



Vegan News

San Diego



February, 2026

Vegan-News.org

Vegantine's Day



Local News • Vegan Cuisine Month

Interview: DxE's Maggie Bellah & Dave Engel

Black History Month • Chocolate Truffles Recipe

Vegan News *San Diego*

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San Diego seeks to support and
grow the local vegan community
by highlighting the work of local
restaurants, activist groups,
animal sanctuaries, diet and
nutrition classes, and vegan/
cruelty free businesses.

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From the Editor

I did it again! I keep misspelling Valentine's Day, sorry about the typo on the cover. We have several Valentine's pieces for you: local chocolate makers for the adults, classroom candies for kids, dating resources for vegan singles, and a delicious chocolate truffle recipe from Melanie Kantor for just about anyone.

Veganuary is now past, but as it happens, February is Vegan Cuisine Month, thanks to the work of the American Vegan Society. Vegan Cuisine Month encourages vegans to create opportunities for omnivores to see what they've been missing, as well as to celebrate vegan heroes. Read on to learn about the occasion, and the resources that AVS offers.

We're deeply indebted to Dave Engel and Maggie Bellah, organizers with the activist group Direct Action Everywhere (DxE), for giving an in-depth interview in which they each share their experiences and insights on the urgent need for activism, and what is needed to achieve change. There are many ways to help the activists in San Diego, and the emotional rewards of doing so are substantial. It's our hope that readers will be inspired to connect with one or more of our local activist groups, on the front lines, behind the scenes, or somewhere in between.

For Black History Month we spotlight some Black leaders in the local vegan community, as well as national and international public figures.

This month's Vegan & Cruelty Free page tackles cosmetics, breaking down the good (vegan & cruelty free), the complicated (cruelty free brands owned by non-cruelty free corporations), and the ugly (companies that test on animals).

New this month is a Fun Page, with tidbits and trivia that will amaze, amuse, and hopefully not annoy. In this month of amour, we hope you find a lot to love in these pages.

Vegans united!
Stephen White

LOCAL NEWS

- Local activist Ellen Ericksen organized three protests during the San Diego rodeo held January 16-18 at Petco Park. The protests were covered by various local news stations (including CBS News 8, Fox 5/KUSI News, KPBS), offering a crucial counterpoint to the sunny depictions offered by the event promoters and Petco Park. Shortly before the event, an opinion piece by Ericksen was published by the *Times of San Diego*. In the days after the rodeo, attorney Bryan Pease announced that in the animal cruelty lawsuit against the Padres and C5 Rodeo by APRL and SHARK, the rodeo would be prohibited from using pregnant mares, and would be required to provide on-site veterinary care with “comprehensive medical equipment.”
- To the dismay of the community, it was announced in late January that the fine dining restaurant Vulture and the diner-style eatery Dreamboat were closing as of February 8, after the building that houses both restaurants was sold.
- Girl Scout cookie season has arrived, and there are FIVE vegan cookies: Adventurefuls, Caramel Chocolate Chip, Lemonades, Peanut Butter Patties, and Thin Mints. (NOTE: The Girl Scouts use two bakeries to make their cookies. San Diego is served by ABC Bakers, which offers more vegan options than Little Brownie Bakers.)
- City Heights Vietnamese restaurant Thanh Tinh Chay was ranked #21 on Yelp’s Top 100 US Restaurants list, covered by local news station CBS 8. Peace Pies ranked #53 in the 2024 ranking.
- Oceanside zero-waste restaurant The Plot is launching a new nonprofit, The Plot Garden Project, “dedicated to growing food, fostering education, and building stronger connections between people and the land.” An inaugural celebration will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 4-7 pm. Tickets are \$6, available online, with proceeds benefitting the project.
- An article in East County Magazine covered the efforts by Strategic Action for Animals (SXFA) and others to expand the law prohibiting the retail sale of commercially bred dogs, cats, and rabbits to include birds. SXFA cofounder Amit Dhuleshia is interviewed in the article. Registered Lemon Grove voters can sign the petition at the Lemon Grove Sprouts Farmers Market, weekdays 3-5:30 p.m.
- A Lunar New Year celebration is taking place at Local Roots Kombucha in Vista on Monday, February 16, with a Shanghai-style Chinese buffet dinner and magic show presented by Viridian Productions, with food by local Chinese cuisine popup/catering company Stone Monkey. Tickets are available through Eventbrite.
- McDonald’s-inspired L.A.-based vegan fast food chain Mr. Charlie’s soft-opened in Pacific Beach in January, with an official Grand Opening on January 31. A Hillcrest location will soon follow.

