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## What it's really like to be vegan in the UK today

18 January 2022 [Ije Teunissen-Oligboh](#) [Follow @SW\\_Londoner](#)

**In the UK, people are reducing meat in their diets, creating a nation with more flexitarians, vegetarians and [vegans](#).**

In 2021, the interest in reducing meat consumption among the British population became action with 44% of people following a diet containing nutritional 'rules' and 3% identifying themselves as vegan.

According to [statista.com](#), the UK market for meat substitutes is the largest in Europe – worth over 500 million euros (£417,050,322.40).

Like many, actor and influencer Kelvin Wiedenhoff began following a vegan diet on New Year's Day 2022.

He decided to change his diet partly for health reasons, but primarily to protect animals.

He said: "Being vegan is amazing. I have much more energy and feel my acne on my back is almost gone. I also lost some fat – I feel so good.

"Everybody I speak to is proud of me because I'm doing it very healthily but more for the animals that are suffering, getting slaughtered and exploited for our human needs."

A common complaint amongst those attempting to reduce meat in their diet is that there isn't enough choice.

However more companies and shops are offering alternatives and substitutes.

The [vegan society](#) said, "In 2019 alone The Vegan Society registered an impressive 14,262 products with The Vegan Trademark.

"That's an increase in registrations from 49% in 2018, that saw 9,590 products successfully registered."

Wiedenhoff elaborated: "There is so much choice at the supermarkets nowadays, less at the express shops, but in the bigger shops, there are a lot of alternatives to meat. And they taste so good."

When asked what sort of things he eats now, Wiedenhoff explained: "Food is healthiest if it looks like how it is. So, I eat a lot of fruits, vegetables, peanut butter, almond butter, grains, sweet potato etc.

“Even though I loved cheese and chocolate, I am finding nice vegan chocolate alternatives, and oat or coconut milk for my coffee tastes good.

“Cow milk is for calves, so drinking it or eating it feels like stealing the breast milk of a pregnant woman that is intended for her child.”

31-year-old Jamie Edgecombe who lives in South London and works as a Data Scientist has been vegan since January 2021.

His vegan journey began with Veganuary but continued after watching [Seaspiracy](#) on Netflix.

He concluded that the best way to protect our water-dwelling creatures is not to eat them.



In 2020, UK vessels landed 623 thousand tonnes of fish into the UK, according to [gov.uk](#)  
Photo by [Oziel Gómez](#) from [Pexels](#)

Edgecombe found that while people in London didn't seem to bat an eyelid when they heard about his new diet, this wasn't the case everywhere: “In London, there was pretty much no reaction.

“But my parents are from the midlands and it's a hassle up there, especially because my dad, in particular, is friends with farmers.

It can come across as a bit insulting to their livelihood.”

A [report by statista.com](#) in 2021 found that only about 4% of the [silent generation](#) respondents stated they didn't eat meat, by contrast with 26% of Generation Z respondents.

Though he found it relatively easy to adjust to a vegan lifestyle, Edgecombe advised that some consideration needs to be taken: “There hasn't been much of a compromise, except for the need to be a bit more careful when choosing where to eat out.

“Otherwise, I pretty much stick with a vegan burger or a risotto. But I do miss cheese.”

When asked if he would recommend a vegan diet, he said: “I missed some stuff a bit in the first few months, but then I found the cravings for those things go.

“Except for when seeing a particularly excellent looking cheese...”

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