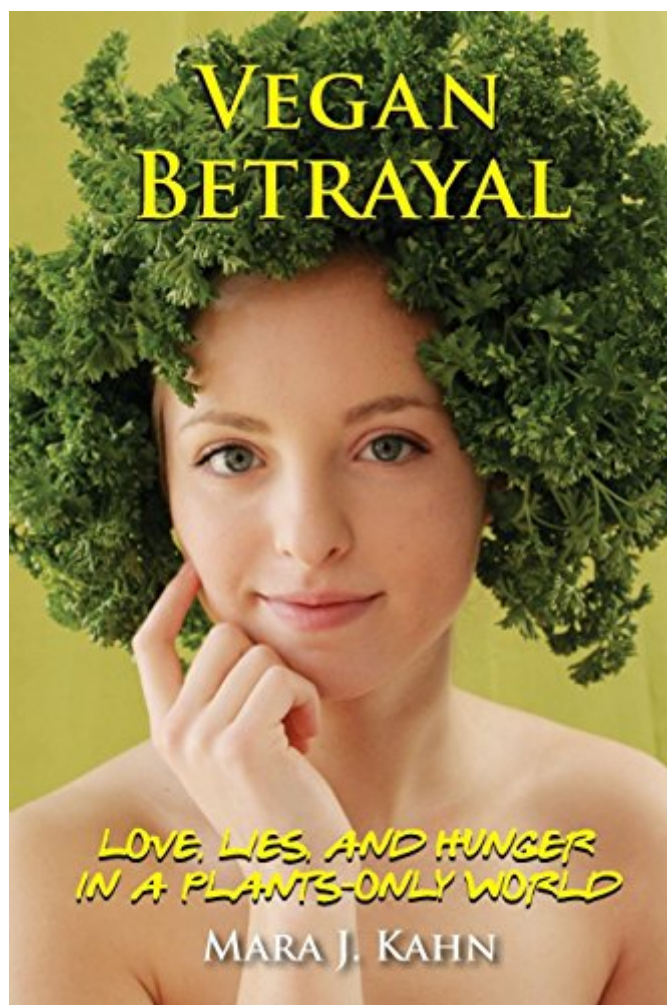


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Vegan Betrayal: Love, Lies And Hunger In A Plants-only World



Synopsis

Science meets sensuality in this penetrating examination of veganism, its scant history, dazzling health claims, fiery proponents, and growing throngs of disillusioned drop-outs. If you've ever wondered whether a plants-only diet is right for you, your son, daughter or significant other, *Vegan Betrayal* answers all your questions. Weaving intimate storytelling with cutting-edge nutrition research, this coming-of-age journey veers passionately from youthful idealism to intense questioning to mature acceptance of our genetic dictates and the earth's sacred but unforgiving biological truths. Travel the wisdom roads of the Buddha, female bowhunters, and salt-of-the-earth family farmers in this candid, comic, fierce but always honest look at our dietary choices and the rightful individuality of your chosen way. In this book you will learn:---Why some thrive and some take a dive on this non-historical, minimally researched diet---The author's concept of reverse speciesism: favoring another species' well-being over your own and other humans---All the important carni-nutrients found exclusively in animal-sourced food (there are a lot of them)---Why lab-concocted supplements and synthetics can never replace real, whole foods---How to find out if you are a high-protein or high-carb metabolic type (or something in between)---Why daily protein recommendations have been substantially increased by nutrition experts---The Ayurvedic body type that suffers most as a vegan, and which type best tolerates this restricted diet---The dark side of soy: why an excess is harmful, while eating a large variety of species, both plant and animal, is the road to good health---The 2.5 million-year anthropological record of human omnivores vs. the extremely brief history of veganism, who invented it, where and why---Why the ethical argument does not hold up under close examination of modern industrial plant agriculture---How our youthful idealism can be betrayed by reality

