



Veganism GOES GLOBAL

All over the world, the plant-based lifestyle is growing increasingly commonplace, with more and more chefs putting vegan dishes at the heart of their menus — and the UK is leading the charge

Veganism once had an image problem — this much is irrefutable, yet with every passing week it becomes harder to believe. These days it's an aspirational trend; in 2019 you are what you don't eat. What's more, the plant-based revolution is no longer the preserve of the beaches of southern California. Listings website Happy Cow ranks London as the city with the highest number of vegan restaurants, followed closely by New York City, Ho Chi Minh City, Tokyo and Sao Paulo.

According to The Vegan Society, the number of vegans in Britain quadrupled between 2014 and 2018, from 150,000 to 600,000. And in 2018, UK companies launched more vegan products than those of any other nation. When bakery chain Greggs launched a plant-based sausage roll at the beginning of 2019, its overall sales rose by 14% in the first seven weeks of the year.

Almost half of the UK's vegans made the change in 2018. So what's behind the boom? Social media influencers and prominent celebrities have played a role. Everyone from Benedict Cumberbatch to Beyoncé has given plant-based eating a go, and Instagram currently has more than 75 million posts tagged #vegan. Google searches for the term have increased steadily over the past decade.

Nowhere is this rebrand more tangible than in vegan restaurant culture, a phrase that's only recently come to mean something other than lentil salad bars or psy-trance cafes. Responding to the rise of plant-based fine dining, this year's

edition of *The Good Food Guide* was the first to list restaurants with a dedicated vegan menu. French chef Alexis Gauthier was at the vanguard of this movement; under his watch, Gauthier Soho, which already has a vegan tasting menu, aims to ditch all animal products by 2020. Elsewhere in the capital, fine dining restaurants Texture, The Ritz and La Chapelle have all added vegan tasting menus.

The greasy yin to haute cuisine's yang, 'dirty veganism', is on the rise too, with dishes such as 'bleeding' beetroot burgers and buffalo chick'n wings made from seitan (wheat gluten) becoming ever more popular. London's Temple of Seitan has gained a devoted following for its popcorn chick'n and, in Edinburgh, the doughnuts at Considerit are renowned.

This is, however, an international movement. In New York City, Michelin-starred Nix puts a local spin on Southeast Asian ingredients for its menu of plant-based dishes, while Rasoterra, in Barcelona, grows the vegetables that form the basis of its tapas menu.

So what next? In the past, travelling as a vegan often meant relying on word-of-mouth recommendations or the ubiquitous Indian buffet. But vegan gastro-tourism has become a market of its own, with many tour operators now offering vegan options. More generally, with studies suggesting a plant-based diet is better for the planet, veganism is a trend that looks here to stay. If the past decade was when veganism went mainstream, the next could be when the mainstream goes vegan. *Liz Dodd*

IMAGES: EVAN SUNG; TEXTURE RESTAURANT; LAGARTY PHOTO; JAMES LEWIS

a taste of London

THREE HACKNEY-BASED CHEFS DISCUSS INGREDIENTS, MISCONCEPTIONS AND HOW PLANT-BASED CUISINE IS TAKING OVER THE CAPITAL – STARTING IN THE EAST



KIRK HAWORTH
Co-founder & executive chef of food studio and restaurant **Plates**

What motivated you to start your business?
My sister Keeley [my business partner] and I have both had a lifelong obsession with food, a love of nature and a passion for sustainability and creativity. We wanted to combine these things to create something completely innovative in food and drink — something that shows a wider audience how amazing plant-based creativity can be. We've built a multipurpose studio for food development, studies, collaborations, special events and content creation, all rooted in food expression.

What are the challenges of vegan fine dining?
There are fewer ingredients to work with, and to create incredible dishes from vegetables, fruit and plants takes time and dedication. You have to master delivering richness without dairy, depth of flavour without meat stocks and strike the balance of being refined, but with substance. We create more challenges for ourselves though, as our desserts are also made without refined sugar. These challenges have forced us to find alternatives and led us down a new and exciting path.

