

# Veganism: It Can Change Sexual Appetites Too

**By: Aly Shea**

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Some choose to go vegan for the health benefits, which include a healthier heart and reduced risk of cancer, according to Amy Pumerantz, registered dietician and nutrition coordinator for Student Health Services. Others go vegan out of respect for animals, saying that animals are our friends, not our food.

And now there's one more reason some may choose a vegan lifestyle: the benefits to their sex life.

A recent study of 157 vegans in New Zealand found that a number of vegans, the majority of whom were female, did not want to date or have sex with people who, unlike them, consume meat or animal products.

"I've always dated at least a vegetarian," said Justina LaSalle, a 7th-semester political science major who has been a vegan for seven years. "I try to be open-minded, but if someone's a vegan or vegetarian, they're that much more attractive to me."

And it's not just not eating meat that can make a person seem attractive to a vegan.

"The last guy I dated, the only meat eater I've dated in years, definitely tasted different," LaSalle said. "He was more acidic, like vinegar, and he smelled pretty strong."

Julia Otero, a 7th-semester ecology and evolutionary biology major who was a vegetarian for four years before making the move to vegan just three months ago, discussed a different type of strong odor that meat eaters can produce.

"Vegans don't smell as bad when we fart," she said, theorizing that eating flesh produces a toxic buildup of bacteria and toxins.

And she's not imagining things.

"A greater protein intake and protein supplementing can produce more gas," Pumerantz said. "Particularly those who are supplementing with protein ... they notice that they pass more gas more frequently and that it may not smell as 'pleasantly.'"

But dating a carnivore isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Bethany Fischer, an 8th-semester environmental chemistry major who was raised vegetarian and then became a vegan in high school before going back to vegetarianism during her freshman year at UConn, said that she has dated both veggie-philes and meat eaters and would probably date another meat eater, as long as he was open-minded.

"A lot of people think it's dumb and don't understand," she said. "People do have good reasons for doing it ... so people should be open-minded enough to find out about veganism before they criticize."

And that open-mindedness extends to all parts of dating, including the sex aspect.

"Dating an omnivore would make for some interesting discussions regarding where to eat," said Chiron Otero, Julia's husband, who was also a vegetarian for four years before becoming a vegan three months ago. "While there are plenty of restaurants that offer vegetarian dishes that can be made vegan, some places I just wouldn't want to eat at simply

because the smell of meat is overbearing and nauseating to me now."

While a trip to a steakhouse might be out, Julia Otero was less particular.

"As long as we're not being taken to a research lab or a slaughterhouse, it's 'veg-friendly,'" she said.

Her husband, echoing her thoughts about not wanting to see animals mistreated, said he wouldn't want to go to places such as zoos, aquariums, or circuses, "where animals are objects living in unnatural conditions and often mistreated."

But both added that vegans generally still like the same kinds of dates as other romantic partners - sporting events, movies, concerts, etc.

Neither Otero has ever dated a carnivore, but both said that any relationship takes compromise and an open mind, vegan or not. For instance, calling a vegan lifestyle 'extreme' is not likely to win you any egg-free, soy brownie points.

"I hate that," Julia said. "We're in no way extreme - we're just following our hearts."

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