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Customer Reviews

This is an autobiography and an anthropology volume. If you want proof that vegan diets are harmful, that is here over and over. Vegetarian isn't much better. Her personal experience matched many others whose mind was muddled and body failing while doing all possible to never harm an animal. Like many others, she had to change. Like Lierre Keith, she then studied thoroughly and wrote the truth that should have been obvious to her years sooner. Then, with all that protect-animal philosophy, the diets fail to do that. Those who make a market for ethical meat production are much more effective. If you love to read, and want a great story, this should be 5 stars. If like me, you just want the information and get it over with, it minus a star for being too wordy. Lierre Keith's book *Vegetarian Myths* gave me the thorough study that I wanted, and I really didn't need to read this one. The Weston A. Price Foundation is another reliable source of healthy eating information. It really is a great book.

First things first. Being vegan can place you at risk for certain nutrient deficiencies. So can being a meat-eater. Kahn correctly notes that research has found deficiencies of iodine, iron, zinc, vitamins D and B12, selenium, calcium, and omega-3 fats in some vegans. According to NHANES data, Americans (most of whom are meat-eaters) are at risk for getting too little vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin E, folate, vitamin C, calcium, potassium, magnesium and iron. No matter what dietary pattern you follow, you need to pay attention to food choices to ensure adequate nutrient intake. The fact that some vegans and some meat eaters don't meet all nutrient needs doesn't say anything about the general safety of either eating pattern. In fact, a whole lot of what Kahn addresses in her book has nothing to do with the safety of vegan diets. She says that a lot of vegans are eating in ways that undermine health because of bad advice on the internet. I agree. Most of my own work is devoted to countering harmful information aimed at vegans. But Kahn fails

the logic test here. It doesn't follow that vegan diets are risky, only that you should be careful about where you get your nutrition information. And the irony of all this is that she doesn't do a whole lot better with her own set of experts. They include a doctor who "knows nutrition inside and out" and who doesn't consider beans, dairy or soy to be "authentic members of the top-quality protein category." This is the same doctor who prescribes a homeopathic remedy for Kahn's nerves. From here she gravitates to a medical intuitive and then finally to a couple of books published in 1952 and 1972 which have her convinced that some people can't be vegan because of their "metabolic typing." I'd say that Kahn's round up of nutrition experts suggests that anyone, eating any kind of diet, can find bad nutrition advice. There is a bit of a challenge in reviewing this book. While the author provides a long list of citations at the end of the book, she doesn't always match them up with what she says in the text. Sometimes she'll reference a study, sometimes she couldn't be bothered. So, for example, unless you're an expert on the role of termites in diets of African children (I'm not) you'll just have to take her word for the fact that kids who eat termites have more beneficial gut flora and more "vigor" than European children who don't eat bugs. Except that once I got into this book, and saw how misleading most of her conclusions were, I didn't want to take her word for anything. I wanted to know whether her larger point "that dietary variety is important and therefore vegans are at risk" was actually supported by this study. So I tracked down the research (1). It did indeed find a healthier gut environment among children in rural Burkina Faso compared to kids in Italy. But this was linked to a diet that the researchers said "consists mainly of cereals (millet grain, sorghum), legumes (black-eyed peas, called Niébé), and vegetables, so the content of carbohydrate, fiber and non-animal protein is very high." The children in Italy were eating a "typical western diet high in animal protein, sugar, starch, and fat and low in fiber." Yes, the African children had more beneficial gut microflora but it was because their diet was mostly vegetarian, not because they ate an occasional termite. The study doesn't support Kahn's point; it counters it. It's just one of the ways in which she misuses data to bolster her position. But I doubt this was intentional. As I started poking around the book's resources, I realized that Kahn most likely never looked at any research. She looked only at what reporters and bloggers were saying about the research. So I am guessing that her experience with this particular study (it doesn't appear in her list of citations) was through an article in US News and World Report, which "it's the media after all" played up the whole termite issue. She doesn't seem to be familiar with the

