



Vegan Food Finds a Place on Long Island

TRENDING

bridget shirvell | AUGUST 13, 2015



spinach, quinoa and roasted vegetables salad. image: ehaurylik

From fast to casual to fine dining, it's easier than ever to find a restaurant serving vegan food on Long Island. Head to Roosevelt Field Mall, where [Seasons 52](#) has a vegan menu and vegan fast food is available at Maoz, Green Leafs, Little Beets, Potatopia and Johnny Rockets. In Huntington, [Toast & Co.](#) offers a vegan brunch menu, and in Freeport there's even vegan soft-serve ice cream.

Once the stuff of hippies, vegan dishes are gaining acceptance as regular food that's just not from animals, and as the popularity of the food grows so does the creativity of the chefs preparing it.

“Everyday we have 25 different dishes,” Lisa Cucinello of Tiger Lily Café said.

[Tiger Lily Café](#) is the original vegan eatery on Long Island. When Cucinello opened Tiger Lily Café in 1998, there was almost nowhere else to go to get vegan food on the Island.



Spicy raw vegan brownies with pistachios and goji berries. image: zstockphotos

“I wanted to take my knowledge of cooking and create an eatery where people had the option to eat vegetarian or vegan,” Cucinello said.

Cucinello has more than a 100 recipes that she consistently rotates. She draws a lot of inspiration from the West Coast, which she said has always been a bit ahead of the East Coast in terms of healthy eating.

Her ahead-of-its-time eatery wouldn't have survived, Cucinello said, if she didn't also offer non-vegan and vegetarian food as well, something she continues to do.

“Part of it is educating people,” Cucinello said.



Vegan curry with tofu, mushrooms and vegetables. image: veselovaElena

Educating a large group of Long Islanders on the vegan lifestyle is [Vegan LI Meetup group](#). More than 1,300 members participate in the group and there is no requirement to be vegan.

“We welcome the vegan-curious, as well as those who already made the transition away from meat and fish, dairy and eggs,” Jennifer Greene of Vegan LI said. “At Vegan Long Island events, our policy is ‘the food is always vegan and everyone is treated with kindness.’”

The meetup group hosts regular events, including restaurant outings and potlucks, and promotes film screenings and volunteer opportunities.

Greene said she personally has come to see eating animals as a justice issue. “They’re not different in any morally relevant way than the dogs and cats we love,” Greene said.



fresh vegetable market. image: Kevin Miller

It's the health benefits that are often the biggest draw to the vegan lifestyle, though. After former President Bill Clinton spoke of the benefits of vegan eating back in 2012, public interest in vegan eating [exploded in terms of Google search](#), and the Vegetarian Resource Group found that 2.5 percent of the country identified themselves as “vegan” that year, up from 1 percent in 2009.

Plant-rich diets are often high in protein, iron and other essential vitamins and minerals with evidence showing it helps mitigate obesity, heart disease and even some forms of cancer.

Cucinello, who said her customers tend to be health conscious, has a menu that is 80 percent gluten free and as many non-gmo and all organic ingredients as possible. She said the trend of vegan eating hasn't yet reached a level where it is widely accepted or there are easy to find options while eating out but that it's moving in that direction

“The younger generation is leading the way,” Cucinello said.



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Bridget Shirvell is the Digital Editor of *Long Island Pulse*. Story idea or just want to say hello? Email bridget@lipulse.com or reach out on Twitter [@breeshirvell](#).

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Christopher Judge · 8 months ago

Vegan Long Island is a great organization where I've met a lot of cool people. I'm surprised I've never heard of some establishments in this article, but I do live in Suffolk.

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Jennifer Greene → Christopher Judge · 8 months ago

Christopher, thanks for the kind words! In case you haven't seen this document yet, it's a compilation of vegan-friendly establishments, arranged by county (it's stored as a file both at the VLI meetup site, and at the VLI FB page):

<https://docs.google.com/viewer...>

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Wendy → Christopher Judge · 8 months ago

Since we haven't heard about these places, then we have to do more to promote them.

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Sheri Rocco → Christopher Judge · 8 months ago

Don't feel bad, I thought the same thing. And I live in Nassau. Lol

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Sheri Rocco · 8 months ago

Great article, thanks!

Shout out to Sweet to Lick for being the first completely vegan establishment on Long Island.

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jeff walker · 7 months ago



Superb! I am also a vegan and I only eat [Vegan Friendly Snacks And Supplements](#). there are many reasons for being vegan as it is good for health.

^ | v | • Reply • Share ›



Bridget Shirvell Mod • 8 months ago

Thanks for all the additional suggestions. Keep 'em coming

^ | v | • Reply • Share ›



gailea • 8 months ago

Excellent! So glad there are more places on LI with healthy vegan food. And let's also keep in mind the fact that plant-based dishes are better for the planet. Animal agriculture requires much more water and fossil fuels than do veggie farms.

^ | v | • Reply • Share ›



Ruth McDade • 8 months ago

Nice article, very glad to read this!

