after an acute event like a car crash or a sudden heart attack than it was fifty years ago, we're really not better at preventing chronic degenerative diseases like heart disease and cancer, often called “disease of affluence,” than we were in the 1950s.³ Today people are living sicker longer, but is that really living?

Thankfully, there is a real, attainable solution to our health crisis, and that solution—a plant-based diet—is also the solution for many other crises around the world. When someone asks me why I am plant-based, I say, “For my health, the plight of farm animals, the environment, the economy, and humanity,” because putting plants on my plate greatly benefits all of those things.

The Global Impact of a Plant-Based Diet

Switching to a plant-based diet is the single most positive impact you can make on the environment and society. The relationship between animal agriculture and global resource depletion is well documented.

In a 2010 report, the United Nations urged a global shift toward a meat- and dairy-free diet. In the report, the UN concluded that meat and dairy production is severely damaging to the environment and requires significantly more resources than plant-based food production; the clear implications being that a vegan diet is vital to save the world from hunger, from fuel poverty, and from the worst impacts of climate change.⁴ This report came after a 2000 report by the World Health Organization, stating that one in every three people suffered from malnutrition as a result of rapid population growth, diminished land, water, and energy resources.⁵

World Hunger

- The United States could feed eight hundred million people with the amount of grain fed to livestock raised for meat. (Additionally, if those grains were exported, it would boost the US trade balance by an estimated eighty billion dollars)!⁶
- One acre of land can produce 20,000 pounds of potatoes or 165 pounds of meat.⁷
- Six million children in the world will die from starvation this year and 1.1 billion people in the world are considered malnourished or suffering from hunger.⁸

Switching to a plant-based diet is by far the most impactful choice you can make toward ending world hunger.

Water Resources

- Animal agriculture is a leading consumer of water resources in the United States. Grain-fed beef production requires 100,000 liters of water for every *1 kilogram* of food. Broiler chickens require 3,500 liters per kilogram. In comparison, per kilogram, soybean production uses 2,000 liters water; rice, 1,912 liters; wheat, 900 liters; and potatoes, only 500 liters.⁹
- The amount of water needed to produce *one* pound of beef (2,464 gallons) is the same amount of water you would use, in total, if you took a seven-minute shower every day for six months. (Wheat, by comparison, requires 25 gallons of water per pound of production.)¹¹
- In 2005, only 13 percent of fresh water was used for domestic purposes including showering, flushing toilets, washing cars, and watering lawns, according to the United States Geological Survey.¹²
- Water shortages due to draughts are already a serious problem in the western and southern United States. Wells are going dry, water tables are dropping, and our aquifers are diminishing.¹³

Switching to a plant-based diet is by far the most impactful choice you can make to conserve water.

Fossil Fuels

- Animal protein production requires more than *eight* times as much fossil-fuel energy than the production of plant protein.¹⁴
- Averaged together, animal protein production requires 28 kilocalories of fossil fuel for every *kilocalorie* of protein produced, compared to plant proteins like tofu, for example, which require 2.2 kilocalories. (Beef and lamb require the most energy at 54:1 and 50:1, respectively.)¹⁵
- Today the US imports 40 percent of its oil.

Switching to a plant-based diet is by far the most impactful choice you can make to conserve fossil fuels.

Other Environmental Factors

- “According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, livestock production accounts for 14.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions—which is more than all of the world’s automobiles combined.”¹⁶
- About 90 percent of US cropland is losing topsoil at a rate thirteen times *higher* than what is considered sustainable. While both plant and animal agricultural practices are to blame, the loss of soil from plant farming is roughly six times slower than the loss from meat farming *and* most of the crop growing is food for livestock!¹⁷
- Livestock farms also pollute our clean water stores and oceans, creating “dead zones” with no aquatic life. Additionally, fecal runoff contains dangerous pathogens like *salmonella* and *E. coli*, which often end up on crops. According to the Natural Defense Council, “more than forty diseases can be transferred to humans through manure.”¹⁸
- The US Environmental Protection Agency estimates that animal agriculture accounts for 5 percent to 85 percent of total man-made ammonia volatilization in the United States. The potential impacts of ammonia are many: damage to our surface waters and crops, and it can cause human respiratory problems. Ammonia also causes acid rain.¹⁹
- The meat industry is also the number-one source of methane throughout the world, releasing over

100 million tons per year.*

- According to the Nature Conservancy, every second of every day one football field of rainforest is destroyed to make room for more cattle ranching.²⁰ The meat from those animals is then exported to the United States for fast-food hamburgers. (According to the Rainforest Action Network, 5 square feet of tropical rain forest—the size of a small kitchen—is permanently destroyed to make a hamburger.²¹)
- Rain forest deforestation also causes untold losses of biodiversity. Up to thirty different plant species, one hundred different insects, and dozens of birds, mammals, and reptile species live within a single square foot of rain forest. All of these species are destroyed with the trees that provide oxygen and filter air pollutants during deforestation. (Depletion of the rainforest is responsible for nine to twelve billion tons of CO² emissions in the last decade from the Amazon region alone.)²²

Human Welfare

Lastly, the animal industry isn't just tough on the animals, either. Yes, the lives and deaths of farm animals are often horrifyingly brutal, both physically and psychologically, but the lives of the workers on these farms (most of whom are underpaid illegal immigrants) are terrible, too.