Have a news tip? Get in touch! info@vegan-news.org

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL NEWS

- The Netflix romantic drama series *Emily in Paris* includes prominent vegan content in its fifth season. In the show, restaurateur Gabriel (played by Lucas Bravo, who is vegan), seeks to offer a vegan menu at his restaurant. The treatment of the topic is favorable, and in fact a collaboration with Planet Oat has led to a limited edition *Emily in Paris* White Chocolate Raspberry Oatmilk Creamer.
- Beyond Meat has just released Beyond Immerse, a line of protein drinks available through the company's [Beyond Test Kitchen](#) site, in Peach Mango, Lemon Lime, and Orange Tangerine flavors. In addition to protein, the drinks include fiber, antioxidants, and electrolytes
- An article in the December issue of the peer-reviewed journal *The Biochemist*, "[Better Proteins Beyond Livestock: Food Without the Footprint](#)", discusses the ethics of animal agriculture, the zoonotic risk posed by these practices, the health risks posed by meat, eggs, and dairy, and the benefits whole food plant based diets.
- Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. unveiled new dietary guidelines for Americans on January 7, putting red meat and cheese at the top of the pyramid alongside fruits and vegetables, declaring, "We are ending the war on saturated fats." Many authoritative health experts have decried the move. The American Heart Association and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics have consistently cited evidence that too much saturated fat is associated with heart disease - the leading cause of death in the U.S.
- San Leandro, CA-based food company [EQUIL](#), which focuses on increasing the protein content in foods such as breads and pasta, recently began a collaboration with Impossible Foods to develop new protein-rich foods.
- While the focus was on dairy, the recently enacted Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 allows for plant milks to be served at U.S. schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. The law requires schools to offer nondairy milks if students provide a note from parents indicating they have a dietary restriction; previously a doctor's note was required.

Online Stories

Sentient: [Critics Declared Veganism Dead in 2025. Here's What Those Obituaries Are Missing.](#) Dec 31, 2025



Valentine's Treats for Kids

Valentine's Day is known for the exchange of sweets or other treats, and kids often have classroom Valentine exchanges. Since finding vegan sweets can be a challenge, we tracked down some leads for you. We should note that there are different degrees of strictness in following a vegan diet - some avoid candies made with bone char sugar, or food colors that have been tested on animals, while others draw the line at ingredients like dairy, honey, gelatin, carmine, and confectioners glaze/shellac. The candies below shouldn't contain any animal products, though as always, we recommend confirming this.

Sweets for Kids

Vegan Candies and Treats For Classroom Candy Exchanges (Can be Personalized)

Dum-Dums lollipops (25 friend cards)
Fun Dip Valentine (22 card pouches) GMO
Jolly Rancher: Lollipops (20 lollipops) GMO
Oreo Double Stuf (30 2-cookie packs) GMO
Ring Pop: Cupid Exchange Packs (22 packs) GMO
Skittles (23 pouches) GMO
Smarties: Love Hearts (8 packs) GMO
Snyders pretzels (30 pack) non-GMO
Sour Patch Kids (20 packs) GMO
SweeTARTS: Lollipops (30 pack) GMO
SweeTARTS: Conversation Hearts (27 packs) GMO
Twinkle Bites: Conversation Heart Candy (15 packs)
Twizzlers Twists: Strawberry (30 packs) GMO
YumEarth: Pops & Gummy Hearts (20 wrapped pops/10 snack packs), non-GMO
YumEarth: Sour Littles/Organic Sour Chewy Candy, non-GMO/organic

