



Welcome to your new ebook!

You are beginning your vegan journey, but you want the same consistency, comfort, and, most notably, the ease of throwing something together with items you have on hand. You want to use a lifetime of practice and habits to good use and not worry about learning an entirely new repertoire of menu items. I get it and I'm here to say that the learning curve is real but doesn't need to be overwhelming.

That's why I'm so excited to share these tips with you. They've been a cornerstone of my family's plant-based lifestyle for nearly 30 years, and I hope they'll make your transition smoother and more enjoyable. These nine beginner tips are exactly what I wish I'd known when I started, and they're designed to help you ease into vegan living with confidence and simplicity.

For recipes and more guides, visit nutsandtwigs.com.

1

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE OVERWHELMING

Make small adjustments



A gradual approach is key for many people when beginning a plant-based journey. You don't have to do it all at once.

Switch the small stuff first. Think easy food swaps. Do you butter your toast in the morning? Switch to a plant-based butter like [Earth Balance](#). Do you put cream in your coffee? Switch to a plant-based coffee creamer like [Califia Farms](#).



Need to try plant-based milk? What are you waiting for?! These minor adjustments will help transform your kitchen too. You will create a pantry full of plant-based staples, making throwing something plant-based together easier.

2

KEEP THE FAMILY FAVORITES AND TWEAK THEM

There is no reason to abandon your familiar foods



It wasn't until I started to look at the foods my family loved and decided to make minor adjustments to make them plant-based that I could finally have a sense of normalcy in the kitchen without feeling the uneasiness that comes with change.

With this approach, the learning curve is not steep. If you stick with it long enough, you will naturally get off the beaten track and enter an exploratory phase.

For example, on taco night, keep all your favorite toppings - sauteed onions, peppers, guac, etc. but replace the beef/chicken with Beyond Meat or go full-on healthy and opt for tofu, seitan, black beans, or [Walnut Meat](#) filling. Explore other easy swaps for family favorites like [Vegan Baked Mac and Cheese](#), [Best Vegan Lasagna](#), [Vegan Peanut Butter Cups](#), [Vegan Caesar Salad](#), or [Vegan Picadillo](#), and see what fits your family's tastes.

3

START WITH ONE MEAL A DAY

Mornings are the easiest meal to veganize.



You can plan to make a smoothie, granola with plant-based milk, toast with plant-based butter, or easy vegan pancakes with a couple of ingredients removed and a side of vegan breakfast sausage.

Look at what you eat for breakfast and see what you can swap to make it plant-strong. You can later evolve into different types of meals or graduate to lunch and dinner when you have mastered the basics of plant-based living in the morning.



Lunch is the next easiest. Many classic lunch staples can be made plant-based with simple swaps. Replace deli meats with hummus, marinated tofu, and veggie-packed spreads for a simple wrap or try this delicious vegan tuna sandwich.

4

DON'T CUT OUT FOOD; CROWD OUT FOOD

Thoughtfully crowding out foods with plants will lead to success

If you have ever restricted your diet before, you know something psychological happens - we want what we can not have.

You may not be eating various beans, legumes, vegetables, seeds, and nuts right now. However, hundreds of plant foods have different textures, colors, and flavors. You'll only remove about three to five animal-based foods you eat regularly, such as chicken, beef, fish, cheese, and eggs. So focus on filling yourself with more whole foods rather than relying on willpower.

Thoughtfully crowding out these foods with plants will lead to success; obsessing over what you leave out can lead to disappointment. Takeaway: leave less room for the foods you are trying to avoid.

Crowd out those animal-based burgers with a healthy [Chipotle Black Bean Burger](#), for example.



5

CROWD YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDS WITH INSPIRATION

Including nuts & twigs

This tip is excellent for when you are just beginning. Start filling up your daily media feed with inspiration. This can be tricky because when you start, you want to avoid inundating yourself with Olympic-level plant-loving influencers that will overwhelm you.

Instead, start simple. Find one or two Instagram feeds showing how good plant food looks and tastes.

