

Four Tips for Feeding Vegetarians

Catering to the individual needs of eaters can be a difficult challenge, even for the most well-prepared cooks. When a member of the house is a vegetarian, creating meals that are both nourishing for the vegetarian and suitable for the meat-and-potatoes crowd can seem almost impossible. But, with these four tips, feeding a vegetarian in a meat-eating household is as easy as 1, 2, 3 (and 4)!

1. **Make layered meals.** Create a meal that begins with a base entrée that everyone can enjoy. Then, have add-on selections so all diners can make choices that work for their diets. For instance, serve pasta with tomato sauce, and have vegetables, cheeses, and meatballs on the table to be added to their plates. Or make a large garden salad with fun toppings on the side, like diced chicken for the meat eaters and beans for the vegetarians. Everyone can choose from other add-ons such as berries, croutons, cheese or dairy-free “cheese,” nuts, and seeds.
2. **Serve meatless meals.** Vegetarian or not, everyone can benefit from eating a meatless meal at least once a day. Create a baked potato bar with lots of sautéed vegetables and beans or try pizza topped with everyone’s favorite veggies.
3. **Make extra.** Take a night off cooking once in a while by doing double duty on a night that you do cook. Prepare a double batch of your layered meal or your meatless meal and store it in the freezer. Reheat it on a night when meat is the main course, or when you’re taking the night off from cooking.



4. **Adapt family favorites.** Replace the meat ingredients in your favorite recipes with a meatless substitute. Make your famous chili meatless and add extra beans or meatless ground crumbles – a soy product. You can also create a hearty soup with vegetable broth instead of chicken or beef broth. Who knows, you may like the vegetarian versions better!

Having a vegetarian in the house doesn’t have to add more work to your already busy meal preparation schedule. Experiment with these four tips to determine which ones work best for you. Even if you don’t have a vegetarian in the house, these tips can help any eater increase their fruit and vegetable intake, which is good for everyone at your table!

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