Other Vegan Candies (Not Personalized)

Airheads: Mini Bars (28 mini bars) GMO	No Whey!: Chocolate covered cherries non-GMO
Brach's: Jube Jel Cherry Hearts GMO	Smart Sweets: Strawberry Hearts
Chocolove: Very Cherry Hearts non-GMO	Smarties: Valentine's Candy Rolls GMO
Fruidles: Valentine's Hearts Jelly Gummi non-GMO	Sour Patch Kids: Glow Ups Hearts GMO

Gelatin warning: Brach's and Sweethearts "conversation hearts" candies both contain gelatin.

PRO TIP: If you have a school-age child, consider having a standing arrangement with them: for any classroom activities/treat exchanges, you'll have a vegan treat to trade them for any non-vegan items they end up with, so they never feel shortchanged or deprived.



Valentine's Treats for Adults

San Diego's Vegan Chocolate Companies

Whether it's a Valentine's Day surprise, or just to indulge in some high quality chocolate for its own sake, San Diego is home to several vegan chocolate makers who offer a wide variety of treats, from bars to truffles to drinking chocolate. Whether you prefer dark chocolate or plant milk chocolate, these local shops have what you need.

Gourmet M Chocolates in Carlsbad

Products: Dark chocolate chocolate bars, truffles, chocolate coated halvah, chocolate squares / gluten free. Gourmet M Chocolates was founded by Michael Ross, an aerospace engineer who designed rockets for NASA. He now serves as the "Chocolate Engineer" for Gourmet M, which uses Belgian dark chocolate, handcrafted in small batches in Carlsbad. The company sells at farmers markets (schedule on website) and by mail order. www.gourmetm.com

MarcieSweets Chocolate in San Diego

Products: Dark chocolate. MarcieSweets' organic, direct-trade cocoa dark chocolate is sold in Jimbo's Naturally stores, and the Ocean Beach People's Organic Food Market; the company also works with restaurants, caterers, businesses, and hotels. www.marciesweets.com

Nibble Chocolate in Pacific Beach, Old Town, Little Italy

Products: Dark chocolate / plant milk bars, truffles, chocolate covered nuts / dates, drinking chocolate / gluten free. Since 2013, Nibble's chocolate is about as far as possible from junk chocolate, made with just two essential ingredients: organic cocoa beans, and organic whole unrefined cane sugar. Products are available at three Nibble cafés. nibblechocolate.com

Rad Chocolate in San Diego

Products: Dark chocolate / plant milk chocolate bars / gluten free. Since 2013, family-owned Rad Chocolate has been making chocolate bars, currently offering 8 flavors, four classic bars and four "crunch" bars with crispy quinoa. radchocolate.com

Rayluca Chocolates in Mira Mesa

Products: Dark chocolate / plant milk chocolate truffles, chocolate strawberries, candy bars, hot chocolate / gluten free. Rayluca combines single origin Belgian chocolate with probiotics and superfoods. In addition to their shop in Mira Mesa, Rayluca chocolates are available at several local markets (see Stockists on their website). raylucachocolate.com

Local Pastries, Desserts, & Other Treats

Bibi's Kitchen and Things in San Diego | Custom cakes, cupcakes, cookies, donuts, cinnamon buns. Order at www.instagram.com/bibiskitchenandthings

Chani's Donuts in Kearny Mesa | Vegan and gluten free mini-donuts in a variety of flavors. Valentine's Day special: Two dozen mini-donuts with a rose. chanisdonuts.com

Hazel & Jade Bakery in Hillcrest | Croissants, muffins, cookies, brownies, lemon bars
www.hazelandjade.com

Le Beignet in San Diego | Beignets sold at local vegan events, including Viridian Productions' sustainable markets/popup markets. [Le Beignet on Facebook](#)