What are you most proud of?
Firstly, of creating a style of food that's unique to Plates. We have a different way of creating and presenting plant-based food, delivering flavour profiles that are refined and interesting. I'm also proud we don't use refined

sugar. Our ethos follows my personal journey in food; I don't eat any sugar apart from what naturally occurs in fruit. I really believe eating desserts with only naturally occurring sugars is an exciting area of exploration. It also addresses the issue of refined sugar being at the core of so much of our food, while being so damaging to our long-term health.

What's currently most popular?
Our gluten-free liquorice bread. It's got a great crust on the outside and is aerated and light in the middle. It's very moreish and quite different to any other gluten-free breads I've tried. We serve it with organic olive oil and a blitzed, slow-roasted carrot and hemp seed dip. It's a wonderful combination.

If you could run a vegan restaurant anywhere else, where would that be?
Somewhere surrounded by nature, such as the Peak District or a spot on the English coastline; somewhere we could grow all our own organic produce.

What would you like to share with people who might be sceptical about vegan cuisine?
That it can be rich, filling and delicious for all palates. There are always good and bad experiences to be had when trying new things, so it's important to not be put off by presumptions or past experiences. With so many people pushing the boundaries and refining their creations, it really is an exciting time for plant-based cooking. plates-london.com



KING COOK
Chef-owner of casual international restaurant **CookDaily**

How easy is it to be creative with vegan cooking?
When you're creating vegan dishes, you have to understand the science of cooking. Extracting flavours from veggies isn't like meat, where you can burn the fat (and, let's be honest, that's where the flavour really is); it's all about understanding what you're working with. At the moment, I'm making crisp vegan bacon from coconut flakes, which I'm marinating in tamari, paprika and maple syrup for that balance of sweetness, stickiness, savouriness and saltiness. Without my previous experience [in non-vegan kitchens], it would be difficult to create the menu I have today.

What do you think about London's vegan scene?
Being a vegan chef in London is still quite rare — but then, they're calling East London the mecca of veganism in England. When I first opened CookDaily in 2015, there were only a handful of restaurants around. Now, in East London alone, we're talking up to 25 restaurants dotted around near us. I believe we kicked down the doors and made it more accessible for people to actually say 'I'm going to open a vegan fried chicken place' or 'I'm going to start a burger place and we're not going to call it plant-based, we're going to call it vegan.'

What's your typical clientele like?
It includes everyone. The younger generation [particularly] love what we're doing, but we're also feeding locals, office workers, families, vegans and non-vegans alike. A lot of people come through who aren't vegan and, for me, that's part of the connection, as that can lead on towards something else. I would say we feed everyone, we really do.

Do you hope you might inspire people to change their lifestyle?
A hundred percent — that's what I'm here for. I started a vegan restaurant for this. And four years on, it's been an amazing journey.

What misconceptions about veganism would you like to correct?
Things have changed; this is a new vegan London. It's not just lasagne, stodgy risottos and pasta bakes anymore. We have exciting things like vegan fried chicken shops, a classic Italian, and then you have Cook Daily, which is international, plus vegan burger joints and loads of markets — so it really is an interesting place to explore vegan food, especially in East London. It's different now; it's no more hippy guys with dreadlocks.

