

3-1 Food

Main Reading text

What is food? Well, I guess we all have a pretty good idea of what food is, especially the food we like. But for different people in different parts of the world, and for people with different beliefs, the idea of food can be very diverse. Let's have a look at some examples of what people think of as food, and what is considered not to be food. We will start with **Fruitarianism**. There are several variations of a fruitarian diet.

Some people who follow this diet eat only what falls (or would fall) naturally from a plant; that is: foods that can be harvested without killing or harming the plant. These foods consist mainly of fruits, nuts, and seeds. Although some fruitarians will eat only fallen fruit because they think it is wrong for humans to eat nuts or seeds as they contain future plants. However, others believe they should eat only plants that spread seeds when the plant is eaten, such as strawberries and tomatoes. Some fruitarians do not eat grains (such as wheat, oats, barley, rice, millet, etc.) believing it is unnatural to do so. Others eat seeds and some cooked foods and some eat beans and peas. Others eat raw fruits, dried fruits, nuts, honey, olive oil, beans and chocolate.

Another group of people are those following a vegan diet. **Veganism** is the idea that "people should live without exploiting animals". As well as not using animals for food, vegans abstain from using any animal products, such as their skin (leather), fur, wool, silk, milk or milk products (dairy products such as yoghurt, butter, cheese) and eggs. Vegans adopt this point of view because the production of eggs and dairy products causes animal suffering and premature death. In battery, cage and free-range egg production, most male chicks are killed because they will not lay eggs and there is no financial value for a producer to keep them.

To obtain milk from dairy cattle, cows are kept pregnant through artificial insemination to prolong lactation (milk production). Male calves are either killed at birth, sent for veal production or reared for beef. Female calves are separated from their mothers within 24-48 hours of birth and fed a milk substitute, so that the cow's milk can be sold for human consumption. After about five years the young are killed and made into ground-meat products

such as burgers, although they might otherwise live for 20 years. The situation is similar with goats and their kids.

There is disagreement among vegan groups about the extent to which products from insects should be avoided. Some vegans will not use silk, and many vegans also regard modern beekeeping as cruel and exploitative; once the honey (the bees' natural food store) is harvested, it is substituted with sugar or corn syrup to maintain the colony. Agave nectar made from several species of the Agave plant is a popular vegan alternative to honey.

Veganism is becoming more and more popular in western countries and several top athletes (e.g. Carl Lewis), many film stars (e.g. Brad Pitt) and world leaders (e.g. Bill Clinton) are vegans. Consequently, vegan food is becoming increasingly available in supermarkets and restaurants. In 2010 the European Parliament adopted food-labeling of food suitable for vegans. The first known vegan meat shop opened in the Netherlands in 2010, selling "mock meats", and as of September 2011 there were 30 branches in the Netherlands and Belgium. Europe's first vegan supermarkets appeared in

Germany in 2011, and the first chain of vegan supermarkets opened in Berlin and plans to have twenty-one stores in Europe by the end of 2015. Another dietary choice is being a **vegetarian**. Vegetarianism is very similar to veganism, except that vegetarians may eat dairy products and eggs. They may, or may not, use animal products such as leather, fur, etc. But, like vegans there is no meat from any animal in their diet.

Vegetarians can have many reasons for this choice of diet. For example one could be a vegetarian out of respect for living creatures, for religious reasons, for cultural reasons, for the concept of animal rights, for environmental issues, for health-related reasons, or for economic reasons. Or for a mixture of many of these reasons.

Vegetarians and vegans may have problems with processed food such as cakes, cookies, candies, chocolate, yogurt and marshmallows, which often contain unfamiliar animal ingredients. For example, some vegetarians may be unaware of rennet (rennet is extracted from the stomach of slaughtered young, unweaned calves. This is a by-product of veal production) being used in the production of cheese and may therefore unknowingly consume the product.

Other vegetarians may know and not care so much. Another dietary choice is the **macrobiotic** diet (or macrobiotics), in which food and food quality are thought to have many beneficial effects and affect our health, well-being, and happiness.

This diet emphasizes eating locally grown whole grains such as brown rice and buckwheat pasta, a variety of cooked and raw vegetables, beans and bean

products, seaweed, mild natural seasonings, nuts and seeds, and fruit. Mild drinks such as bancha twig tea are recommended. The use of highly processed or refined foods and most animal products should be avoided. These foods can be combined into meals according to the principle of balance; known as yin and yang. Some Japanese stress the fact that yin and yang are relative qualities that can only be determined in a comparison. All food is considered to have both properties, with one dominating. Foods with yang qualities are considered compact, dense, heavy, hot, whereas those with yin qualities are considered expansive, light, cold, and diffuse. However, these terms are relative; "yangness" or "yinness" is only discussed in relation to other foods.

