

GUIDEBOOK FOR

PLANT-BASED DOGS & CATS

How to transition your animal companions to a healthy plant-based diet.

DIGITAL
VERSION HERE



**YES,
THEY CAN
BE VEGAN
TOO.**



PLANTBASED TREATY

DISCLAIMER

This guide is intended to inform the reader about the benefits of transitioning your animal companions to a nutritionally complete plant-based diet and to provide practical guidance and advice on doing so successfully. Please consult with your veterinarian annually, and always seek treatment immediately if your animal companion is unwell, regardless of their diet.



INTRODUCTION

As guardians and caregivers, we want the best for our animal companions. Additionally, as caring and conscientious citizens of Earth, we also want to minimize our environmental impact and avoid unnecessarily harming others. Until recently, the accepted belief was that our animal companions needed “meat” to be healthy. As a result, despite widespread ethical issues within the pet-food industry, many vegans and environmentalists continue to feed a commercial meat-based diet to their cats and dogs.

THANKFULLY, THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE!

- Cats and dogs can thrive on a vegan diet (1).
- It can even help them overcome many common health issues (1).
- The most important factor in a healthy diet is the amount and combination of nutrients; the source of those nutrients is of less importance.
- Dozens of commercial plant-based cat and dog food products are now recognized as nutritionally complete and balanced.
- Most are designed to meet the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) standards.
- Vegan cat and dog foods have been formulated and endorsed by veterinarians.
- A 2023 scientific review found multiple benefits from feeding cats and dogs a vegan diet (2).

Let us help guide you to transition the cats and dogs in your life to a healthy vegan diet, for the benefit of their health, the health of our planet, and the well-being of farmed animals.

WHY VEGAN?

FOR HEALTH:



Plant-based diets for animal companions **are safe and often superior** to commercial meat-based diets (1).



Dogs fed a vegan diet are less likely to suffer gastrointestinal illnesses, skin and coat conditions, muscle and bone disorders, ear infections, blocked anal glands, eye issues, allergies, and behavioral problems (1).



The same synthetic taurine added to plant-based cat and dog foods is also added to meat-based counterparts.



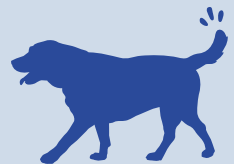
One of the main genetic differences between domestic dogs and wolves is that **dogs digestive systems have evolved** to thrive on a diet rich in starch (3)



Animal-sourced protein is one of the most common allergens for cats and dogs (4).



The American Veterinary Medicine Association recommends against **feeding raw "meat" due to the risk of illness** (5).



Source:

(1) Knight, A., Huang, E., Rai, N., & Brown, H. (2022). Vegan versus meat-based dog food: Guardian-reported indicators of health.

(2) Domínguez-Oliva A, Mota-Rojas D, Semendric I, Whittaker AL. The Impact of Vegan Diets on Indicators of Health in Dogs and Cats: A Systematic Review. Veterinary Sciences. 2023.

(3) Axelsson, E., Ratnakumar, A., Arendt, ML. et al. The genomic signature of dog domestication reveals adaptation to a starch-rich diet.

(4) Mueller, R. S., Olivry, T., & Prélaud, P. (2016). Critically appraised topic on adverse food reactions of companion animals (2): Common food allergen sources in dogs and cats.

(5) American Veterinary Medicine Association. Policy: Raw or undercooked animal-source protein in cat and dog diets. (2023).

FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:

1/4

Cat and dog food production accounts for approximately **one-quarter of the total environmental impact** of "meat" production (6).

X2

Globally, meat-based animal food production requires a **land area twice the size of the U.K.** (7).

5-11

The pet food industry uses **5 to 11 cubic kilometers of freshwater annually** (7).

106

Cat and dog food production releases approximately **106 metric tons of CO2 emissions**, around the same as the entire country of Venezuela (7).

7%

Companion dogs have a **climate-impact pawprint** of around 7% the size of an average EU citizen (8).



Source:

(6) Okin, G. S. (2017). Environmental impacts of food consumption by dogs and cats.

(7) Alexander, P., Berri, A., Moran, D., Reay, D., & Rounsevell, M. D. (2020). The global environmental paw print of pet food. Global Environmental Change.

(8) Yavor KM, Lehmann A, Finkbeiner M. Environmental Impacts of a Pet Dog: An LCA Case Study. Sustainability. 2020.

FOR ETHICS:



Our current system of cat and dog food production is speciesist and unjust.