If you could open a vegan restaurant anywhere else in the world, where would it be?
I really want to take CookDaily worldwide. America is my first choice, without a doubt, and the second would be southeast Asia — probably Thailand or somewhere like that. cookdaily.co.uk

IMAGES: ANTON RODRIGUEZ, JORDAN CURTIS, HUGHES

Opening pages, from top left: Dirt Candy, Los Angeles; courgette flowers at Gauthier; vegan cheese platter at Kopps, Berlin; Flower Burger, Milan; Texture, London

This page, from top right: King cooking noodles; vegan udon noodle stir-fry at CookDaily

Opposite page: beetroot tartare with avocado, redcurrants and fennel pollen at Plates



MERIEL ARMITAGE
Co-founder of
vegan pub
The Spread Eagle

What are the challenges of creating vegan pub food? We set out to challenge the idea that vegan food is just for hippies and hipsters — all about chickpeas and chia seeds — and we knew some people would be sceptical about us opening. Luckily, our fantastic team share our vision of showing that veganism is for everyone and can be every bit as fun and flavourful as non-vegan offerings.

What are your favourite ingredients? We were one of the first to pioneer pulled jackfruit in London — it's got such a meaty texture and is so versatile. We serve it from the griddle in burritos and roasted in carnitas ('little meat' tacos). Plus, we make sticky barbecue 'ribs' with our secret recipe glaze.

What's most popular? Our beer-battered tofish taco. It's inspired by the Baja California region of northern Mexico, and also pays homage to battered cod from your traditional British chippy. We wrap flaky tofu in nori to give it the flavour of the sea, then pair it with zingy pickled cabbage, salsa verde and sour cream.

Where else would you like to open a restaurant? LA, baby! To be among our heroes. thespreadeaglelondon.co.uk



Jackfruit carnitas

Meriel Armitage substitutes traditional pork for jackfruit, which, she says, has a "pulled-meat texture and the ability to absorb the flavours of the sauce"

SERVES: 6 **TAKES: 1 HR**

INGREDIENTS

5 tbsp rapeseed or vegetable oil, plus a drop for the pan
 2 x 400g tin jackfruit, drained
 1 bunch fresh coriander
 500g tomato salsa
 2 red onions, finely diced
 1-2 jalapeños, sliced into 1cm rounds
 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 2 tbsp ground cumin
 ½ tbsp dried oregano
 2 tbsp Mexican hot sauce
 100g nutritional yeast
 12 mini corn tortillas

FOR THE PINEAPPLE SALSA

½ white onion, skin removed and ends trimmed
 1 jalapeño
 2 garlic cloves
 240ml pineapple juice

FOR THE SOUR CREAM

400g unsweetened soy, almond or coconut yoghurt
 juice of 1 lemon

METHOD

1 First, make the pineapple salsa. Set a frying pan over a high heat until very hot, then add the onion, jalapeño and garlic cloves, turning until charred on all sides; this should take a few mins. Put the pineapple juice in a saucepan set over

a medium-high heat, then add the charred onion, jalapeño and garlic, along with a pinch of salt, and cook for 10 mins, or until the liquid is reduced by half. Transfer to a blender and blitz until almost smooth but retaining a little texture (alternatively, use a stick blender). Set aside until ready to serve.

2 To make the sour cream, mix the yoghurt, lemon juice and salt to taste, then set aside.

3 Add 4 tbsp of the oil to a large frying pan and set over a high heat until smoking. Tip in the jackfruit and a pinch of salt and cook for around 30 mins, turning regularly, until all the water in the jackfruit has evaporated and the flesh has turned crisp.

4 Meanwhile, pick a small handful of coriander leaves and set aside. Add the remainder, including the stalks, to a blender, then tip in 400g of the tomato salsa. Blitz until almost smooth but retaining some texture.

5 Pour 1 tbsp of the oil into a frying pan set over a medium heat. Add the onions, jalapeños and garlic and cook for 5-10 mins until the onion is translucent. Stir in the cumin and oregano and cook for 30 secs more, then add the hot sauce, cooked jackfruit and blended tomato salsa and mix well. Cook for a further 10 mins until the sauce has been absorbed, then stir in the yeast and cook for a final 5-10 mins until fully dissolved.

6 Meanwhile, set a large frying pan over a high heat. Add a drop of oil and brush it around the pan, then add as many tortillas as you can fit. Cook for 10-20 secs on each side until bubbling slightly. Repeat until you've warmed all the tortillas.