Frequently, you'll stumble across posts when you're scrolling and see a simple soup you can make or a delicious meal you can create easily with ingredients you already have at home, like [easy vegan tortilla soup](#) or a [20 minute vegan miso soup](#).

Work slowly, adding other accounts as you become more engaged with the plant-based lifestyle. Your social media feeds should not overwhelm you; they should inspire you to make small changes with small steps.



6

NO NEED TO GET FANCY - DON'T OVERCOMPLICATE

The simplest meals are the most satisfying.

When I first started with 100% plant-based, I overcomplicated everything. I made my sauces, my salsa, fresh beans, etc. But after a while, I realized I could save time and effort by seeking pre-made, healthy, and plant-based foods.

I rarely make beans anymore; I buy them in the can. While I still like to make my sauces and other condiments, this ultimately simplifies my life because I make it in big batches that last me a while. I always focus on simplifying what I can.

Try these sauces to stock up your fridge for ready-to-use condiments:

- [Simple Thai Peanut Sauce](#)
- [Easy Vegan Ranch Dressing](#)
- [Salsa Romesco](#)
- [Vegan Avocado Crema](#)



7

REFLECT ON WHY YOU WANT TO BE PLANT-BASED FREQUENTLY

Always remember why you are on a plant-based journey. Write it down somewhere or keep it firmly in your mind's eye. When I went 100% plant-based and vegan, I focused on why I was doing it. My health, age and all the research I read then pointed to transitioning to a whole-food, plant-based diet as what I needed to feel better, look better, and age gracefully.

I read about the harsh realities of animal welfare in the dairy and egg industries, and it struck a chord I couldn't ignore. It felt impossible to justify being a part of that system when I knew I could live a healthier, more sustainable, and deeply enjoyable life without harming animals. This perspective continues to give me the drive to make plant-based eating not just a personal commitment but a truly satisfying and delicious experience for my entire family.



8

KEEP IT FUN

Nothing sucks the fun out of something more than striving for perfection each time.

You don't need to be perfect from the beginning. Small steps ensure you are going at the right pace while keeping it fun. Share your meals with the people you love when beginning your plant-based journey. Make vegan banana mini muffins, sit with a cup of coffee, and have some good conversation. If you like eating out with your significant other, plan to eat vegan food once a month at a local restaurant.

If you like eating at home more often, plan a vegan makeover of a meal your family enjoys every week. One summer during the Tour de France, my family and I did a "tour de fries," sampling french fries from local fast food restaurants every few days. We ended up rating them from our favorite to least favorite and came up with our family's favorite fast-food fries. While I did not know then that not all fast food fries were vegan, it wasn't perfect (or healthy), but we had fun, and it is now a nice family memory. We've since done similar family samplings with plant-based milk and hot sauces.



9

RALLY SUPPORT

Nothing sucks the fun out of something more than striving for perfection each time.

When beginning a plant-based journey, some people struggle with partners, children, or friends that do not want to be a part of the journey. But you've probably snuck in food to the movie theatre before. Sneak in an Impossible Burger to your partner or child who is reluctant. Sneak in [red lentils](#) in the spaghetti sauce like in [this vegan lasagna](#).

Start crowding out foods with more plants. Take advantage of baked foods, where you can easily swap out eggs for egg replaces like in [this vegan chocolate chip cookie recipe](#).

It goes back to the first part of this post - veganize your family favorites. They'll love it and rally behind your choices if you have done it right.



WHAT I HOPE YOU TAKEAWAY

By making small, sustainable changes with the tips above, you'll eventually reach the consistency and comfort of just throwing a plant-based meal together easily.

You'll practice new habits to create a sustainable and enjoyable plant-based life. Think of small daily changes, then graduate to weekly changes, and eventually, the change will be the new normal. Aim for consistency, not perfection, and remember why you started this journey.

Make sure it fits your family's needs and preferences, and you will be closer to going and staying vegan.

I hope you enjoyed these tips and that they help you in this wonderful, compassionate journey. Visit nutsandtwigs.com for recipes to help you!