Maya's Cookies in Grantville, San Marcos | Cookies, boxes, cookie mixes.
www.mayascookies.com

Phatties Bake Shop in Point Loma | Pastries: Muffins, cupcakes, cookies, donuts, carrot cake. 24 hours notice required for custom items. phattiesbakeshop.toast.site

Split Bakehouse in La Mesa | Pastries: Cookies, croissants, cinnamon rolls, danish, muffins. Place online orders by noon for next-day pickup. splitbakehouse.com

Starry Lane Bakery in Hillcrest | Cakes, cupcakes, pies, tortes, bundt cakes, brownies
starrylanebakery.com

Sweets by Victoria in City Heights, online bakery | Cakes, cookies, pop tarts, babka. Order 2 days in advance for most items, 7 days for cakes. www.sweetsbyvictoria.com

Whimsy & Whisk in Sherman Heights, online bakery | Cakes, cupcakes, cake pops, rice crispy treats, pretzel rods www.instagram.com/whimsyandwhiskco

...and Even More Chocolate! (Made by Out of Towners)

Vegan Chocolates from Vegan Companies

[Coracao Chocolates](#) Oakland, CA | Truffles, chocolate bars, candy bars, hot chocolate

[Fames Chocolate](#) Brooklyn, NY | Truffles, candy bars, clusters, jellies, gift boxes

[No Whey! Foods](#) Lakewood, NJ | Truffles, holiday chocolates, candies, baked treats

[Sweet Vegan Chocolates](#) New York, NY | Truffles, bars, chocolate bark

[VGAN Chocolates](#) West Chester, PA | Chocolate bars



Photo: Raven Deerbrook



INTERVIEW

Maggie Bellah & Dave Engel, DxE

Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) is a nonviolent protest group founded in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2013, which fights against speciesism and seeks to challenge systems of oppression. Maggie Bellah and Dave Engel are organizers for the San Diego chapter of DxE. We're grateful for the work that they do for our community, and for their kind willingness to share their experiences.

You're known in the community as activists with DxE, but your path surely started before that. How did you each first get involved in animal welfare/vegan activism?

Maggie: I was vegetarian for 10 years, and I initially made that choice primarily for environmental reasons. At the time, I was very active in environmental activism, yet I had little awareness of the massive impact animal agriculture has on our planet. After watching a documentary about the environmental damage caused by human activity, I saw a brief segment about factory farming. For some reason, that image stayed with me, and I decided I no longer wanted to be part of that system.

I transitioned to a 100% plant-based lifestyle in 2013, even though I still didn't fully understand the animal agriculture industry. Most of my friends and family were omnivores, and for a while I was an apologetic vegan. As I began meeting more vegans and getting involved in the community, I discovered several local activist groups in San Diego and slowly became active with them. At first, I was concerned about potential issues with law enforcement, but through the training and support provided by Direct Action Everywhere, I learned more about our rights as citizens and the importance of exposing corruption within the food industry, particularly animal agriculture. This is a topic that continues to be silenced, yet it urgently needs to be addressed. We must speak up for the animals, because they cannot defend themselves against the oppression we subject them to—it's horrific.

Dave: Ten years ago, I was a climate activist. Through that work I learned that the most credible experts in the field like Robert Goodland and Jeff Anhang had concluded that animal agriculture, both directly (for example through methane from belching cows) and indirectly (through the destruction of carbon-sequestering forests), accounts for at least half of the greenhouse gases driving climate collapse.

I was frustrated that many mainstream climate groups downplayed this reality. Worse, they often relied on statistics produced by the animal agriculture industry itself compiled by people with glaring conflicts of interest and no scientific credibility. So I decided to reach out to animal rights activists who I ironically looked down on at the time because I thought they were too emotional and were not putting their energy into big, important things for people. I hoped they would help me tell the truth about animal agriculture's impact on the planet.

That decision changed my life.