For more information on the effects of animal farming and global depletion, see [Animal Welfare](#) in the appendix, [Learn More about Plant-Based Living](#).

The Truth about Plant-Based Nutrition

“We are designed by nature to consume the majority of our calories from plants. On this point, there is little dispute among dietary paleontologists. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds have been the dominant source of calories for our species.”²³

Why, then, is our modern diet so different?

Unfortunately, political and financial interests have routinely been put ahead of our health interests.

For example, in 2000, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine won a lawsuit against the USDA for unfairly promoting the special interests of meat and dairy industries through its official dietary guidelines (known then as the Food Guide Pyramid). It was revealed that six of the eleven members of the USDA committee assigned to create the guidelines had financial ties to meat, dairy, and egg interests. (Prior to this lawsuit, the USDA had refused to disclose such blatant conflicts of interest.)

Since numerous books discussing food politics already exist, I won't delve too deep here except to say that special interests with deep pockets (and clever marketing masked as information) have led us to believe we *need* meat, milk, eggs, and other animal products to be healthy, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

“Where do you get your protein?”

“Without milk, won't all your bones break?”

“Can you get all of the vitamins and minerals from plants that you get from meat and dairy?”

These questions—the result of all that misguided propaganda—are ones you'll likely hear from friends and family once you adopt a plant-based lifestyle. If you're new to plant-based eating, you may be asking these questions yourself.

As with food politics, many books go into great depth about the health benefits of a plant-based diet and the damaging effects of animal products. (*For a list of recommended books and further reading,*

see the [appendix](#), [Learn More about Plant-Based Living](#).) For the sake of brevity, I'll keep to the main points and most commonly heard myths here.

The Dairy Myth

One of the biggest lies we've been told is that dairy is an essential source of calcium and the key to strong bones. Not only is milk *not* the best source of calcium, it wreaks havoc on our health.

Here are just some of the facts that debunk the dairy myth:

- Greens and broccoli contain more calcium than milk.
- Dairy doesn't reduce fractures. It increases your risk of fracture by 50 percent!²⁴
- Worldwide, the incidence of osteoporosis correlates strongly with dairy consumption. Africa and Asia, for example, have both the lowest rates of osteoporosis and the lowest consumption of dairy, while places with the highest levels of dairy consumption (e.g., the United States) have the highest rates of osteoporosis. Why? Dairy actually leaches calcium from your bones!^{*25}
- Dairy has also been linked strongly to prostate cancer, acne, eczema, constipation, heart disease, strokes, obesity, sinus congestion, migraines, stomach issues, anemia, heartburn, Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, ear infections, irritable bowel syndrome, and many other conditions.
- More than 60 percent of the global population is lactose intolerant. Scientists say we shouldn't even call lactose intolerance an allergy or a disease because that would imply the intolerance is abnormal.
- Dairy contains a naturally occurring hormone called insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1), which is one of the most powerful promoters of cancer growth ever discovered for breast, prostate, lung, and colon cancers.²⁶

By consuming dairy, we're not only breastfeeding past infancy, we're also breastfeeding on a whole other species! No other species consumes the milk of *another* species. Dairy is super weird when you think about it!

The Protein Myth

All foods—including fruits and vegetables—contain protein, and many plant foods pack more protein than meat. For example, spinach and kale have nearly twice as much protein as beef, calorie for calorie.²⁷

Moral of the story? Don't fret over protein. Absent special medical circumstances, you cannot be protein deficient unless you're calorie deficient, and then you're deficient in *everything* because you're starving.

I especially love what my good friend Rip Esselstyn, former professional triathlete and author of *The Engine 2 Diet*, says about protein deficiency: "Protein deficiency is so rare that I have never found a *single* person who knows the name of the medical condition that results from a serious lack of it on the diet." (If you're curious, the condition is called *kwashiorkor*.)

According to the World Health Organization the average 150-pound male requires only 22.5 grams of protein daily, a mere 4.5 percent of his total calories, based on a 2,000-calorie-per-day diet. To put that in perspective, 1 cup of beans has 15 grams of protein. You could literally eat nothing but

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