



The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide
Peak Performance for Everyone from Beginners to Gold Medalists

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*To my husband, Bob,
the "Wind Beneath My Wings"*

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FOREWORD

The human body is the simplest yet most complex bit of working machinery. It is a marvel of movement, engineering, grace, and strength in sport with, possibly, a "million-mile motor"—if given the right fuels. Each new day provides new knowledge and usable information about fueling this magnificent machine to maximize fitness and performance.

In *The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide*, Lisa Dorfman scores by giving 10- to-100-year-olds ways to maximize optimal fitness. Matching vegetarian nutrition to exercise makes this book an operator's manual that will have a lasting positive impact on quality of life for many who might have become couch potatoes with bad bodies.

Eating and exercise do not take vast amounts of time, and both can become enjoyable within the limits of progressive moderation. Exercise programs or diet plans are merely outlines, so remember, too much may lead to failure; a little bit can lead to more and more success. If you grasp Lisa's concepts of progression, apply them, and selectively modify them, you are well on the way toward winning performance and personal satisfaction that will give you a high quality of life as you move down the road. Keep in mind that you can have a changed energy system with the guiding principles that Lisa provides in this nutrition text, which has a basis of sound science and experience tied onto it.

It may not be outlandish to believe that "when you feel good, you have more energy, you move quicker, and you just feel better about yourself." If that is not a winning combination of factors that can generate a healthy America, one has yet to be discovered. Lisa Dorfman has created vast opportunities for everyone.

BOB BEETEN
DIRECTOR, SPORTS MEDICINE
UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

PREFACE

Sports and exercise have been a major part of my life ever since I can remember. As a child I was always on the go. I didn't walk to school, I ran. Neighborhood boys asked me to join their pickup games. Later, I became something of a female "jockette," excelling in cross-country, track and field, baseball, and basketball. And since then, I have enjoyed a good deal of success as a professional marathon runner and triathlete.

Many say my achievements can be chalked up to genetics, along with a dose of hard work and determination. I won't deny that I am blessed in many ways, but I believe that 98% of my speed, strength, and endurance is due to one thing—my diet.

For more than two decades, I have been a vegetarian. It all started at the age of 15 when my Austrian-born mother returned to the workforce and my 50-year-old father retired and became "Mr. Mom." My life would never be the same.

Despite my dad's faith, genetics, and athletic background, occupational stresses had taken the best years of his life. His health concerns were mounting. High cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood pressure, and diabetes were just the beginning.

Dad's days of meat, potatoes, beer, and ice cream obviously weren't working for him as he entered midlife. But then he read

about Nathan Pritikin, the vegetarian guru of the 1970s. Dad became convinced that he needed to adopt a 10%-maximum-fat/vegetarian diet plus an exercise program to get his life and health back in control. It was a last resort before trying prescription drugs and psychotherapy.

I was shocked to see a grown man give up his meat and potatoes. But he did. And every day he prepared a menu of vegetables, grains, fruits, and plenty of supplements. He also started bicycling 20 miles a day. I supported his effort by giving up my preteen diet of fast food burgers, french fries, Diet Coke, and ice cream. Dad lost weight and reduced his levels of cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood sugar and pressure. He achieved—and maintained—15% body fat while thriving on a vegetarian diet that allows fish (pesco-vegetarian). For me, Dad's change laid the groundwork for my future as a nutritionist, psychotherapist, and coach.

I've never looked back since giving up chicken, fish, and red meat. In 1992, Hurricane Andrew destroyed Miami and my life. Our possessions blew as far as the Bahamas. Yet later that year I ran the best major marathon I had ever run, beating my personal record by 10 minutes and placing second overall at the Olympic Marathon course in Atlanta. Six months after giving birth to my third child, breastfeeding, and dealing with the stress of new motherhood again, I finished my first half-ironman—five hours of ocean swimming (1.2 miles), bicycling (56 miles), and running (13.1 miles). Since 1990, I have won or placed in the top 1 or 2% in 18 marathons, a 50-kilometer road race, and hundreds of triathlons, duathlons, and 5K to 30K road races. I've competed from sea level to 14,000 feet altitude and from 16°F to 100°F.

Why This Book?

For several years now, I have taught athletes at every level and every age how to enhance their performance with food. A good many of the athletes have been vegetarians at some time in their lives, but many more were not.