Farmed animals suffer immensely for cat and dog food. In the United States, the FDA allows commercial cat and dog food to contain the bodies of animals who have died before reaching the slaughterhouse, including '4D' animals **(dead, dying, diseased, and disabled)**.



By using **unwanted body parts** such as bones, heads, and entrails, the cat and dog food industry props up animal agriculture, an industry that is responsible for the deaths of more than 80 billion animals per year and is a leading driver of the climate emergency (9).



Dog and cat food production is also a human rights issue! Controversy has long surrounded fish-based cat food companies and their dubious links to slave labor (10).



Source:

(9) D. L. Meeker, J. L. Meisinger, COMPANION ANIMALS SYMPOSIUM: Rendered ingredients significantly influence sustainability, quality, and safety of pet food, *Journal of Animal Science*, Volume 93, Issue 3, March 2015.

(10) Picci, A. (2015). Is your cat feasting on food caught by slave laborers? CBS News, 31st August.

COMMERCIAL PLANT-BASED DIET OPTIONS

One of the benefits of commercial plant-based food is that it will already be formulated with the vitamins and minerals your animal companion requires.

HOWEVER, JUST LIKE WITH HUMAN DIETS, THE LESS PROCESSED FOOD OUR ANIMAL COMPANIONS CONSUME, THE BETTER.

We should aim to feed animals in a more natural way, and since home-cooked whole food will always be the healthiest option we encourage caregivers to include as many whole foods in their animal's diets as practicable and possible.

These processed, commercial options have their place as convenient, time-saving, and easy to prepare. Many people find that feeding a combination of both commercial and homemade works best for them.



The following is a non-exhaustive list of the most commonly recommended retail brands of plant-based cat and dog foods. Each listed product has been formulated to be nutritionally balanced and complete and to meet the standards of AAFCO:

NORTH AMERICA



v-planet

VECAO

WYSONG

BRAMBLE

Halo

EVOLUTION
DIET

NATURAL
BALANCE

EUROPE

omni

Benevo
- pioneers of ethical pet food -



v-planet

AUSTRALASIA

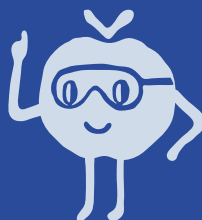


ADDICTION®
WE GO FURTHER FOR PETS

AFRICA

VEGAPRO

ONE WAY TO CHOOSE HIGH-QUALITY COMMERCIAL FOOD IS TO CHECK THE INGREDIENTS LIST. FAVOR PRODUCTS THAT HAVE RECOGNIZABLE INGREDIENTS, FORMULATIONS THAT ARE FREE FROM FILLERS AND PRESERVATIVES, AND THOSE WHICH ARE LABELED HOLISTIC, CLEAN, AND NATURAL. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THIS GOES FOR 'MEAT'-BASED CAT AND DOG FOOD PRODUCTS TOO, NOT JUST PLANT-BASED ONES.





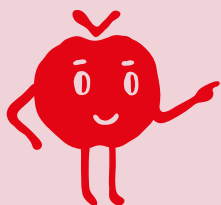
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

If you cannot find a plant-based cat or dog food supplier near you, please take positive action by approaching animal food stockists and specialty vegan stores. Talk to them about the issues within the pet food industry and ask them to consider stocking plant-based cat and dog food. This way, we can all play a part in increasing accessibility.

MAKING PLANT-BASED CAT AND DOG FOOD AT HOME

Cooking cat and dog food at home is easier than you might think. There are supplements available to use in addition to feeding nutritious, accessible foods such as lentils, beans, and starchy vegetables. Supplements provide hard-to-get nutrients so you can be

assured that the meals are nutritionally complete. The most common of these supplements are called Vegedog and Vegecat respectively. Each product is formulated with the specific species in mind to provide balanced nutrition to cats and dogs.



A NOTE ON SUPPLEMENTS: SUPPLEMENTS SUCH AS VEGEDOG AND VEGECAAT ARE DESIGNED EXCLUSIVELY TO BE ADDED TO HOMEMADE FOOD. COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS HAVE ALREADY HAD THESE NUTRIENTS ADDED AND ADDING MORE IS UNNECESSARY AND DANGEROUS.

Many resources provide recipes and guidelines for the home cook to follow when learning to make plant-based animal food. The Vegedog supplement company has downloadable recipe brochures available online which are free and very helpful and there are further resources at the end of this guide.