Brown rice and other whole grains such as barley, millet, oats, quinoa, spelt, rye, and teff are considered to be the foods in which yin and yang are closest to being in balance. Therefore, lists of macrobiotic foods that determine a food as yin or yang generally compare them to whole grains.

So, we have looked at four popular choices of diets, *Fruitarians*, *Vegans*, *Vegetarians* and those who choose a macrobiotic diet (there's no name for this group of people). Let's now finish by looking at some strange foods. A popular food among native Australians and native Africans is grubs. These little worm-like animals are the larvae of several types of moth. Eating these may seem horrible to us, but they are a good source of protein. Some people like to eat insects, spiders and scorpions, especially when covered chocolate. And some people like to drink snake's blood and eat a snake's heart that has just been cut out of the living animal; so that the heart is still beating as you swallow it. In fact, there seems to be nothing that is not considered to be food by some group of people.

Vocabulary

1. DIET (n.) 飲食；食物

Any food and drink regularly provided or consumed. The kind and amount of food given to a person, or animal, for a special reason

2. FRUITARIAN (n.) 果食者(只吃水果的人)

A person who eats only fruit.

3. HARVEST (n.) 收穫

The season when crops are gathered from the fields, or the activity of gathering crops.

4. VEGAN (n.) 素食主義的人

A person who does not eat any food that comes from animals and who often also does not use animal products (such as leather)

5. EXPLOIT (v.) 剝削

To get value or use from something, or to use someone or something) in a way that helps you unfairly.

a. Top athletes are able to exploit their opponents' weaknesses.

b. She said the tragedy had been exploited by the media.

6. ABSTAIN (v.) 抑制

a. To choose to stop doing something, that you (usually) like to do.

b. to abstain from drinking alcohol.

7. PREMATURE (a.) 比預期早的；早產兒

Of something happening, arriving, existing, or being performed before the proper, usual, or intended time. For example a human baby born before 37 weeks is a premature baby.

8. BATTERY (n.) 層架式雞籠

a. A large group of similar things, people, or ideas that work together, or that are used together.

b. A device that is used to store electricity and is usually placed inside a machine (such as a clock, toy, or car).

9. ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION (ph.) 人工受精

The action of making an animal (sometimes humans) pregnant but without using a male except for the production of sperm. This is a very economical way for one high quality bull to become the father of thousands of calves a year.

10. LACTATION (n.) 分泌乳汁；哺乳；哺乳期

The action of producing milk from a female body. This is typical of all female mammals.

11. REAR (v.) 飼養

To take care of a young person or animal, usually from the time it is immature to the time it becomes an adult.

12. SEASONING (n.) 調味料

Anything such as salt, pepper, a spice, or an herb that is used to add flavor to food.

13. LARVAE (n.) 幼蟲；幼體

The immature, wingless, and often worm-like form of an insect before it becomes the adult (plural: larvae). A caterpillar is the larval form of a

butterfly.

Review exercise

Choose the best word or phrase to complete the following sentences based on the text.

1. In general, fruitarians will eat only fruit, _____, and nuts.

(A. seaweed B. bread C. cheese D. seeds)

2. Some fruitarians believe it is OK to eat strawberries and _____.

(A. other plants B. tomatoes C. yoghurt D. eggs)

3. Veganism is the idea that "people should live without _____ animals".

(A. saving B. making pets of C. exploiting D. feeding)

4. To make sure farmers have enough milk to sell, cows are made to _____ milk production.

(A. extend B. have C. provide D. reproduce)

5. Some vegans consider bee-keeping to be _____.

(A. dangerous B. alternative C. unfair D. too difficult)

6. Recently, the European Parliament _____ food-labeling of food suitable for vegans.

(A. adopted B. tried C. stopped D. suggested)

7. Vegetarians and vegans may have problems with _____ food such as cakes, cookies, and candies.

(A. fresh B. produced C. processed D. sweet)

8. A macrobiotic diet _____ eating grains as the main food.

(A. makes B. suggests C. gives D. involves)

9. The idea of yin and yang is one of _____.

(A. grains B. balance C. comparison D. macrobiotics)

10. Macrobiotic foods that _____ a food as yin or yang generally compare them to whole grains.

(A. determine B. make C. produce D. give)

True or False

1. Some fruitarians think that it is wrong to eat nuts or seeds. T/F

2. Fruitarians never eat chocolate. T/F

3. Vegans do not eat meat, but can wear leather belts. T/F

4. Cows are kept continuously pregnant to increase milk production. T/F

5. Vegans do not use insect products, such as honey or silk. T/F

6. Veganism is not as popular nowadays as it was in the past. T/F

7. Top athletes are never vegans, because they need to eat meat. T/F

8. There are vegan supermarkets in Europe. T/F

9. "Mock meats" are specialized meat products. T/F

10. Beans and rice are important parts of a macrobiotic diet. T/F