^ | v | • Reply • Share ›



Naropa • 8 months ago

Where is the Freeport soft-serve? This might be the most important question of the day for me.

^ | v | • Reply • Share ›



Jennifer Greene → Naropa • 8 months ago

Hi Naropa! Sunrise Vitamin and Health: 129 W Sunrise Hwy, Freeport, New York, (516) 379-3111 (and if you're a Facebook user: <https://www.facebook.com/Sunri...>

We've got it listed in our Vegan Dining doc (which, for future reference, is stored under "Notes" for the Vegan Long Island FB page):

<https://www.facebook.com/notes...>

And if you're not a FB user, you can access the same document from the Files page at Vegan Long Island Meetup: <http://www.meetup.com/Vegan-Lo...>

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Jennifer Greene • 8 months ago

Thank you for this great article, Bridget!

I should add that just in the time since you interviewed me, a brand-new all-vegan establishment has had its grand opening! 3 Brothers Vegan Cafe, in Copiague.

<http://www.3brothersvegancafe...>

^ | v | • Reply • Share ›



Jennifer Greene • 8 months ago

P.S. I want to note that another important reason for shifting from animal products is the environment. A great documentary is Cowsspiracy: The Sustainability Secret.

<http://www.cowspiracy.com/>

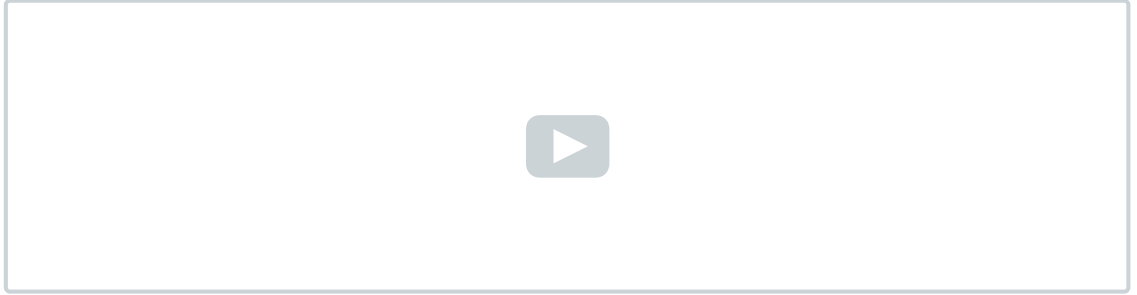
To learn more about health benefits, check out Forks Over Knives (available via iTunes, Amazon, Netflix) : <http://www.forksoverknives.com...>

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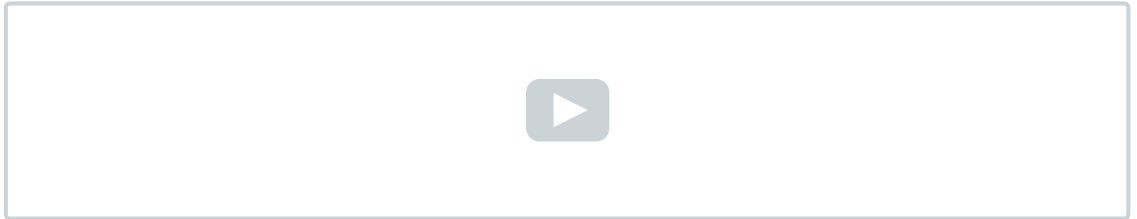


Jennifer Greene → Jennifer Greene · 8 months ago

Another important film is Earthlings (view it for free on YouTube):



My personal favorite might be Dr. Melanie Joy's TEDx talk on the psychology of eating animals. It's 19 min:



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Wendy · 8 months ago

everyone check out the vegan long island Facebook page!

^ [v] · Reply · Share >



Wendy · 8 months ago

Here is a link for some veg'n restaurants Long Island. You'll see how a lot of them have closed.

<http://longisland.about.com/od...>

^ [v] · Reply · Share >



Jennifer Greene → Wendy · 8 months ago

Well, keep in mind that there's a pretty high rate of closure for small businesses in general (whether they're veg or not).

Here's a more updated list of vegan dining: <https://docs.google.com/viewer...>

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Zulqurnain Khan · 8 months ago

I am always looking for vegan restaurants in Long Island. Good thing is I keep finding new ones every so often.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >



Victor Urbach · 8 months ago

Thanks for this helpful article Bridget. You mentioned several great establishments and organizations. VLI in particular has been a valued source of up-to-date info on where to go to find cruelty-free meals on Long Island that are tasty and healthful.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >



Verbena Santo · 8 months ago



Great article! I'm always grateful to see the media shining a light on 'the vegan choice' - best for health - of the individual, of the animals and of the planet! LI VEGAN is a great resource for those curious about a vegan choice - whether or not they are ready to commit to a vegan lifestyle - for those who have committed, it's a great opportunity to meet others who share your perspective and lifestyle ... Thanks again for an excellent article - and thanks to Tiger Lily for being in the forefront, one of my personal favorites when down in Port!

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