

# HOW TO MAKE PRODUCTS

SUITABLE FOR VEGANS

# A GUIDE



AnimalAid



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## WHAT IS A VEGAN?

Vegans are people who have chosen to end the consumption of products derived from animals, or that involve the use or exploitation of animals. People adopt veganism for a number of reasons, including concerns about the suffering of farmed animals and the environmental impact of animal agriculture, and the health benefits of a plant-based diet.

As such, when it comes to food, vegans do not consume meat, dairy and eggs, or any other product that is of animal origin.

**However, there are a number of other ingredients that are derived from animals and which commonly appear in products, usually in very small quantities. These include, beeswax, carmine and shellac. Without these minimal animal ingredients, such products would otherwise be suitable for vegans.**

The good news is that there are plant-based alternatives to such ingredients, which can easily be substituted, thus making the products vegan.

**“ Veganism is a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose. ”**

- Definition of veganism, from the Vegan Society

## WHY SHOULD YOU MAKE PRODUCTS SUITABLE FOR VEGANS?

The number of vegans in the UK has risen by around 360 per cent in the last ten years to more than 500,000<sup>1</sup>, and many more people are choosing to reduce their consumption of animal products without eliminating them entirely. They are from all walks of life, but there has been particular growth amongst those aged 15-34, who account for 42 per cent of vegans.

It has been widely reported that veganism will be the number one food trend of 2018<sup>2</sup> - and this has come to fruition with many new products hitting shelves, seemingly on a daily basis.

It makes perfect sense for companies to recognise this and to change and adjust recipes that feature one or two non-vegan ingredients to make them vegan-friendly; not only will this have no impact upon the quality of the product, but it will also open them up to a huge and ever-growing market<sup>3</sup>.

**“ Between 2015 and 2016, sales of vegan products went up 1,500 per cent. ”**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vegansociety.com/whats-new/news/find-out-how-many-vegans-are-great-britain>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.buzz.ie/food/vegan-predicted-popular-food-trend-next-year-267099>

<sup>3</sup> <https://1010data.com/company/blog/plant-based-products-are-blossoming-quickly/>

# ANIMAL-DERIVED PRODUCTS THAT CAN EASILY BE MADE VEGAN

## 1. Vitamin D

### WHAT IS VITAMIN D AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Vitamin D is made internally when our skin is exposed to sunlight. However, because we rarely get enough sunlight in the UK, it is important for everyone - vegan or not - to consume adequate sources of vitamin D, mostly in the autumn and winter.

Vitamin D is important for calcium absorption, and thus for healthy bones, and it is also vital for muscle health. In the UK, vitamin D deficiency is a huge concern because we rarely get enough sunlight, and thus supplementation is widely recommended.

Fortifying products like breakfast cereals with vitamin D is one way that companies can help consumers obtain an adequate amount - however, an issue arises when this vitamin D is of animal origin. As vegans do not consume products of animal origin, everyday products such as cereals can be rendered unsuitable for vegans, if animal-derived vitamin D is included, despite appearing vegan on the face of things.

### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VITAMIN D2 AND VITAMIN D3?

Vitamin D2 - Always plant-based.

Vitamin D3 - Can be animal- or plant-derived.

*Animal sources of vitamin D3 include lanolin (from sheep's wool) and fish oil.*

### WHY DON'T VEGANS USE WOOL PRODUCTS?



Vitamin D3 of animal origin usually comes from a substance called lanolin - which is an oil derived from sheep's wool. Vegans avoid wool products for a number of reasons, but mainly because of the intrinsic link between wool products and the meat industry, and also because of recent undercover exposés showing widespread abuse in the wool industry<sup>4</sup>.

### WHAT ARE THE VEGAN ALTERNATIVES TO LANOLIN-SOURCED VITAMIN D3?

D3 - Lichen.

D2 - Which is always vegan-friendly.

<sup>4</sup> <https://investigations.peta.org/australian-wool-industry-cruelty/>

## 2. Honey and beeswax

### WHY IS HONEY NOT VEGAN?

Even some new vegans aren't too sure why honey isn't vegan, but once one examines the industry it is clear that honey is not a vegan product. This is mainly due to bees being forced to reside in unnatural environments on farms and to endure practices such as wing-clipping. They are often fed inadequate diets which lead to colony collapse and culling.



### WHAT ARE VEGAN ALTERNATIVES TO HONEY?

- Maple syrup
- Agave nectar
- Unrefined sugar
- Date syrup
- Rice syrup
- Barley syrup

### WHAT ABOUT BEESWAX?

Beeswax - also listed as E901 - is a wax produced by honey bees, and is essentially a by-product of honey production. Therefore, vegans avoid beeswax.

### WHAT ARE VEGAN ALTERNATIVES TO BEESWAX?

The most common and easiest alternative is carnauba wax which is widely used in the same way as beeswax.

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## 3. Shellac

### WHAT IS SHELLAC?



Shellac - or E904 - is a resin that is produced by the female lac bug. Vegans avoid shellac because bugs, even though they are small, are living beings, and even where there is little evidence of an animal's ability to suffer, we like to give them the benefit of the doubt.

### WHAT ARE VEGAN ALTERNATIVES TO SHELLAC?

Similar to beeswax, shellac is used as a 'glazing' agent, to stop food - mostly sweets - from sticking together. Therefore, carnauba wax is a readily available alternative.



## 4. Gelatine

### WHAT IS GELATINE?

Gelatine is the boiled-up bones, tendons and skin of animals - most commonly pigs and cows. As such, vegans do not consume products that contain gelatine.

### WHAT ARE VEGAN ALTERNATIVES TO GELATINE?

- Agar agar - made from certain species of algae.
- Pectin - comes from the cell walls of certain fruits.
- Carrageenan - made from red edible seaweeds.



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## 5. Carmine/cochineal

### WHAT IS CARMINE?

Carmine, sometimes called cochineal - or E120 - is a red food colouring derived from the cochineal insect. These insects are boiled to extract the carminic acid.

### WHAT ARE VEGAN ALTERNATIVES TO CARMINE?

The most common vegan alternative to carmine/cochineal is lycopene (E160d) - which is a red colouring derived from tomatoes.

## CONCLUSION

The majority of ingredients that are animal-derived can easily be substituted for plant-based alternatives. This is not only simple, but a sensible business decision; by making products suitable for vegans, without altering the taste or integrity of the final product, you will be opening up your products to an ever-expanding market.

**Therefore, not only will customers continue to purchase the products that they already know and love, those following a vegan diet will also be able to purchase them.**

**Animal Aid campaigns peacefully  
against all animal cruelty and  
promotes a cruelty-free lifestyle.**





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