7 To serve, divide the tortillas between six warmed plates and spread each one with 1 tsp pineapple salsa. Follow with 1 tbsp jackfruit mix, 1 tsp reserved tomato salsa and a drizzle of the sour cream. Garnish with the reserved coriander.



IMAGES: CHRISTIN LUDWIG; MATTEO CARASSALE; GETTY



Clockwise from top left: crowds at Markthalle Neun; Brammibal's Donuts; train crossing the Oberbaum Bridge; Kopps

48 hours in

Berlin

FROM BEETROOT-GLAZED DOUGHNUTS TO MEAT-FREE DONER KEBABS, VEGAN DINING IS REVOLUTIONISING THE GERMAN CAPITAL. WORDS: CHRISTIE DIETZ

I look down at the earthy arrangement of pine nut-crusted celeriac adorned with chestnuts, redcurrants and shallots, and I'm slightly concerned: I'm only halfway through my seven-course tasting menu and I'm already rather full.

I've come to Kopps, a vegan fine dining restaurant in Berlin's central Mitte district that has dark walls, low lighting and a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. The dishes thus far have comprised a creative, playful mix of textures, colours, shapes and flavours: there's been neat orange cubes of sous vide turnip with radish, parsley and lingonberry; a creamy black salsify soup poured over beetroot, horseradish and pear; and stewed lentils with leek and balsamic, which came in a small glass jar. I'm also taken by the drinks pairings, which have included a locally brewed IPA, a Sardinian grenache and a yuzu cocktail that's simultaneously bitter, sweet, salty and sour. I only have 48 hours to explore Berlin's vegan scene and I'm wondering whether I've already peaked with this first meal.

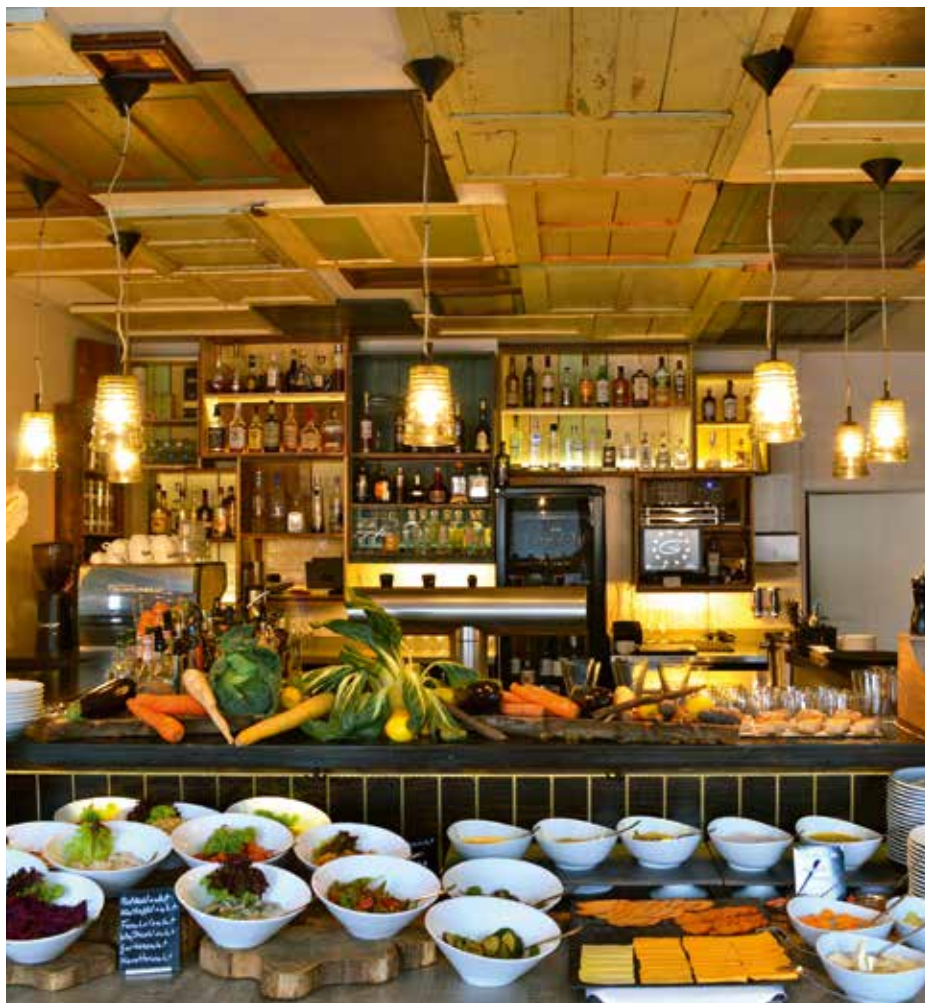
The next morning, I go in search of something completely different: the handmade, deep-fried confections at Brammibal's Donuts, arguably Berlin's best-known vegan treat. I wander through the bustling weekly Turkish market by the Landwehr Canal, which marks the border between Neukölln and Kreuzberg. The sun is shining, and the queue at the bakery is nearly out the door. They regularly sell out of doughnuts here, so I'm lucky to snag both a table and a taste of the goods. I try two: chestnut-filled chocolate, and walnut-white chocolate, topped with a bright pink beetroot glaze. Cutting the first of these in half, the dark chocolate dough breaks into soft flakes and the chestnut custard squelches out pleasingly. It's light and fluffy — and in a city known for its traditional jam-filled Berliner, this is a very good alternative indeed.

