



# The fussy eater

## Ariel Leve

There are many different varieties of vegetarian. And that includes the ones who eat bacon...

**T**he other day I read about a dating site for vegetarians called Veggiedates. What's more appealing than online dating with moralising vegetarians looking for love? Staying single.

Even though I'm a vegetarian, and have been for 30 years, I don't think of myself as one. Maybe because unless I'm asking the waiter if a soup is made with chicken stock, I'm not focused on it. My soul mate could be a butcher.

The one time I dated a vegetarian it was by accident. I liked him at first but after the 10th lecture about animal welfare, I wanted to show up wearing a fur coat and order the veal.

Does this make me a self-hating veggie? An anti-vegie? Perhaps. But that's only because I'm a vegetarian due to neurotic reasons, not decent, ethical ones. Which leads me to distinguish between the varying categories of vegetarians.

**1**The Diet Veggie. Otherwise known as the episodic vegetarian. They'll cut out meat for a few weeks and proudly declare, "I'm vegetarian now" with unwavering conviction. As soon as they say this you know it's



only a matter of time before they're carving a turkey. Anything they say about how great it is being vegetarian doesn't count.

**2**The Health-Conscious Veggie. This one is always talking about the virtues of avocado and the best source of protein. They work at a health food store and usually look anaemic.

**3**The Ambivalent Veggie. Having been vegetarian for so long, the ambivalent vegetarian worries they won't be able to digest meat any more and the fear of getting sick trumps everything. And also, they've lost the craving for meat which makes it easy. And also, they eat fish.

**4**The Moral Veggie. Frequently self-righteous because they're vegetarian for moral reasons which

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makes them better than you. They tend to pass judgment on meat-eaters.

**5**The Moral People-Pleasing Veggie. This person goes out of their way to pretend it's not a morality issue so as not to upset the person they're dining with and make them feel bad for ordering beef. They'll say, "No, it's fine. It doesn't bother me" while secretly resenting them.

**6**The American Veggie. The vegetarian who sometimes eats bacon.

In America, the vegetarian label is loosely interpreted. If you tell someone that you're a vegetarian they say, "Yeah but you eat chicken, right?"

My friend, Lisa, laments the unlucky fate of the chicken. "There's no such thing as a sacred chicken," she says, "It's the default meat for everyone."

A British friend suggested that one reason for this is that Americans might think chicken doesn't qualify as meat because a chicken lays eggs which makes it more similar to fish. I'm not so sure. I think it could be that chicken tastes so bland, it's more like eating nothing, so who cares.

As if the dating world wasn't precarious enough, it turns out Veggiedates shared a database with other non-vegetarian sites and they admitted that "meat eaters comprised a majority of its users".

It must be jarring if you're on Veggiedates and your date suggests dinner at steakhouse. Then again, it does save time. At least you know early on that you're not a match. **OFM** [ariel.leve@observer.co.uk](mailto:ariel.leve@observer.co.uk)

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