When I set out to write *The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide*, I knew it would interest two types of people: affirmed vegetarians who

know or suspect that they are not getting the most from their diet, and nonvegetarians who may or may not be curious about eating more of a plant-based diet but are definitely looking for an edge in their sport. Which describes you?

Eating a vegetarian or plant-based diet won't automatically elevate you to the top ranks of your sport or activity. If you're a weekend athlete, a vegetarian diet won't suddenly allow you to bicycle or jog twice your normal distance. Nevertheless, a well-chosen vegetarian diet will help you feel stronger and healthier. Just ask the 17 top vegetarian athletes who contributed their insights to this book.

For Dave Scott, six-time ironman champion, being a vegetarian athlete means "never having ups or downs in training performance and having the ability to refuel easily afterward." For Art Still, a six-foot-seven-inch, 255-pound former Kansas City Chiefs football player, a vegetarian diet helped build energy and endurance and decrease body fat. Other athletes such as Ben Williamson, a world-class sailor, and Debbie Stephens, a world-class equestrian show jumper, find that being a vegetarian helps them stay at their best competitive weights.

The benefits of a vegetarian diet rich in complex carbohydrates, fiber, and naturally low-fat foods are well known and numerous. But science is just discovering the magic of the micronutrients and compounds that exist in plant-based foods. These ingredients help maximize the potential energy available in the muscles and protect important cells in our bodies.

The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide shows you how to maximize the benefits of a vegetarian diet for your specific athletic needs. Though you're welcome to read it cover to cover, feel free to skip around. In 10 chapters, you'll find juicy, hands-on sports nutrition advice. Part One explores food's impact on physical activity and sports, including the best "fuels" for your body—from the macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein, and fats) to the micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals). In Part Two, you'll discover specific ways to use a vegetarian diet to reach your athletic goals.

If you are not a vegetarian and perhaps even a bit apprehensive about switching to a plant-based diet, you will learn how to adapt simple formulas, recipes, and tips to enhance your nutritional health as well as your training and fitness program. If you've already made the switch to a vegetarian diet, you will learn new and easy ways to reen-

ergize your current eating regimen from the pros. Regardless of your activity level, you will have a better understanding of sports nutrition science and get a behind-the-scenes look into the lives of world-class vegetarian athletes.

The athletes profiled in this book were not raised vegetarian. They elected to make the switch in their teens or adulthood while pursuing more serious, high-level training and competition. They represent a variety of ages, sports, and cultural backgrounds. They also follow different types of vegetarian eating programs, from semivegetarian to lacto-ovo vegetarian to vegan. Their inspiring stories reflect how a plant-based diet can be applied to any sport at any level.

The goals in this book have broad applications and scientific support, also. They comply with federal dietary guidelines and the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Guide Pyramid. They also meet the recommendations of other recognized pyramids such as the Mediterranean and Asian pyramids, which are plant-based, and the American Heart Association and American Cancer Society guidelines.

While these guidelines have slightly different takes on what it means to eat healthfully, they all validate the need for a diet rich in carbohydrate fuel, stabilized with protein and sprinkled with fat, glued together with a variety of vitamins, minerals, herbs, and phytochemicals. In *The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide*, I apply these guidelines to the needs of active individuals like you by providing

energy, carbohydrate, protein, and fat "formulas"

fluid, vitamin, and mineral recommendations

plant-based menus for peak performance

One of my goals for this book is to take sports nutrition beyond simply eating specific foods for a purpose. A vegetarian diet is rich in tastes and textures. And contrary to popular belief, vegetarians are more than just granola-eating former hippies or picky eaters who pore over food labels checking for meat and animal byproducts. Recent research from The Women Physicians Health Study suggests that 69% of female physicians who describe themselves as vegetarians do so for health reasons. Also, surveys of consumers from health food stores, traditional supermarkets, and a vegetarian food fair from 1974, 1992, and 1997,

respectively, cited health consistently as the major impetus for a plant-based diet.

Vegetarians are passionate people who believe in themselves, their faith, the earth, and our children's future. They also savor good food. That's why I enlisted spa chef Jason Hanners, a former student of mine at Johnson and Wales University, to create simple, fast, and tasty recipes for vegetarian appetizers, soups, salads, main courses, and desserts. Jason experienced his own "plant-based conversion" when he adopted a semivegetarian program 2 years ago and lost 115 pounds.

