

World Vegetarian Day

Did you know that there's a special day to find out about vegetarianism? Vegetarians don't eat meat, and these days many people are choosing to eat a more plant-based diet. Read the article to find out why.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises to check your understanding.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. protein
2. livestock
3. carbon emissions
4. sustainable
5. industrial farming
6. a diet
7. grains
8. ethical

Definition

- a. the food and drink that a person usually eats or drinks
- b. relating to beliefs about what behaviour is good, bad, fair, honest, etc.
- c. producing plants, animals, milk, eggs, etc. on a large scale, often using chemicals and machines
- d. animals that are kept on a farm, such as cows, chickens or sheep
- e. carbon dioxide and other gases that cars, planes, factories, etc. produce, which are harmful for the environment
- f. made in a way that doesn't harm the environment and can continue for a long time
- g. a substance that our bodies need, found in food such as meat, cheese, fish, eggs, etc.
- h. a healthy food that come from the seeds of plants

World Vegetarian Day

It's estimated that around 1.5 billion people worldwide don't eat meat. However, not all of those people are vegetarian by choice. Many of them don't have access to meat and for others it's simply too expensive. But for a lot of people, vegetarianism is a lifestyle choice. These vegetarians often choose a veggie diet for ethical, environmental or health reasons. World Vegetarian Day, which takes place on 1 October every year, promotes and raises awareness of the benefits of a vegetarian lifestyle.

What exactly is a vegetarian diet?

A vegetarian eats no meat at all, including white meat (like chicken, turkey, etc.) or fish. Some people follow a semi-vegetarian diet. For example a 'pescatarian' is someone who eats no meat, but does eat fish and seafood. Other people call themselves 'flexitarian' – they are mainly vegetarian but allow themselves an occasional meat dish. Vegans, on the other hand, don't eat or use any animal products at all – for example they don't eat eggs, cheese or honey.

Why cut out meat?

Many vegetarians and vegans choose not to eat meat or animal products for ethical and environmental reasons. Often they are unhappy about the bad treatment of animals. Industrial farming for meat, milk and eggs often means that animals don't have enough space to move around, they don't have enough contact with other animals and they never go outdoors.

Many people are worried about the effects of meat and fish production on the environment. Livestock farming produces more carbon emissions than the emissions from cars, planes, ships and all other transport put together. In addition to this, it uses a huge amount of the planet's land and water resources. Many people see plant-based diets as the only sustainable option for the future.

Is vegetarianism healthier than a meat-based diet?

Some people choose a vegetarian lifestyle to improve their general health. According to the Vegetarian Society, a meat-free diet could help reduce the risk of certain cancers and the possibility of heart disease, as well as other health problems such as obesity and high blood pressure.

Of course, being vegetarian doesn't simply mean cutting out certain foods from your diet. To ensure that your body gets all the protein, vitamins, etc. that it needs, it's important to replace animal products with a good variety of foods like nuts, tofu, lentils, seeds, grains, cereals and vegetables.

Teens and vegetarianism

It seems that young people are among the most likely to turn towards a vegetarian diet, and research shows that many more people are likely to become vegetarian in the future. A lot of teenagers decide to try out a veggie diet, and for many this becomes a lifelong choice.

So whether or not you decide to cut out meat completely, or reduce the amount of meat you eat, there are certainly a lot of delicious plant-based meals to try. What's your favourite vegetarian dish?

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
	True	False
1. There are approximately 1,500,000 vegetarians in the world today.	True	False
2. A lot of people who don't eat meat have no choice – they can't afford it.	True	False
3. World Vegetarian Day is on 15 October every year.	True	False
4. Many people stop eating meat because they don't agree with how animals are treated on farms.	True	False
5. A lot of vegetarians think that eating meat has a negative effect on the environment.	True	False
6. Raising animals for food produces more carbon emissions than emissions from transport.	True	False
7. Experts say that vegetarianism is less healthy than a diet that includes meat.	True	False
8. Older people are much more likely to try vegetarianism than young people.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

pescatarian	protein	plant-based	lifestyle
vegan	flexitarian	vegetarian	meat-free diet

1. A doesn't eat any meat or fish, but eats eggs and other animal products.
2. A doesn't eat any meat, but eats fish and seafood.
3. A is vegetarian most of the time, but occasionally eats meat.
4. A doesn't eat meat, fish, eggs, cheese or any other animal products.
5. World Vegetarian Day promotes the benefits of a vegetarian
6. Foods like nuts, grains and lentils can help to provide and vitamins.
7. Some experts say that a can help reduce health problems.
8. There are a lot of delicious meals that you can try.

Discussion

Do you eat meat? Would you consider eating less meat or no meat at all?

Answers

Preparation task

1. g
2. d
3. e
4. f
5. c
6. a
7. h
8. b

Task 1

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. True
7. False
8. False

Task 2

1. vegetarian
2. pescatarian
3. flexitarian
4. vegan
5. lifestyle
6. protein
7. meat-free diet
8. plant-based