

## Vegetarianism

### Task 1 You are what you eat!

Write a list of all the food you ate yesterday in the table below. Be honest and try not to forget any little snacks.

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks

- Have a good look at your list.
- Is there anything that appears several times in your list? If so, what is it?
- What do you understand by the saying, 'you are what you eat'?
- Put a tick next to all the healthy food on your list and a cross next to the unhealthy food.

### Task 2 Going veggie

To go veggie is a very informal way to say 'to become a vegetarian'. Discuss these questions in your group and be prepared to share the comments with the whole group.

- What is a vegetarian?
- What does a vegan eat?
- What do you understand by organic food?
- Do you know anyone who is vegetarian?
- Why do you think some people choose to become vegetarian?
- Is meat an important ingredient for some of your country's national dishes?
- Would you ever consider going veggie?
- Would vegetarians have any problems eating out at bars and restaurants in your country?

### Task 3 Vegetarian UK? Reading task

Now you are going to work in groups of four. Each person should read only **one** of the paragraphs. Then tell the rest of your group what you read about.

#### **Vegetarian UK?**

One of the rising trends in UK food culture is vegetarianism. How far this has been influenced by recent food safety scares is impossible to say. What is certain, however, is that more people are cutting out meat and animal products from their diet.

In 1989 a MORI poll indicated that 3% of the UK's population was vegetarian, while the results of a similar poll conducted in 2001 estimated that 5.7% of the population were vegetarian. In numbers this means there are over 3 million vegetarians in the UK today and vegetarianism (where you don't eat meats), and veganism (where you don't consume any animal products) are becoming more and more mainstream in UK culture. Part of this is down to food scares, but social changes, and the fact that the range of vegetarian food available is so wide, have also played a part.

#### **Why we are healthier eaters**

Many vegetarians and vegans choose not to eat meat or animal products for ethical reasons regarding the treatment and slaughter of animals for food and the effects of meat and fish production on the environment. Recent food safety scares such as BSE (or 'mad cow disease' as it is commonly known) and salmonella have also led many to stop eating meat. Others choose to change their diet in this way for reasons of health. According to the UK's leading body, the Vegetarian Society, a vegetarian diet could help reduce the risk from certain cancers and the possibility of heart disease as well as various other health problems such as obesity and high blood pressure.

#### **Organic farming**

Another rising trend in the UK's food culture is to do with how our food is produced – due to the intensive farming procedures which are used many people are turning to organically farmed foods as they can be more certain of the quality of the product. As with vegetarianism, why people choose organic foods is largely to do with health or ethical considerations. One of the main features of organic farming is that the use of artificial chemical pesticides and fertilisers is restricted, instead organic farmers rely on developing a healthy and fertile soil and growing a mixture of crops. Organic farming isn't only concerned with plant crops, animals can also be reared organically without the use of drugs and antibiotics commonly used in intensive livestock farming.

#### **Organic food**

According to the Soil Association, the UK's leading campaigning and certification organisation for organic food and farming, three out of every four households in the UK now buy organic food in some shape or form. Some people buy organic meat, fruit and vegetables from farmers' markets or schemes that deliver a box of mixed fruit and vegetables to their homes each week. Most people, though, probably buy organic produce in their local supermarket as a wide range is available, including fruit and veg, but also items as diverse as rice pudding, chocolate, crisps and baked beans.

Now discuss with your group:

- Are there any vegetarian restaurants in your town or city?
- Is organic food becoming popular in your country?
- Is it important to you to know how the food you eat has been produced?
- Do you think vegetarians are generally healthier than meat eaters?

### Task 4 Vegetarian meets meat eater role play

Use your imagination and work in pairs to discuss vegetarianism. Imagine you are one of these characters. Try to put yourself in their shoes for ten minutes. Take a few minutes before you start to make some notes.

A - You have been a vegetarian all your life. Your parents are vegetarians and you have never eaten meat. Your family all believe that it is wrong to kill animals for their meat. You believe that no one should eat meat and you actively encourage your friends to become vegetarians. You think it is barbaric to eat meat and you are convinced it is much healthier not to eat any meat products. You are part of an animal rights group and your ideal Saturday is spent campaigning outside fast food restaurants.
B - You love eating meat and can't imagine eating a meal without any meat in it. You think that you need to eat meat to get enough proteins and keep healthy. You believe that meat production is similar to producing any other food product and humans shouldn't get sentimental about the animals. You think that some vegetarians believe animals are more important than humans and think their time and energy would be better spent campaigning for human rights. For you, an ideal day is spent fishing with a nice picnic of chicken sandwiches!

### Task 5 Fruit and veg trivia

Match the fruit or vegetable on the right with the information on the left.

1) This fruit has 300 calories and is 22% fat.	a) carrot
2) This fruit grows on a plant, which is in fact a giant herb.	b) lettuce
3) This vegetable is native to Afghanistan and was originally red, black, yellow, white or purple. The Dutch changed its colour to what it is today.	c) potato
4) The ancient Greeks believed this vegetable made you sleepy.	d) banana
5) One tree can produce 1,500 of this fruit and you pick them six times a year.	e) avocado
6) This vegetable is native to Peru and is a relative of tobacco and tomato plants.	f) lemon

### Task 6 Fun fruity phrases

Read the sentences and choose a fruit or vegetable from the box below to complete the phrase.

peanuts banana potato cucumber lemon onions beetroot plum nuts

- "I've been waiting for you on my own for over an hour! I felt like a real \_\_\_\_\_!"
- "He watches TV for three hours every day, he's such a couch \_\_\_\_\_"
- "That's great news! Top \_\_\_\_\_!"
- "I was so embarrassed; I turned as red as a \_\_\_\_\_."
- "That guy is \_\_\_\_\_; he's driving way too fast through the town centre!"
- "That lady has a very posh accent. It sounds like she's got a \_\_\_\_\_ in her mouth."
- "She didn't panic at all. She was as cool as a \_\_\_\_\_."
- "He really knows his \_\_\_\_\_ when it comes to computers. He's really knowledgeable"
- "Do you like my new jacket? It was half price in the sales so it cost me \_\_\_\_\_"

- Work in pairs and write a short dialogue. You must use at least two of the idiomatic expressions above.