# LESSON 17: "TRAVELING AS A VEGAN"

Traveling as a vegan may sound challenging, but with a little preparation, you can eat the way you want anywhere your wanderlust takes you. Whether you're in transit or in a foreign country, there are ways to ensure you receive delicious dishes prepared without any animal products.

How to prepare

Preparation is key! Before traveling, do some research online to find out if there are any vegan restaurants where you're going. You can use websites like www.happycow.net (they also have an app) or www.vegman.org, travel sites like stay.com (they have vegan guides for several cities) or simply google the name of the place and "vegan restaurant."
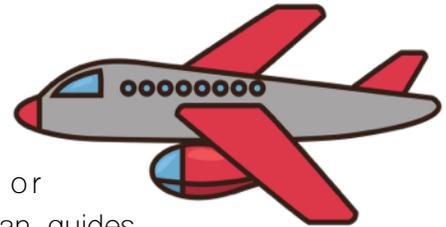
It can also be great to ask local vegans for advice. I do this fairly frequently. I simply look up Facebook groups, blogs or Instagram accounts and then contact people who live where I'm going. I've met some great people this way and it's also a good way to have a not-so-touristy experience.

In transit

If you're used to traveling by bus, you'll know that they commonly don't serve or sell food, so you would have to prepare your own food either way. Some great snacks include fruits (tangerines, apples, dates, figs...), vegan crackers and granola bars. Trains often have a café selling snacks on board. I wouldn't expect too many vegan options there, but you might find some vegan tortilla chips or something similar in case you forgot to pack snacks. If you're traveling by plane, you can actually order a vegan meal ahead of time. If you book your flight online, they'll give you the option to choose a menu before confirming your booking. If that is not the case, or if all they have is a vegetarian option, you can send an e-mail to the airline's customer service asking them to have a vegan meal ready for you.

I've had some surprisingly delicious vegan meals on airplanes.

What if you don't speak the language?

I always thought that I'd somehow be able to easily find vegan food no matter where I went – until I traveled to Japan. Of course, I knew that I wasn't going to be able to speak the language or decipher anything, but I think I underestimated how challenging that would feel at times. At non-vegan restaurants, my Japanese friends helped me order (you'd be surprised at how many things contain fish sauce in Japan, including some soy sauces) and when I ate out alone, I only went to vegan restaurants and cafes and pointed at whatever looked best on the menu. People there were always very forthcoming, friendly and patient.

If you find yourself in a place where you don't speak the language, you don't know anyone and there are no vegan restaurants, the best trick is to prepare a note that says "Hi! I'm vegan. That means that I don't eat any animal flesh, including fish, and no other animal by-products like milk, butter, cheese, eggs and honey." and have someone translate it for you beforehand. You can also get the "vegan passport" (it costs about 5$), which contains a definition of veganism in about 85 different languages, as well as some images for very complicated situations.

How can I ensure my hotel accommodates my preference for vegan food?

Hotels are usually very big on customer service and will always try to help you out in order to make you feel as comfortable as possible. Simply send an e-mail to the front desk manager telling them about your situation. If it is an all-inclusive club or if there is a restaurant in the hotel, send an e-mail to the chef or ask to meet them upon arrival. I used to work in hotels an we would receive emails about special dietary requests all the time. The chefs and kitchen staff actually preferred that as it allowed them to prepare in advance.