The following recipe is similar to what Anne Heritage cooked for Bramble, a border collie who lived to age 25 and became the Guinness World Record holder for the oldest dog. She would sometimes add fresh mint from the garden and as Bramble aged, some turmeric for arthritis.

LENTIL STEW



WATER
5 cups



DRIED LENTILS
2 cups



DRY BROWN RICE
2 cups



FRESH VEGGIES
1 cup or more



SUPER FIRM ORGANIC TOFU
1 block

NUTRITIONAL YEAST
3 tbsp

GROUND FLAXSEEDS
1 tbsp or
fresh flax oil

TAHINI (SESAME BUTTER)
1 ½ tbsp

ORGANIC TAMARI SOY SAUCE
1 tbsp or ½
teaspoon salt

VEGEDOG SUPPLEMENT
1 ½ tbsp or
daily label
amount

- 1 In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the water to a boil.
- 2 Add lentils, rice, and veggies and simmer, covered, for about 45 minutes.
- 3 Cool to serving temperature and add the tofu, nutritional yeast, flaxseeds, tahini, tamari, and Vegedog.

THIS RECIPE YIELDS 3,443 CALORIES

(22% protein, 13% fat). You can freeze any extra for small dogs.

THREE-INGREDIENT VEGAN DOG TREATS

MAKING PLANT-BASED TREATS AT HOME IS EVEN EASIER!

The internet is full of healthy recipes to suit the tastes of your canine or feline companion. Here's a simple recipe to start with:

1

**OAT FLOUR
(BLENDED OATS)**

2 cups

2

**COOKED AND
MASHED PUMPKIN**

1 cup

3

**NATURAL SMOOTH
PEANUT BUTTER**

2 tbsp

- 1) Blend ingredients until a dough forms.
- 2) Add a little water or more flour to reach the desired consistency.
- 3) Roll out onto a floured board and cut into shapes with a cookie cutter.
- 4) Bake at 180°C for 10 minutes.
- 5) Cool completely before storing in an airtight container.



FOODS FOR NUTRITION AND FOODS TO AVOID

A HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS VEGAN DIET FOR CATS AND DOGS INCLUDES:



FRUITS AND
VEGETABLES



LEGUMES



NUTS AND
SEEDS



HEALTHY
OILS



GRAINS



HERBS AND
SPICES

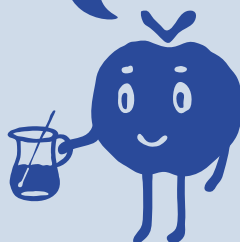


SUPPLEMENTS



TREATS

ALWAYS PROVIDE
PLENTY OF FRESH WATER



**THE FOLLOWING FOOD
SHOULD BE AVOIDED FOR
BOTH CATS AND DOGS.**

Some of these foods may upset the digestive tract and others are considered highly poisonous. Please consult your veterinarian if your animal companion accidentally consumes any of the following:

- Onion
- Grapes, raisins, sultanas
- Cocoa, chocolate
- Wild mushrooms
- Rhubarb, *particularly the leaves*
- Nightshade (*potato, tomato*)
leaves and stems
- Apple seeds, cherry pits,
apricot pits, peach pits
- Macadamia nuts
- Walnuts
- Bread dough
- Alcohol
- Xylitol

TRANSITIONING: TIPS, ISSUES, AND SOLUTIONS

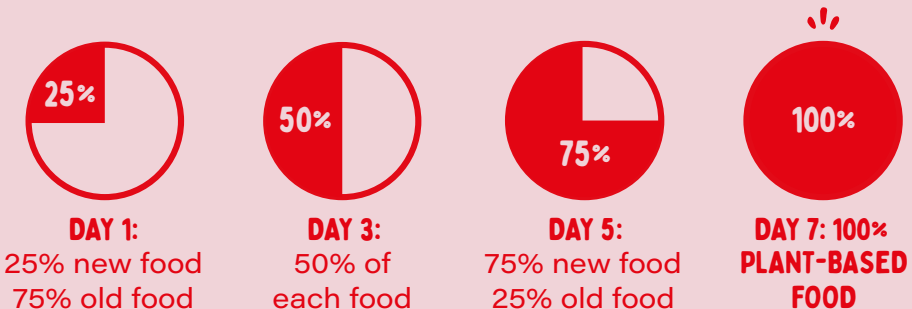
TRANSITIONING A DOG OR CAT TO A PLANT-BASED DIET SHOULD BE TREATED LIKE ANY MAJOR DIET CHANGE.

