

If in a local/non-chain restaurant, here are some tips on what to order. Feel empowered to ask that dairy and meat be omitted and for vegetables to be substituted at no charge instead. Chefs welcome the opportunity to be creative. Owners welcome the opportunity to create a situation to have positive reviews made about them and get customer referrals.

### **Tips before you go**

-Use Happy Cow to find a vegan friendly restaurant. If you find a vegan friendly restaurant, add it to Happy Cow AND leave a review on Yelp and Google so fellow vegans or people wanting to eat more vegan can know!

-Call ahead during a restaurant quiet time and ask them about items on their menu. Ask them to look at package ingredients because the staff will not know. In this way, you can select a restaurant with options AND know what your options are before you arrive.

-Remember, most wait staff in a non vegan restaurant has no idea what vegan means. So be specific, ask if a dish contains meat, milk or eggs. And be specific with dairy. Many people do not know that dairy = cheese, cream, sour cream, milk.

Plant based options at typical chain restaurants are at the bottom of a menu:

**Chinese:** Probably the easiest to eat vegan. Eat from the menu as most buffet dishes are cooked with dairy, even the vegetables. Ask that tofu be substituted for meat for any favorite dish and they will, even if tofu is not even mentioned on the menu. So, for example, you can order General Tso's chicken with tofu instead of chicken. Or get the mixed vegetable dish with your favorite sauce. Ask, most spring rolls are accidentally vegan. Verify the vegetable dumplings are vegan. Fried rice can be easily made for you without meat and egg, just ask. Caution, some restaurants bulk cook their fried rice with egg so it cannot be made vegan. None of the soups are vegan nor are the won ton.

**Italian:** Ask to verify but often these dishes happen to be vegan: Pasta in marinara sauce, Salad, Minestrone Soup **Watch Out For:** Fresh Pasta (may have eggs); breadsticks-verify not cooked *with* butter, ask that the butter on the outside be omitted. Ask that salads NOT have cheese on top and omit croutons (has dairy).

**Pizza:** There are many chains now that offer vegan cheese. MOST chains use a crust recipe that happens to be vegan. If vegan cheese is not available, order a veggie Pizza without Cheese or veggie calzone with no cheese. Pizza places are used to *substituting at no additional charge* a vegetable in lieu of cheese.

**Mexican:** veggie fajitas ; veggie or bean burrito; Beans, Rice, Tortillas, Salsa. Some even have a vegetarian section of the menu so just ask that cheese and sour cream or cream sauces be omitted. Some even have fried potatoes that can be added into an entrée instead of meat. Corn tortillas are vegan as are the chips and salsa.

**Watch Out For:** Beans (make sure they are not cooking with meat or lard), rice (make sure it's not cooked in chicken or beef broths); verify that flour tortillas have no lard.

**Thai:** Many vegetable dishes and tofu dishes (be sure to specify no fish sauce!). Thai is a very easy vegan option and for religious reasons most Thai restaurants know what vegetarian and vegan mean.

**Japanese:** Vegetable sushi, vegetable gyoza, ask about the miso soup. If they cook fried rice to order then it is an option, just ask if it can come without egg or flesh. Noodle bowls like ramen or udon, just make sure it's a miso broth and to remove any meat/sub with tofu.

**Indian:** Most Indian restaurants are very familiar with vegan requirements and have a large selection of vegan or easy to make vegan dishes. Just be sure they do not include milk, butter/ghee or cheese. Most naan is not vegan unless the restaurant has a large vegan customer base so ask.

**Ethiopian:** Like Indian restaurants, most are very familiar with vegan requirements and have a large selection of vegan or easy to make vegan dishes.

**Greek or Middle Eastern:** Almost always vegan is hummus, baba ghanoush, pita bread, baked vegetables, vegetable kebab, salad, rice pilaf, and small vegetable dishes, like olives, stewed eggplant, or sautéed greens.

**Grills:** Bell Pepper or veggie Fajitas, Vegetarian Chili (without cheese), Salad

**Watch out for:** Make sure veggie burgers are actually plant based and do not have dairy or egg added. Tell them not to butter your buns! Ask them to read the bread label to ensure the buns happen to be vegan.

**Salads-Caution-**most cream salad dressing have egg or dairy or both and croutons are made with butter. Ask to see the dressing label.

**Anywhere:** Just ask that the following dishes omit cheese and sour cream and are not cooked in milk, butter or lard: Oatmeal, Salad, Baked Potato, French fries, hash browns, Corn on the cob, Steamed Mixed Vegetables, white or brown rice. Mashed potatoes are made with dairy.