research on any of the topics she addresses and it trips her up over and over again. Here's another example. She suggests that soy isoflavones have not been shown to reduce menopausal hot flashes. Well, yes and no. Placebo-controlled hot flash studies use one of two types of isoflavone supplements. When they utilize supplements that are derived from the whole soybean and that mimic the isoflavone profile of soybeans (that is, they are high in the isoflavone genistein) they are effective in reducing hot flashes (2). Supplements that are lower in genistein, and therefore very different from actual soyfoods, are far less effective. It's a fine point, but a critical one in determining whether soyfoods affect hot flashes or not. A superficial glance at the research might suggest that they don't. A more informed analysis tells a completely different story. Kahn thinks most vegans are eating diets that are packed with carbs and too low in fat and protein. How does she know this? She's seen it with her own eyes while having lunch at a Whole Foods cafe in Boulder, Colorado. By observing two teenage teens eating blue corn chips and coleslaw (which incidently, is not vegan) and a bored child playing ring toss with her macaroni and cheese (also not vegan) she concludes that vegans eat too many carbs. And while it's possible that they balance their carb-heavy lunches with a protein-rich breakfast, Kahn says it's unlikely because breakfast for every veggie I've ever known is cereal or granola with a splash of soy or almond milk, often just a bagel with coffee or juice. I've never been to Whole Foods in Boulder, but I've looked at more than a few studies of vegan diets. Average fat intake among vegans is not particularly low; it's about 30% of calories and average protein intake is moderate at 10 to 12% of calories (2-5). Yes, vegans eat more carbohydrates than the average American. But the evidence suggests that this does not put them at risk for the insulin resistance that Kahn warns about (5, 6). In fact, among Seventh-day Adventists, vegans are far less likely to develop type-2 diabetes compared to meat eaters and lacto-ovo vegetarians (7). Likewise, when Kahn cites studies on the triglyceride-elevating effects of high-carb, low-fat diets she completely ignores the more than a dozen studies showing that vegans typically have lower triglyceride levels compared with both meat eaters and lacto-ovo vegetarians (5, 8-10). Lysine is the limiting amino acid in vegan diets, but Kahn uses some duplicitous misquoting to make it seem like a bigger problem than it is. She says: "Jack Norris, RD, himself a vegan, admits that it's very hard for vegans who don't work out every day to meet daily lysine needs because they're not consuming the calories needed to get enough from plants alone." Since I co-authored a book on vegan nutrition with Jack, I'm pretty familiar with his perspective on lysine. I know for a fact that he doesn't believe it's difficult to meet needs. Here is what he actually

says about lysine [emphasis added]: It is very hard to design a vegan diet that meets lysine requirements for a person who does not exercise daily without including legumes, seitan, quinoa, amaranth, pistachios, or pumpkin seeds. That is, it's only difficult if you happen to eliminate a huge category of plant foods from your diet. Jack recommends (as do I) at least three servings per day of lysine-rich plant foods. Menu choices might include veggie burgers, hummus, bean burritos, quinoa, pumpkin seeds sprinkled into a salad, scrambled tofu, split pea soup, falafel, cereal with soymilk, or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. There is nothing odd or onerous here. It is not particularly difficult to meet lysine needs on a vegan diet. Like every other book aimed at discrediting veganism, Kahn has a chapter on soy. And, like every other soy detractor she claims that Asians eat very little of this food and that what they do eat is usually fermented. This comes straight from the internet. It couldn't possibly come from the research, because it's not at all what the research shows. Studies published over the past 25 years have comprehensively quantified soy intake throughout Asia. The research shows that non-fermented foods like tofu and soymilk actually play a bigger role in Asian diets than fermented soy products. In fact, ethnic Chinese in China, Singapore and Hong Kong consume almost no fermented soy with the exception of soy sauce. Even in Japan where the fermented foods natto and miso are widely consumed, tofu accounts for about half of all soy intake. And depending upon the country and region in question, average soy intake ranges from one-half serving per day to about two servings per day (11). Nor has soy intake been associated with lower testosterone levels in men as Kahn warns. That's the internet again. Yes, a few case reports showed that men consuming excessive amounts of soy "12 or more servings per day" experienced a reduction in testosterone levels. But the extensive clinical trial data, which includes more than 30 studies, show that soy doesn't lower testosterone levels even when men consume the equivalent of six servings per day (12). Soy is not the only dangerous plant food according to this book. There are pages of fearmongering about wheat which Kahn alleges is an opiate due to genetic modification of its protein gliadin. Never mind that there is no genetically modified wheat on the market. Or that the digestive product gliadorphin, which has been found to have opiate-like effects in lab animals, probably can't even be absorbed by humans. Or that there is no evidence of addiction to or withdrawal from wheat. And then finally, there is this: "Science continues to discover essential micronutrients found solely in animal sourced food. If you're familiar with the Weston A. Price Foundation, you know where she's going with this. For those who don't know, Dr. Price was a dentist who, in the 1930s, traveled the world and determined that not only fine teeth, but also fine character were related to nutrition. He wrote a book called