It is helpful to take your companion to the veterinarian for a health check and a complete blood panel before you begin. This can be used as a comparison in the future to track whether the diet change is positively impacting their overall health.

THE TRANSITION TO A NEW PLANT-BASED FOOD SHOULD HAPPEN GRADUALLY, OVER AT LEAST 7 DAYS.

Monitor your cat or dog for vomiting, diarrhea, or any changes in appetite, and if they experience any signs of intestinal discomfort, try going slower to give them more time to adjust. This goes for any diet change, not just the switch to a plant-based diet. If they are experiencing adverse effects even after a slower transition, it is recommended that you seek the advice of a veterinarian who is supportive of plant-based diets for animal companions and/or try another product.

TRANSITION GUIDE



MOST CATS AND DOGS WILL TRANSITION EASILY, BUT THERE ARE A FEW COMMON ISSUES THAT SOME CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCE.



Challenge: Animals are individuals with their own preferences and some can be fussy eaters.



Solutions: If your cat or dog is reluctant, you could look for a supplier who sells sample packs so you can try different products before you invest in a larger quantity. Sometimes adding boiled water to a portion of dry food will make it more appetizing by bringing out the aromas. Many basic, low-salt gravy recipes are also safe for cats and dogs and can help entice animals to dig in.



Challenge: Cost can be a barrier that prevents some people from transitioning their animal companions to a plant-based diet since plant-based kibble is the cost is similar to that of other high quality kibble.



Solution: One way to overcome this challenge is by cooking meals at home using a supplement and sourcing low-cost ingredients seasonally and in bulk. Dried beans are usually more affordable than canned, and frozen vegetables are often cheaper than fresh.



Challenge: Rarely, some cats or dogs experiences ongoing digestive issues beyond the immediate transition.

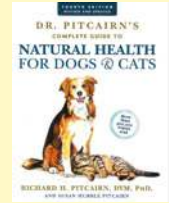
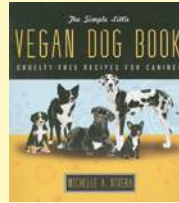


Solutions: Start keeping a food journal so you can learn if certain ingredients are a trigger. Be aware of the non-soluble fiber content of the meals you're preparing and reduce this if necessary. Always introduce new ingredients gradually in small amounts, and if you're feeding fresh beans and legumes, soak them for at least 12 hours before cooking.

PLEASE CHECK THE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT THE END OF THIS GUIDE FOR MORE TROUBLESHOOTING.

FURTHER RESOURCES

BOOKS:



BLOG ARTICLES:

Vegan Dogs Lower Their Carbon Pawprint *Plant Based Treaty blog*

Complete Guide to Vegan Dog and Cat Food *PETA*

Can Pets Be Vegan? What's Really in Pet Food? *Bitesizevegan*

RECIPE DOWNLOADS:

Download the Vegedog and Vegecat recipe brochure from compassioncircle.com



VIDEOS:

Dr. Sarah Dodd, Plant-based Diets for Cats and Dogs

Professor Andrew Knight, Should Cats and Dogs Go Vegan?

Veterinarian Armaiti May, Vegan Diets for Dogs and Cats

JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 @plantbasedtreaty  PlantBasedTreaty  @plant_treaty



Follow **Plant Based Treaty** on Instagram and see our post explaining why plant-based diets for cats and dogs are the climate-friendly option:



Follow **Animal Save Movement** and check out these plant-based dog myth-busters:

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Feeding dogs and cats a healthy plant-based diet is the future! Caregivers are becoming more informed and there is a wider variety of products available in more countries than ever before. As of 2019, approximately 10.4 percent of guardians surveyed were feeding their dogs an intermittent plant-based diet. Accessibility and affordability are rapidly increasing, and the vegan dog and cat food industry looks set to boom. **This change has so many benefits for the animals and our environment.**

WE NEED THIS CHANGE



for the health of our
animal companions,

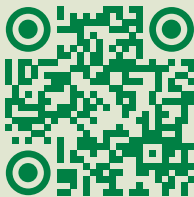
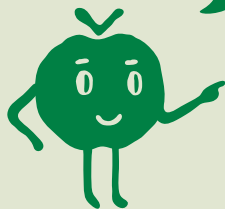


to mitigate the
climate crisis



to reduce the suffering
of farmed animals

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MOBILE TO SIGN THE PBT



**GO
VEGAN,
IT'S EASY!**

PLANTBASEDTREATY

Plantbasedtreaty.org