I went online to look for animal rights organizations and, within seconds, found myself watching footage of cows being sent to slaughter. I only made it about ten seconds before I broke down. I'm not someone who cries easily, but there I was, alone, crying like a baby. I was overwhelmed by what I can only describe as a triple shame.

First was the shame of having ever supported something so violent, so cruel, and so utterly unnecessary. Second was the shame of having looked down on animal rights activists. Who was I to judge anyone for feeling compassion?

Third and perhaps most painful was the shame of being wrong. It's bad enough to look down on people and be right. But to look down on people and realize you were wrong is devastating.

That moment changed everything. I became an animal rights activist. I began animal rights activism locally with Anonymous for the Voiceless, then led by my soon to be friends Rach Hosler and Melanie Bazzell. Soon after that at the end of 2018, I joined Direct Action Everywhere (DxE), where I became an organizer just after the pandemic.

Animal agriculture is not a single isolated problem. It is a system with many ugly, destructive branches: massive environmental degradation, world hunger, antibiotic resistance, horrifying public health risks (is there a better breeding ground for disease than crowded, filthy factory

farms?), devastating personal health outcomes, and the exploitation of poor workers, disproportionately people of color, inside slaughterhouses and industrial farms.

And above all, it is built on the immense, completely unnecessary suffering of animals.

That is why I fight!

How did you each first connect with DxE?

Dave: I first connected with Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) in 2018, when the San Diego chapter was just getting started. Many of us had come from Anonymous for the Voiceless, and we joined DxE in its early days, energized by the growing movement. One of my first major experiences was traveling to Phoenix, Arizona for an animal rights march, followed by an action at a Whole Foods store. The response was swift and telling: police arrived and informed us that we were all banned from that store for six months. There was no due process, no dialogue, no attempt to hear why we were there.

In 2019, I attended my first Animal Liberation Conference (ALC) in Berkeley. The conference offered powerful trainings and culminated in a mass duck rescue at Reichardt Farms in Sonoma County, where roughly eighty activists were arrested. Activists had traveled from around the world to participate, and the action received significant media coverage. That weekend was a formative experience for me, solidifying my commitment to the movement.

During that period, we organized protests against retailers selling fur. Those efforts helped build momentum that eventually led to California passing legislation banning the sale of fur. This was an incredibly rewarding victory that showed what sustained activism can achieve. We also continued to organize actions targeting Whole Foods for its ties to animal exploitation.

In 2021, I stepped into a leadership role as an organizer. Serving as the political liaison, I led trainings for activists on how our political system functions and worked to engage political campaigns on animal rights issues. It was another way of pushing the movement forward connecting grassroots action with the broader struggle for systemic change.

Maggie: I met a friend who was involved with DxE in the Bay Area, and when she happened to move to San Diego, she introduced me to the organization's mission and strategy. The first event I attended was a community gathering and volunteer day at Farm Animal Refuge in Campo in March of 2019, where I met several activists and organizers. After that, I began participating in working groups and attended multiple protests against Whole Foods, as well as demonstrations against the fur industry before the sale of fur was banned in California.

My first role as an organizer with DxE San Diego involved helping with social media. Later, I began attending the annual Animal Liberation Conferences (ALC) hosted by DxE, until they were interrupted by COVID. The ALC was a transformational experience, offering excellent trainings to help activists improve their skills, as well as large-scale actions including civil disobedience, open rescues, vigils, and marches in the streets. After the pandemic, some activists did not return, and the community became smaller, but a dedicated group of us remained and continue organizing to this day.

For those who aren't up to date, could you talk about some of DxE's recent activities?

Maggie: Our activist community is relatively small and experiences a high turnover of volunteers, so we have focused on building coalitions and collaborating with other groups and campaigns. We take on specific roles in organizing protests, community events, and social media outreach, and we are always open to supporting, collaborating on, and promoting any form of activism or action related to animal rights. Recently, we organized an anti-San Diego Rodeo rally at Waterfront Park, where several activist leaders spoke out against the rodeo and emphasized the importance of coming together to show the public that we do not support animal abuse in our city.