Nutrition and Physical Degeneration in 1939, and it somehow gave rise to a movement that focuses on the benefits of butter, raw milk, and cod liver oil, and the harmfulness of vaccines, baking powder, and tofu. Dr. Price suggested that there was an Activator X that improved mineral absorption, bone development, prevented tooth decay and protected against inflammation and cancer. His followers believe that this was vitamin K2 or menaquinone. According to Kahn, vitamin K2 deficiency is widespread in the American population. According to the Institute of Medicine we have no actual dietary requirement for vitamin K2 as long as we consume adequate vitamin K1. Nor are there any established requirements for the other compounds that Kahn believes are essential nutrients like carnosine, taurine, and conjugated linoleic acid. The bottom line is that Mara Kahn was unable to maintain good health as a vegan. I can't speculate as to why that is. I only know that her book fails to make the case against a vegan diet. She cobbles together misinformation from the internet and blends it with her own faulty interpretations of nutrition research. And then for good measure tosses in a whole lot of completely irrelevant observations about nutrition. It makes for a compelling read. But by no means does it prove anything about vegan diets.

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Great reading with good information.

Mara is very well read and it shows in her diverse writing. This book is an objective look at the factors that contribute to health, and points toward moderation, not the extremism of being vegan. It also provides a research based look at veganism is not practical for many of us. This book is very insightful about physiology, history, and health. A great read for anyone looking to expand their understanding of wellness.

I love this book! Mara obviously did a ton of research and the book is very well written.. It is packed full of valuable information about food, diets, supplements, everything we ingest. It's also a very fun read as Mara takes us on her many travel adventures and intersperses food facts with her personal and spiritual journey. A must read for vegans in particular but also anyone interested in food and the powerful effects of diet. I highly recommend!

Mara J. Kahn's excellent work "Vegan Betrayal: Love Lies and Hunger In A Plants - Only World" is closer to having a superb intellectual entertaining conversation than it is a marvelous reading experience, though it is certainly that as well. "This conversation" / this thought provoking reading experience, both in depth and broad based, in a "down to earth manner" in part centers around the humanity of cultural endeavors pertaining to diets (lower case and upper case "d's" intended here). Throughout this work the concepts of human health and practical psychology when it comes to decisions about food intake are clearly evident. This thoroughly researched personable and realistic work is "open and honest" and beckons the reader to relax, to have an opened mind, as Mara J. Kahn has us journey on trails that while challenging established and accepted thought per both temporary and well ingrained eating habits/food choices clearly recognizes their intended and/or realized contributions. "Vegan Betrayal" is much much more than what I stated; however, through it all "Vegan Betrayal" a top notch read.

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