I'd like to share three important points before you read further:

1. The food companies and products mentioned in *The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide* have not provided any financial support in exchange for appearing in the book. They were selected based on recommendations from the athletes, Chef Hanners, or myself.
2. The recipes throughout the book have been placed in chapters or sections that relate to the composition, ingredients, or nutrient density of the food. Sometimes they just pop up, so don't be surprised!
3. Whenever you change your normal diet, activity, or lifestyle habits, ask your primary health care provider, such as your physician, if the program is suitable for your age and medical status. Do not attempt any program before getting the go-ahead from the medical professional who knows your needs best.

After completing the book, continue your transformation to a peak performance, plant-based diet by contacting me at my Web site (www.lisadorfman.com) for additional guidance and assistance.

Giving Back

In an effort to give back to the future and create great American athletes, I took a great deal of time and effort before starting this book to select a nonprofit organization that could benefit from a portion of the income that I receive from this book. I selected the SportsMed 2000 Program of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC).

SportsMed 2000 is a sports medicine program formed by the USOC to raise funds for education, research, program development, and equipment that is not available within the current USOC budget. The funds will ensure the best health care systems, education programs, research methods, medical technology, and nutritional guidance to help each athlete achieve his or her goals.

According to Bob Beeten, USOC Sports Medicine Director, the program "ensures the best possible sports medicine care for U.S. athletes in a cutting edge environment, and serves as a resource center for the dissemination of information for the entire Olympic sports community."

I made a commitment to give 10% of my net proceeds from this book to SportsMed 2000 to support America's athletes in 2000 and beyond. This is my way of passionately giving back to the sport and profession that I love.

FOREVER HEALTHY, FIT, FAST, AND VEGETARIAN . . .
LISA

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I am grateful to the Lord God, who walks me through every challenge and success in my life.

To my children, Rebecca, Danielle, and Joseph, who reflect His miracles and love and my "vegetarian pregnancy diet" every day in every way.

To my mother, Melanie, who taught me to be strong regardless of life's circumstances, and my father, Walter, who encouraged me to be a vegetarian when I was 15.

To my siblings, Bruce and Linda, for being my role models in love and life.

To the athletes spotlighted in this book, who lent their time and talents and shared their strength, beauty, and passion for their vegetarian lifestyles.

To my dear friends, training partners, and colleagues who have molded me into the person, athlete, nutritionist, and mom I had always dreamt of being.

To mystery author James W. Hall, my neighbor and friend, who inspired me to write from my mind, heart, and soul.

To former *Miami Herald* sports reporter David Kilmer, my editor and friend, for his faith, honesty, and guidance.

To Gloria Mazer, L.M.T., my massage therapist since 1992, who has helped me to stay physically and mentally fit between competitions and the "chapters" of my life.

To Barbara Barbier, B.S.F. Teaching Leader, and my B.S.F. sisters for their fellowship, love, and support.

INTRODUCTION

For many people, especially Americans, no meal is complete without meat. It is a tradition. Nonetheless, it is a relatively young tradition.

The earliest example of a plant-based diet dates to about 400,000 to 360,000 B.C. in the middle of the Pleistocene period, during which man "used fire to cook venison which supplements his diet of wild plants (hackberry), roots, nuts, acorns, legumes, and wild grains." God even inspired vegetarianism into the writing of the Old and New Testaments, beginning with the book of Genesis: "Everything that has a breath of life in it I will give every green plant for food" (Genesis 1:30).

Historically, most of the world has eaten a largely vegetarian diet. Only in affluent areas such as Europe and North America, where most citizens could afford meat and meat products, has a diet centered around meat become traditional.

In the United States, vegetarian diets didn't get much attention until the 19th century. Sylvester Graham, a Presbyterian clergyman and author, publicly attacked meats, fats, white bread, and even mustard, ketchup, and pepper, calling these foods "injurious to the health and stimulating to carnal appetites." Graham's popular book, *A Treatise on Bread and Breadmaking*, and his vegetarian-based hotel chain brought vegetarianism to the masses as thousands flocked to consume vegetarian diets. The champion of the vegetarian movement came in

1876, when the Seventh Day Adventist and surgeon John Harvey Kellogg created vegetarian foods and fed them to thousands who visited his Michigan retreat. He noted, "How can you eat anything that looks out of its eyes?"