This campaign is especially important because many people can empathize with animals used for entertainment and recognize how unnecessary that exploitation is, regardless of whether they are vegan. Other groups are also working to cancel the rodeo using different strategies.

DxE San Diego and I also organize additional events and actions in collaboration with other organizations. One example is National Animal Rights Day, an annual event we have organized for the past four years with my activist partner, Rachel Hosler, from Kind Heart Coalition. Another is Fright for the Future, an annual Halloween-themed event where we help create exhibits highlighting the horrors of the animal agriculture industry. In the past, we have also been involved in organizing the Animal Rights March in San Diego.

From your experience, what makes for a successful protest?

Dave: A protest can be successful in different ways. Early on, I measured success by too many criteria: a certain number of attendees, media coverage, or other outcomes largely beyond our control. The problem with that approach is that it sets us up for disappointment, especially when success is defined by factors we can't reliably influence like whether the media shows up.

Today, I see protest success differently. A protest is successful when its goals are clear, intentional, and defined in advance by the organizers ideally written down to keep everyone focused on what we're there to achieve. Strong visuals and large, eye-catching props play a crucial role in sparking curiosity and drawing people in.

As advertisers understand well, most people don't change their views the first time they hear a message. If a protest delivers even one meaningful repetition of our message to people who need to hear it, that matters. By that measure, a protest can be successful even if its impact isn't easily



quantifiable. Clear speeches, powerful speakouts, and well crafted chants are also essential tools for making that message land. Ultimately, we need to be in the streets showing up, speaking out, and continuing to plant the seeds of change.

Maggie: In DxE, we strive to be highly organized in order to carry out effective actions. We prioritize strong visuals that attract public attention and translate well on camera, aiming for a professional presentation with high-quality design and messaging. Before every protest, we hold a briefing—especially in case new activists join—so we can establish the tone, intention, and goals of the action, clearly define our demands, and explain why we are targeting specific locations. Each activist is assigned a specific role. Even something as simple as holding a sign is just as important as leading chants or participating in a speak-out. We work to ensure that everyone feels welcome and understands that they have a voice and a place in the movement. There are many ways to advocate for animals, and people often need time to explore different roles before finding the style of activism that fits them best.

A core value of DxE is a strong commitment to nonviolence in our intentions, language, and behavior. We are not against consumers or the general public; rather, we challenge the corporations and government systems that allow animals to be exploited and killed in horrific ways. Overall, a successful protest requires clear goals and demands, strong organization, punctuality—for activists and, at times, the press—and strict adherence to our nonviolence principles.

Activism is always a mix of challenges and rewards. Could you tell us about the challenges you've faced, and what you find most rewarding about your work?

Dave: One of the real challenges of activism is the absence of instant gratification. I used to write software, where you could solve a problem and see immediate results. I found this to be deeply satisfying. Activism doesn't work that way. Progress is slower, messier, and often invisible in the moment.

Staying motivated requires a deep understanding of just how urgent and far-reaching animal rights issues truly are. The consequences of animal agriculture touch every one of us through immense animal suffering, environmental destruction, public health risks, and social injustice. That sense of scale matters. As Archimedes famously said, "Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world." Our work may feel small at times, but it has leverage.

One of the most rewarding parts of this work for me is seeing the "light bulb" moment when someone begins to question long-held assumptions. I've been influenced by David McRaney's book *How Minds Change: The New Science of Belief, Opinion, and Persuasion*, which explores a method known as deep canvassing. Rather than trying to "win" an argument, the goal is to build genuine connection and understand how people arrived at their beliefs primarily by asking thoughtful questions and then adding your own input in a non-threatening way. While I'm still learning this approach, I've already seen encouraging results and look forward to refining the practice.

