

Vegan Education in Schools

Vegan Clubs

Years 7 to 12

Vegan cooking classes

Overview

Vegan cooking classes are an engaging way to teach students practical cooking skills while highlighting the positive impact of vegan eating on animals, the environment and personal health. By learning to make easy, delicious vegan meals, students gain hands-on experience with vegan food. These classes also provide an opportunity to discuss the ethical, environmental and health benefits of veganism in a fun and interactive environment.

How to organise vegan cooking classes

1. Choose simple and appealing vegan recipes to teach.

- Select recipes that are easy to prepare and use accessible ingredients:
 - a) Breakfast: Smoothie bowls or vegan pancakes.
 - b) Lunch: Wraps with hummus, roasted vegetables and fresh greens.
 - c) Snacks: Bliss balls or popcorn with nutritional yeast.
 - d) Dinner: Vegan pasta with creamy cashew sauce or lentil tacos.
 - e) Dessert: Chocolate avocado mousse or no-bake vegan brownies.
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2. Provide all necessary ingredients and equipment for the class.

- Gather fresh, vegan ingredients for the recipes, ensuring they are easy to source and affordable.
- Prepare basic equipment such as cutting boards, knives, mixing bowls, spatulas, blenders and stoves or hot plates.
- Include allergen-friendly options like gluten-free or nut-free alternatives.

3. Start the class with an introduction to vegan eating.

- Briefly explain what veganism is and why people choose it:
 - a) Ethical reasons: Respecting the rights of animals.
 - b) Environmental reasons: Lowering carbon footprints and conserving resources.
 - c) Health reasons: Reducing risks of chronic diseases.
 - Share surprising facts to engage students, such as:
 - a) "Did you know it takes 15,400 litres of water to produce 1 kilogram of beef, but only 287 litres for 1 kilogram of potatoes?"
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4. Demonstrate the recipes step-by-step to guide students.

- Lead the class by demonstrating each recipe while explaining key techniques:
 - a) Show how to sauté vegetables without oil or blend a smooth, creamy sauce.
 - b) Explain the benefits of certain ingredients, like the protein content of lentils or the versatility of tofu.
 - Encourage students to ask questions and experiment with ingredients.
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5. Pair cooking with a discussion about the benefits of veganism.

- Use the cooking process as an opportunity to discuss topics like:
 - a) The connection between vegan eating and reducing factory farming.
 - b) The role of veganism in protecting wildlife and preserving biodiversity.
 - c) How a vegan diet supports global food sustainability.
 - Encourage students to share their thoughts or experiences with vegan meals.
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6. Include a tasting session to celebrate the dishes created.

- Once the meals are prepared organise a group tasting session where students can enjoy their creations together.
- Encourage students to describe the flavours and textures of the dishes and share their favourite recipes.

7. Provide takeaway recipes and resources for students to use at home.

- Distribute printed or digital recipe cards with the dishes made in class.
 - Include additional vegan meal ideas, cooking tips and a list of vegan-friendly substitutes for common ingredients.
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8. Incorporate a creative element to personalise the experience.

- Examples of creative additions:
 - a) Ask students to design their own vegan recipe or modify one they learned in class.
 - b) Organise a mini cooking challenge where students compete to create the most creative vegan dish using limited ingredients.
 - c) Create a "Top Vegan Chef" awards ceremony to recognise students' efforts.
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9. Discuss how veganism helps animals and the planet.

- Use real-world examples to connect the class to broader animal advocacy and environmental themes:
 - a) "By eating vegan meals, we show our respect for the rights of animals."
 - b) "Eating vegan just one day a week can save over 150,000 litres of water per year, then imagine how much difference you could make by being 100% vegan!"
 - Highlight the connection between food choices and positive change for animals and ecosystems.
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10. Inspire ongoing vegan exploration after the class.

- Encourage students to continue trying vegan meals and share their experiences with family and friends.
- Suggest additional resources, such as:
 - a) Vegan cookbooks or food blogs.
 - b) Documentaries like "*The Game Changers*" or "*Forks Over Knives*".
 - c) Social media accounts featuring vegan recipes and tips.

Outcomes

- **Practical cooking skills:** Students learn how to prepare nutritious and delicious vegan meals, equipping them with lifelong skills.
- **Increased awareness:** Cooking classes provide an opportunity to discuss the ethical, environmental and health benefits of veganism.
- **Empathy and connection:** Students see how small dietary changes can have a significant impact on animals and the planet.
- **Encouragement to explore:** Students feel inspired to experiment with vegan cooking and introduce vegan meals into their daily lives.
- **Community building:** Preparing and sharing meals fosters a sense of collaboration and shared purpose among students.