I find plenty more vegan offerings an hour's walk away at Berlin's historic indoor market, Markthalle Neun. At the TofuTussis food stall, there are shallow trays of fresh organic tofu, made in the cellars downstairs

from German-grown soybeans. Marked in coloured chalk on the blackboard is today's special: a barbecue-sauce-marinated tofu burger with jackfruit, salad, pickles, mustard and vegan mayonnaise. By the time I've circled the market hall and arrived at traditional organic bakery Endorphina, I'm ready to eat. I choose a vast triangular scone with whole raspberries bulging beneath its golden crust; it's crumbly, delicious and not too sweet.

Going out for vegan food appears to be more than a trend in the German capital, and in the neighbourhood in which I'm based (alternative, artistic Friedrichshain), it's clearly here to stay. My hotel, the Almodóvar, lays on an organic, vegan-vegetarian breakfast spread involving the tastiest, flakiest croissant I've had in years. On the short walk there from the station, a number of eateries catch my eye: a pizza joint advertising the arrival of vegan cheese; a hip vegan doner kebab shop with a hunk of seitan rotating steadily on its back wall; and a Mexican restaurant with vegan rolled tacos on the menu. At the other end of the neighbourhood, between a graffiti-covered former train repair yard and the double-decker Oberbaum Bridge, is a branch of vegan supermarket Veganz, into which I pop to pick up a snack in case I get hungry between meals. I needn't have worried; it stays untouched in my bag until I'm on the train home.

On my final day in the city, I take an early-morning stroll around the weekly Boxhagener Platz market, inspecting pickled Spreewald gherkins and bottles of bright orange sea buckthorn juice, then head for brunch with friends. We eat at Happy Baristas, a light, modern multi-roaster cafe decked out with hanging plants, 'no laptops' signs and a colourful mural by Berlin street artist El Bocho. The daytime-only menu caters for omnivores, but there are vegetarian and vegan options available. My dal makhani is hearty and warming, the dark mound of spicy black lentils topped with crunchy chickpeas, cubes of potato, fresh coriander and two long, crisp leaves of cavolo nero, all swimming in a pool of pale, creamy coconut milk. I wash everything down with a pot of fresh mint tea.