The relationship between vegetarian diets and sports performance was first recognized in the 1800s. Initially, a preeminent physiological chemist promoted the concept that protein was the sole fuel source for all muscular movement. Research in the 1850s proved this theory false. Indeed, carbohydrates and fats were found to be the major sources of fuel for muscles.

Vegetarian athletes of the mid- to late 1800s were some of the first to prove the superiority of a plant-based diet, especially in endurance events. The London Vegetarian Society formed an athletic and cycling club that outperformed meat-eating competitors. Vegetarian athletes dominated walking races. In a German 100-kilometer walk, 11 of the top 14 finishers were vegetarians. In 1912, the vegetarian runner Kolehmainen became one of the first men to finish a marathon in under two and a half hours. Numerous other achievements and studies from this period reinforced the success of vegetarian diets for sport.

Recently, a California scientific researcher compared 351 vegetarians to 8,891 omnivorous runners and revealed that vegetarian runners average 13 to 14% more miles per week than non-vegetarians, have slimmer waists and lower total and LDL cholesterol by 3 to 5% (see chapter 5), and drink less alcohol.

Vegetarians of All Types

There are many different types of vegetarianism. There is even a distinction between a vegetarian diet and a plant-based diet. According to the American Institute on Cancer Research, a plant-based diet is more than eating garden flowers. A plant-based diet is "scientific lingo for a diet that consists primarily of vegetables, fruits, grains, and other foods from plant sources. It's different than a vegetarian diet in that it may include modest amounts of meat with an abundance of vegetables and fruits."

Vegetarian diets, on the other hand, eliminate animal products to different degrees.

Types of Vegetarian Diets

Semivegetarian	Includes some but not all groups of animal-derived products, such as meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, milk, and milk products
Lacto-vegetarian	Includes milk and milk products but excludes eggs, fish, seafood, and meat
Lacto-ovo-vegetarian	Includes only milk, milk products, and eggs
Ovo-vegetarian	Includes only eggs
Vegan	Excludes all animal products, including eggs, milk, and foods that include animal byproducts
Fruitarian	Eats only fruits, nuts, honey, and olive oil
Macrobiotic vegetarian	Restricts animal products and progresses to a specific regimen "balance" of grains, fruits, vegetables, and some fish using in part the yin/yang philosophy and following a specific lifestyle that includes meditation, washing rituals, and special food preparation

A Healthy Kick

The health benefits of vegetarianism are numerous, according to clinical and experimental research studies as well as a position statement issued in 1998 by the American Dietetic Association.

One major advantage to consuming a plant-based diet is the reversal of coronary heart disease, shown most recently by Dean Ornish, M.D., and his Preventive Medicine Research Institute. His program demonstrated that arteries that have become clogged with fatty deposits actually respond to lifestyle and dietary changes, including a low-fat vegetarian diet, stress management, smoking cessation, moderate exercise, and emotional support. Mortality from coronary heart disease is lower in vegetarians. This appears to be due to the diet's naturally low content of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and animal protein. The typical vegetarian diet, compared with a meat-based diet, also has more folate (which reduces levels of homocysteine, thus reducing the risk for coronary heart disease), antioxidants such as vitamins E and C, and carotenoids (vitamin A), as well as phytochemicals.

Other health benefits of a vegetarian diet include reduced rates of hypertension, perhaps due to higher potassium intake; a lower incidence of death from Type 2 diabetes due to a higher intake of complex carbohydrates; less obesity; and lower body mass indexes (BMI). Constipation and diverticulosis are also less common in people who consume a high-fiber vegetarian diet.

Reduced rates of lung and colorectal cancer have also been shown, likely because of the abundance of dietary fiber, vegetables, and fruits consumed. Lower estrogen levels in vegetarian women may also protect against breast cancer. A 1998 study published in the *American Dietetic Association Journal* reported less oxidative DNA damage and lower breast cancer risk when consuming cooked vegetables versus a diet with meat.

A vegetarian diet may also treat or prevent conditions such as renal disease, osteoporosis, and portal-systemic encephalopathy (a disease of the brain). A low incidence of kidney stones has also been found in vegetarians. Some plant proteins decrease proteinuria (excess protein in the urine) and improve other kidney functions such as glomerular filtration rate and renal blood flow.

