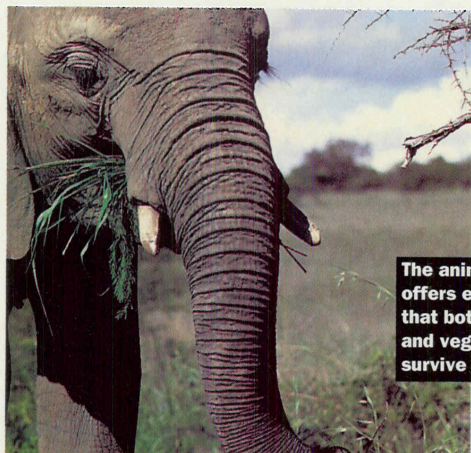


# Does Meat Make You Fat?

No—and we've got proof that you can eat it without blowing your diet



The animal kingdom offers evidence that both carnivores and vegetarians can survive just fine



## EATING MEAT VS. VEGETARIANISM

BOTH CAN BE HEALTHY, BUT IS ONE BETTER?

**M**any people believe that giving up red meat will automatically make them thinner and healthier. Dean Ornish, M.D., author of *Eat More, Weigh Less* (HarperCollins, 1993), has staked his career on this theory. In his opinion, "Being overweight is primarily due to how much fat you eat. And most of the fat you eat comes from animal products and oils." The low-fat vegetarian diet he advocates has made him enormously successful: His book was on the *New York Times* bestseller list for 20 weeks. But those

who allow for some meat in their diets—following suggestions set out in the Food Guide Pyramid—may, in fact, have the better idea. Giving up meat entirely may make it difficult to get enough iron, protein and other important nutrients. And it may even be easier to limit your fat intake if you *don't* give up meat. Many vegetarians rely on high-calorie, high-fat protein sources such as cheese and peanut butter, while lean beef, chicken and pork—prepared without oil—are both low in calories and rich in protein.

## GREAT PRETENDERS

**M**eat substitutes have improved a lot. In fact, health-food stores are full of very edible options. Here, a few tasty selections recommended by Yolanda Bergman, a Los Angeles-based food consultant and author of *Food Cop: Yolanda, Tell Us What to Eat* (Bantam, 1991): **Fakin' Bacon and Fakin' Bacon Bits**, by *Lightlife*: Soy-based meat replacements. A tablespoon of the Bacon Bits has just 10 calories and less than ½ gram of fat; 3 slices of bacon have 80 calories and 2.6 grams of fat.

**Life Choice Vegetarian Frozen Dinners**, by *Healthy Choice*: These meat-free meals are low in fat and a lot healthier than your classic TV dinner. **Smart Deli Thin Slices**, by *Lightlife*: Fat-free, soy-based luncheon "meats" include imitation ham, bologna and turkey; 40 calories and 0 grams of fat in 3 slices. **Smart Dogs**, by *Lightlife*: This hot-dog substitute is soy-based and tastes like the real thing when it's eaten with sauerkraut and mustard. Best part: One has only 40 calories and 0 grams of fat.

## PUMPING IRON

Young women need to take in 18 milligrams of iron every day. For carnivores, it's as simple as eating a few servings of lean red meat; for vegetarians, it's trickier. Elizabeth Somer, M.A., R.D., offers these tips:

- Add dried fruit to cereal.
- Toss beans into salads.
- Eat citrus fruits with meals—vitamin C increases iron absorption.
- Cook in cast-iron pots.
- Avoid coffee and tea—they inhibit iron absorption.

## Food for Thought

**W**hether you're a meat-eater or a vegetarian, chances are you've got some misguided notions about which foods are "good" and "bad." Here, we set the record straight.

### The good news:

- Buttermilk may sound rich, but this dairy product has only 1 gram of fat and 40 calories per ½-cup serving.
- Pork, trimmed of visible fat, is a better choice than many other meats: only 194 calories and 5 grams of fat in a 3 ½-ounce serving.
- Roasted chestnuts aren't as fattening a treat as you may think. They have only 2 grams of fat and 245 calories per ¾ cup. Use them as a meat replacement in stuffings or add to cakes.

### The bad news:

- Carob may be caffeine-free, but it's no less rich than chocolate. When it's made into a candy bar, it's combined with fat and sugar—just like the real thing.
- Soy milk, a common substitute for cow's milk, is actually ten times more fattening than skim milk; eight ounces contain five grams of fat.
- Sunflower seeds are not only addictive, but fattening—¾ cup has 582 calories and 50 grams of fat.