For dinner, I make my way to Kanaan, a lively Israeli-Palestinian restaurant in Prenzlauer Berg that serves a mix of vegetarian and vegan dishes. As I sit at a bare wooden table, a large piece of black slate is slid before me. In its centre, a spoonful of chickpeas nests in a thick swirl of hummus, accompanied by two plump, handmade falafel. They're straight from the oven and, when broken in half, their vibrant green insides release hot puffs of steam. I'm also served a chunky Arab-style potato salad with red onion, sumac and tahini sauce; half a roasted cauliflower drizzled in date honey and sweet pomegranate molasses; blood-red beetroot roasted with Moroccan spices; and a freshly chopped salad finished with pomegranate-date dressing and a sprinkling of za'atar. Once again, I find there's no need — or indeed room — for any meat at all.

I've ticked off a lot of vegan boxes during my weekend stay, from a mouthful of currywurst at the hotel breakfast (points for the curry ketchup, fewer for the sausage itself) to a generous serving of rice noodles with peanuts, salad and crispy baked tofu at casual Vietnamese restaurant Com Nam. Despite my best efforts, I've still barely scratched the surface of Berlin's plant-based offerings, which include Michelin-starred dining at vegan-friendly Cookies Cream. I'm usually an omnivore (albeit at the vegetarian end of the scale), but my mind is made up: if I ever make the move to giving up animal products altogether, Berlin is where I want to be based.

From top: brunch buffet at Kopps; sabich at Kanaan

How to do it

GreenMe Berlin offers neighbourhood tours that include visits to sustainable producers, projects and shops, plus a bite to eat, for €30 (£26) per person. Private vegan tours are available on request. greenmeberlin.com For further information, go to germany.travel

VEGAN BERLIN

Three to try

Sabich at Kanaan

This traditional Israeli sandwich is served in a deconstructed, make-your-own format at Kanaan. Stuff soft pita with Iraqi-style hummus, chickpeas and slices of oven-roasted aubergine, then add fruity mango pickle and spicy zhug (hot sauce). Cool yourself down with a glass of homemade orange blossom lemonade. kanaan-berlin.de/en



Baumstriezel at Street Food Thursday

You'll find countless vegan options at Markthalle Neun's weekly street food market, including momos (South Asian dumplings), empanadas (Latin American pastries) and tempeh rendang (a spicy soy dish). If you're craving something sweet, go for traditional Hungarian baumstriezel. This doughy, sugar-coated, charcoal-roasted sweet treat is usually basted with melted butter, but you'll be able to pick up a vegan version here.

Brunch at Kopps

On weekend and public holidays, the brunch buffet at Kopps is a popular option. There's soy yoghurt with fruit and muesli; vegan cheeses and cold cuts; and warm options including vegan scrambled 'eggs' and kaiserschmarren, a classic Austrian dish of shredded pancakes served with fruit compote. kopps-berlin.de/en

IMAGE: KEFER HARBBI

destination dining

OUR PICK OF THE WORLD'S VEGAN HOTSPOTS, AND WHAT TO ORDER WHEN YOU GET THERE. WORDS: LIZ DODD

MILAN, ITALY Joia

In 1996, Joia became the first vegetarian restaurant in Europe to be awarded a Michelin star. Raw food is king here, with a focus on foods like kombucha and kimchi. joia.it/en/
TRY IT: 'Il volto della natura': a cluster of root vegetables with cannellini beans and wasabi.
CITY WATCH: Flower Burger is renowned for its colour-coordinated baps and fillings — think a yellow roll with chickpea patty and vegan cheese. Alternatively, try the apricot jam croissants at Pave or sample the vegan panino at Wes Anderson-designed Bar Luce.



