

Vegan Cat Food

As the Internet is full of different and contradictory opinions about vegan nutrition for cats, and as finding conclusive information about the potential harm or benefit of it proved very difficult, we would like to share some of our own experience for the benefit of others.

We were looking for cat food without any animal derived products, and found quite a few options. Some were commercial types of cat food, and some involved adding special supplements to food we had to cook, bake or mix ourselves. Our cat has been eating vegan food for over 18 months. His coat is thick and shiny, he likes his food and seems to be very happy. He had recently undergone a thorough medical examination in which he was found to be in excellent health.

What is missing in vegan food

Of what we have read, the nutrients cats in nature can get only from animal sources are taurine (an amino acid), vitamins A and D, and a certain fatty acid; these are essential for the cat's nutrition. All animals need those, but while some other carnivores can synthesize some of these themselves, cats cannot, and thus depend on their food.

How to get what is missing

Taurine, vitamins A and D and the necessary fatty acids are found in certain algae, or may be synthesized from vegetable sources. Commercial foods enriched with these or nutrition supplements added to homemade foods can do the work. The foods and supplements we use meet the requirements of the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) Cat Food Nutrient Profile.

What sorts of food are we talking about?

Our cat gets a commercial type of vegan kibble, which he likes, and a home made treat - Seitan (see below) mixed with a commercially available nutrition supplement (made according to the recipe we received with this food supplement). This is his absolute favourite, he has never been so enthusiastic about any other food. In terms of nutritional value, each of these two would be sufficient and a fully nutritious food by itself, according to the manufacturers. We give him both kibbles and Seitan daily. We mix Seitan for him once a week, it only takes a few minutes, and lasts for 7-8 days.

Our cat also likes most kinds of commercial soy-cheese and soy-meat slices (soy-ham, soy-pastrami and the like). It took a short period of

trial and error, experimenting with different kinds of commercial and home made foods until we found his favourites.

The kibble we give our cat is manufactured by *Evolution*, and we bought it over the Internet (see the links below). It may seem relatively expensive -- we paid around \$70 for a 40 lb. sac -- but it lasts very long (it took our cat almost a year to finish one sac). On their website they offer an introductory package, that includes both a small container of the kibble food, and a can of moist food. We tried the two types of canned foods, but our cat did not like them (he did like the avocado-pea type, but only the first time he tried it. The next day he wouldn't touch it. The vegetable stew did not appeal to him at all). However, he did like the kibbles very much.

The nutrition supplement we use for food we make ourselves is *Vegecat*. We got that over the internet too (see the links below). It is a powder one adds to different kinds of foods. It is not very expensive, and lasts long. They also offer a kibble mix, to which one only has to add flour, knead, bake and cut into kibble. We tried that, and it required quite a bit of work to make, and our cat was not enthusiastic about the outcome (he only ate it when we mixed it with cooked squash, which is, by the way, one of his favourites foods). However, the supplement we add to Seitan according to the recipe that came with it is a huge success. They add a recipe booklet to every package, and we were simply lucky enough to succeed with the first we tried, so we cannot recommend any others.

Would cats eat vegetables?

Most definitely. Our cat just loves freshly cooked squash, most types of cooked beans (Lima beans, black beans and chick peas/garbanzo beans are his favourites), crushed tomatoes (not to mention any type of beans and tomatoes stew) - and this is only what we have discovered so far. We heard of other cats eating other types of vegetables too. However, it is essential to remember that vegetables alone are absolutely insufficient, and must only be given in addition to other foods that provide the cat with all the necessary nutrients.

Where to get vegan cat food

- **Vegepet** (Vegecat food supplement, Kibble mix):
<http://www.vegepet.com/>
- **Evolution** (ready to eat Kibble food, "meat" cans):
<http://www.petfoodshop.com/>

These manufacturers of commercial food offer products for other animals, as well as many kinds nutritional supplements.

Seitan is the Japanese name for a meaty-textured food made of gluten (wheat protein), soy sauce and other ingredients. Prepared seitan is

available in supermarkets and natural/health food stores as meat substitute, but it is easily mixed at home from cheaper raw ingredients with the necessary added nutrients. Gluten is wheat protein and is available in big supermarkets, natural/health food stores etc., it is in fact high-protein wheat flour used to enrich baked goods, so sometimes it may be found in these sections of the supermarket. Sometimes it is referred to as "vital wheat protein".

Other sources

- [VeganCats.com](#)
- [Vegetarian Pet Food @ dmoz.org directory](#)

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