



THE MEAT CONUNDRUM

We all know we should eat less meat, right? It's better for our health; it's better for the planet, it's better for the animals. We know that eating less meat is good for many reasons, but are we reducing our meat intake? For those that love meat but want to be mindful of their consumption, supermarkets and restaurants can be a tough place to navigate.

The conventional way of raising meat is burdensome to the environment and less than stellar for the animals. According to the CDC, pollutants from factory farms can have a negative impact on humans and animals. The animals that call these factory farms home are treated as commodities and often experience intense confinement and inadequate treatment. This method of raising animals is viewed as the solution to feeding our growing population but is this really the best way forward? If you're omnivorous and want to embark on a more mindful way of eating, you don't have to abandon your burger all together.

LESS MEAT, BETTER MEAT

To improve animal welfare, reduce our carbon footprint and improve our health, we as eaters must vote with our forks. We should all be eating less but higher quality meat. To do so, we need to seek out animal proteins that have a higher standard of welfare. Finding a local supplier that you can develop a relationship with is great but perhaps not possible for everyone. It's also important to familiarize yourself with food labels. Look for labels with a defined set of publicly available animal care standards that are third-party verified. In the café, look for dishes that blend meat with other ingredients like a mushroom blended burger.

MOVE MEAT BEYOND THE CENTER OF THE PLATE

There's no question better meat can be expensive. If we think of meat as an indulgence and reduce the quantity that we consume, we can feel better about putting our hard earned dollars towards the good stuff. In countries around the world where meat is a luxury, it's typically a garnish to the main dish of rice or noodles and lots of produce. Incorporating more dishes into your diet where meat plays a supporting role can reduce your meat intake without the feeling of deprivation.

SKIP MEAT NOW AND THEN

Another way to reduce your meat intake is to take a break from it for a meal or two throughout the week. Customize this to fit your lifestyle. Pick a night of the week to make a meatless meal. Others might prefer to skip meat at breakfast and lunch and have a small amount of animal protein at dinner.

Reference:

1. <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/themes/en/Environment.html>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/other/agricultural/afo.html>
3. <https://awionline.org/content/consumers-guide-food-labels-and-animal-welfare>

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