WARSAW, POLAND Youmiko

This popular restaurant blends Japanese traditions with Polish influences: slivers of marinated tomato and beetroot replace the tuna on nigiri; shiitake mushrooms are served crunchy, like soft-shell crab; and seaweed pearls take the place of caviar. Equally impressive is the price — the 18-piece tasting menu comes in at around £14. [Facebook.com/youmiko.vg](https://www.facebook.com/youmiko.vg)
TRY IT: Gunkan maki with corn (see recipe, right).
CITY WATCH: For more Japanese flavours, try the Vegan Ramen Shop or, for something more Polish, Lokal Vegan Bistro for punk and politics with your pierogi.

Clockwise from far left: il volto della natura at Joia, Milan; vegan sushi at Youmiko, Warsaw; Wes Anderson-designed Bar Luce, Milan; Gatherings, Christchurch



IMAGES: LUCIO ELIO; KAROLINA WYDRYSZEK; ATTILIO MARANZANO

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND Gatherings

Award-winning Gatherings is all about sustainable, local, seasonal food and natural wines. From fermented chilli pesto to sage, shallot and tomato tartare, the food here is light and creative. Meat and fish come as optional extras on the tasting menu. gatherings.co.nz
TRY IT: Aubergine tataki, galsed with honeydew and vinegar, served with grated radish and wasabi.
CITY WATCH: The city has an array of organic, vegan-friendly spots, plus dozens of community gardens in which produce is grown. Old-school hippies will love herbal medicine dispensary and cafe The Herb Centre, while gourmards should try wine bar Not Without You for local pinot and platters of vegan cheese and soy chorizo.



VIENNA, AUSTRIA Tian

Formal yet friendly Tian counts a Michelin star and three Gault & Millau toques among its accolades, and offers a seasonal menu revolving around creative Asian cooking using Austrian ingredients. Its sister bistro, a 30-minute walk away, offers similarly smart vegan food in a more relaxed setting. tian-restaurant.com/wien/en/
TRY IT: 'Sunny Side Up', a mango and IPA dessert that looks disconcertingly like fried eggs.
CITY WATCH: The popular Anker bakery chain offers a range of sweet treats, including a vegan twist on the classic apple strudel. Vienna also hosts two 'Veganmania' festivals during the summer: one in the city centre (7-10 June) and one on the Donauinsel island (24-25 August).



Gunkan maki with corn

This easy 'battleship' sushi comes from vegan restaurant Youmiko, in central Warsaw

MAKES: 12 PIECES
TAKES: 1 HR 20 MINS

INGREDIENTS

- 180g uncooked sushi rice
- 50ml Japanese rice wine vinegar
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 sheets of sushi nori, cut into 12 long strips, each about 3cm wide
- ½ tsp wasabi
- 1 tsp vegan mayonnaise
- 1 fresh corn cob (or 200g cooked sweetcorn)
- 1 tsp teriyaki sauce
- chives, chopped, to serve
- 1 tsp sriracha sauce (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Cook the rice according to pack instructions. Meanwhile, put the vinegar, sugar and ¼ tsp salt in a small saucepan and set over a medium heat until the sugar and salt dissolve, taking care not to let the mixture come to the boil; this should take around 5 mins. Set aside to cool.
- 2 Once the rice is cooked, gently fold in the cooled vinegar mix. Fold the rice every 5 mins until lukewarm.
- 3 Add the corn to a pan of boiling water and cook for 5 mins, then drain. Remove the kernels and discard the cob, then set the corn aside to cool. (If you're using cooked sweetcorn, skip this step.)
- 4 Shape a thumb-size amount of rice into an elongated egg shape. Lay it flat and wrap a nori strip around the rice to form a cylinder. Top with a dab each of the wasabi and mayonnaise. Repeat until you've used up all the nori and rice.
- 5 Brush the corn with the teriyaki sauce and scorch with a brulée torch to lightly char (alternatively, char the corn in a hot, dry frying pan for 30-60 secs). Spoon the corn onto the maki and finish with the chives and sriracha sauce, if you like.