Vegetarians seem to absorb and retain more calcium from food. Lacto-ovo-vegetarians, for instance, have been shown to have the same calcium intakes as nonvegetarians. However, the lower protein intakes of vegetarians causes a calcium-sparing effect (see chapter 7). In addition to regular weight-bearing exercise and a low sodium intake, this may help prevent osteoporosis in susceptible women.

Environmental Concerns

Besides the health benefits offered by a vegetarian diet, there are also environmental implications. Modern methods of animal production waste energy and deplete topsoil. The grain used to feed animals provides only a fraction of the energy involved in eating the grain. For every 100 calories of plant material eaten by a cow, only 10 calories are stored in the cow, and one pound of pork provides 1,000 to 2,000 calories yet requires 14,000 calories to produce. It takes an average of 430 gallons of water to produce one pound of meat. And more vegetarians means fewer animals raised specifically for human consumption.

Waste materials associated with animal production are also a concern. Manure from overcrowded areas pollutes rivers and lakes. Excess nutrients cause algae growth that chokes aquatic life and causes nitrate pollution of drinking water. Animal waste produces gases that are released into the atmosphere, contributing to acid rain. Forests are also being cleared for new grazing land, diminishing the earth's ability to absorb carbon dioxide. This, along with the methane produced by animal waste, may contribute to global warming.

In the end, a plant-based diet is not only beneficial for the health of individuals, athletes, and families, it is important for the future of our planet.

**PART ONE—
FOOD AS FUEL**

1—

The Plant-Based Sports Engine

At age 64, Ruth Heidrich should be an inspiration to us all. After being diagnosed with breast cancer in 1982, Ruth participated in a research project with Dr. John McDougall, a pioneer in the use of nutrition as medicine, and transformed her diet and exercise program. Ever since, Ruth has found no challenges with being a vegan, completely animal-free. In fact, she says it gives her more endurance and speedier recoveries from the six ironmans and over 700 road races, triathlons, and marathons she has completed.

In 1997 alone, Ruth completed 63 races, including the Senior Olympics. She's run the Great Wall of China, the Ironman New Zealand and the Ironman Japan (placing first in her age group), the Moscow Marathon, and other races all over the world. In her "spare" time at home in Hawaii, she hosts her own radio show, *Nutrition and You*, and has written two books, *A Race for Life: From Cancer to Ironman* and *The Race for Life Cookbook*. She has also given over one hundred talks every year since 1988.

Ruth takes no medications, alcohol, or even supplements. Her daily diet includes oatmeal, greens, Ruth's Ironwoman Pho (Vietnamese soup, which is her favorite one-pot meal; see page 149 for the recipe), brown rice, vegetables, baked potatoes, carrots, popcorn, and apples. Her favorite prerace meal is a special blend of brown rice, kale,

banana, and blackstrap molasses (see page 37). Her favorite snacks include air-popped popcorn, sweet potatoes, apples, and carrot sticks.

I chose Ruth as the first vegetarian athlete to spotlight in *The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide* because she inspires even the best athletes in the world and anyone else with an appreciation for the energy one needs to fight and overcome disease, let alone begin an admirable sports career at the age of 41. To me, Ruth represents the ultimate plant-based sports machine.

So, how does Ruth make the best use of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins in her vegan diet? How does she convert the energy from food to fuel her body for training, sport, and life? How does her vegan, plant-based eating program enhance her body's ability to compete at peak performance and recover quickly for everyday tasks?

Let's begin to tackle these questions by learning how the body uses and translates the nutrients from food to energy.

Warmup Session

Get ready for a condensed version of Energy Metabolism 101. I have tried to simplify some complicated terminology, but like cars, some of the words are not "convertible." After you read this section, you'll have a better appreciation for the impact and necessity of a plant-based diet for peak sport performance.

Picture your body in continuous motion—from bed to shower, work or school to sport, meals to reading, TV to sleep. To support these activities, the body is in constant need of energy, or calories. In addition to fueling the muscles to contract and relax for exercise, calories are used for

digestion, absorption, and assimilation of food

glands such as the pancreas and thyroid to secrete hormones like insulin and thyroxin, which help your body to function at rest and during exercise

proper electrochemical messages from the brain to pass through nerves and stimulate muscles to contract and relax

the synthesis of new compounds, such as protein for building larger muscle tissue through strength training

sample content of The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide: Peak Performance for Everyone from Beginners to Gold Medalists

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