NEW YORK CITY, US
Candle 79

This chic vegan restaurant on New York's Upper East Side first opened in 2003 and also has two sister restaurants: a bistro/bar on Broadway and a cafe on 3rd Avenue. It's notable for its raw recipes — such as the homemade cheese platter, featuring almond, pepper-macadamia and herb-cashew cheeses — and creative menu, which is smart but not fussy; seaweed salads and wild mushroom crepes are offered alongside cheeseburgers and burritos. candle79.com

TRY IT: The legendary seitan piccata.

CITY WATCH: Dirt Candy on the Lower East Side is worth a trip for the portobello mousse with cherries and truffle toast, while all-vegan Champs Diner in Williamsburg is famous for waffles topped with chick'n and maple butter.



TULUM, MEXICO
The Real Coconut

Everything tastes better when eaten in paradise — and this little strip of sand, yoga studios and jungle on Mexico's Caribbean coast is just that. Treat yourself to lunch on The Real Coconut's sea-view terrace; the nacho bowl, made from local greens, coconut flour tortillas, melted chipotle coconut cheese and pico, are particularly decadent. therealcoconut.com

TRY IT: Avocado tempura — pieces of avocado coated in a light coconut flour batter.

CITY WATCH: Tulum is renowned for its creative (if pricey) cooking: even Noma has hosted a pop-up here. Head to Raw Love for enormous smoothie bowls and 'living' pizzas (made with sprouted seed crusts) or, if you're craving something a bit greasier, venture up the beach to Charly's Vegan Tacos for 'porkless crackling' tacos in hot chilli sauce.



Clockwise from main: trio of tacos at Charly's Vegan Tacos; spring risotto at Little Pine, Los Angeles; plant-based cheese board at Alegria, Tel Aviv; Charly's Vegan Tacos, Tulum

READ IT
Find our interview with Eric Brent at nationalgeographic.co.uk/food-travel

LA's finest
AS CHOSEN BY HAPPY COW
FOUNDER ERIC BRENT

Little Pine

This chic Los Angeles restaurant is owned by musician and activist Moby, and all profits go to animal rights organisations. The menu and atmosphere reflect seasonal, Californian cuisine within a minimalist yet cosy setting. Favourite dishes include lemon and poppy seed pancakes and croissants, as well as the savoury seasonal flatbread. littlepinerestaurant.com

Veggie Grill

Originally established in Irvine, Orange County, this veggie fast-food concept has been a huge success, and is now a national chain with several LA branches. It's a go-to for its reliability and consistent quality. Omnivores love the burgers and mac and cheese, while, personally, I'm happy with the nutrient-dense bowls, grilled tempeh and salads. veggiegrill.com

Shojin

Japanese restaurant Shojin has two locations in LA, and both regularly feature on the city's vegan 'best of' lists. Sushi options go far beyond the usual cucumber and avocado rolls, and some of the more extravagant creations are torched at your table. theshojin.com

Happy Cow is a global listings website for vegan and vegetarian restaurants. happycow.net



TEL AVIV, ISRAEL
Alegria

Restaurant/cafe Alegria is famous for its plant-based cheeses (available from the adjoining shop) and Middle Eastern-inspired cooking; options include charred aubergine with pesto and tahini, and tofu kebabs in a beetroot marinade. The seating area gets busy quickly, particularly around brunch, so get there early. TRY IT: Sourdough focaccia stuffed with tofu, seaweed, herbs, tahini and lemon harissa. CITY GUIDE: Trendy bar Bana offers minimalist plates with a punch — think burnt beetroot with persimmon in orange syrup and cashew cream, or papaya and avocado salad with cacao nibs. Shawarma restaurant Sultana, meanwhile, serves mushroom kebabs with tahini dressing and a tangy mango pickle. Green Wave, Israel's first vegan supermarket, has around 4,000 products lining its shelves. ●