Maggie: I often say that our main challenge is bringing more activists to our actions and events, as well as finding people who are committed and willing to dedicate more time to organizing with us. Speaking up for animals is deeply rewarding, and this issue is urgent now more than ever. We need to step out of our comfort zones and become active for the animals—this cannot wait any longer. Taking action for animals alongside others has also helped me build friendships and a strong sense of community, which is incredibly rewarding. Through this work, I have found a purpose that keeps me going and motivates me every day. Each day, we have the opportunity to help animals in some way, and every time we take action on their behalf, it brings a powerful sense of fulfillment.



Do you feel like this work ever takes a toll emotionally? How do you engage in self-care to protect yourself?

Maggie: Activism can be difficult—it is time-consuming and, at times, frustrating, and it can leave us feeling powerless or hopeless. When that happens, I remind myself that animals are being killed by the millions every hour, every second. We have to do something. We must speak up loudly, stand against oppression, and keep pushing the message forward.

For me, self-care is simple: spending time doing things I enjoy, hanging out with friends and family, staying home with my cats, practicing yoga, rock climbing, visiting sanctuaries, and going on nature walks or hikes.

Dave: Of course, there are times when this work becomes emotionally exhausting. When that happens, I've learned the importance of stepping back and deliberately shifting my focus.

Physical movement helps especially walking paired with engaging my mind in something else I care about, like listening to a podcast. Music, I've found, often just provides a soundtrack for my frustration. A conscious change of focus in these moments is essential for sustaining myself in this movement over the long haul.

I'd imagine many readers are interested in activism, but might be a little hesitant, not knowing what's involved. Do you offer any kind of introduction to DxE, or "animal activism 101" opportunities?

Maggie: Yes, DxE offers an online introductory workshop where people can learn about the organization's mission and strategy, as well as how to get involved with their local chapter. As I mentioned before, participating in a protest can be as simple as showing up and holding a sign.

We also believe that building community is essential for growing the movement, so we host social and community-focused events such as potlucks, hikes, and group dinners at vegan restaurants. These gatherings provide a more relaxed environment for people who may want to get to know the activists and organizers before participating in actions.

Within DxE, are there different ways that people can help?

Dave: There are so many ways to get involved with DxE, and there truly is a place for everyone. While rescuing animals from factory farms is one powerful form of activism, it's just one of many ways to help. If hands-on rescue isn't right for you, you can still make a real impact by joining protests, supporting social media efforts, helping plan actions, contributing financially, making props, hosting meals, or lending your skills in other creative ways.

We understand that everyone comes to this work from different life circumstances, and we honor that. You decide how you want to show up and what level of involvement feels right for you. There is never pressure to take on more risk than you're comfortable with. However you choose to participate, your contribution matters, and you are genuinely welcome in this movement!

Maggie: Yes, we are always in need of help. We welcome support with managing our social media pages, website, and email list, as well as with creative writing, visual design, and community-building efforts that help bring new people to our actions. We also greatly appreciate volunteers who can take photos or create videos during events. Honestly, any type of support is truly welcome.

San Diego is fortunate to have more than one animal activist group. Do you ever collaborate with other groups?

Maggie: Yes, we try to collaborate with everyone. While time can sometimes be limited, we are always happy to help, support, promote, and collaborate on anything related to animal rights.

Every animal rights group in our community is welcome to use our social media to promote their events or actions, and as activists, we make an effort to show up and participate whenever possible. Over the past several years, we have consistently collaborated with organizations and individuals such as Kind Heart Coalition, Strategic Action for Animals, Ellen Ericksen, NARD (National Animal Rights Day), PETA, San Diego Vegan Activists, and many others.

Dave: We often work with The Kind Heart Coalition, Vegan Justice, BAAL etc. and encourage people to become familiar with those groups as well.

There's more to your life than DxE. What do you do when you're not advocating for animals?

Dave: I work full-time as a civil engineer with the City of San Diego, and I'm now running for the U.S. House of Representatives in California's newly drawn 51st Congressional District, currently represented by Sara Jacobs. My campaign is grounded in a progressive vision that centers animal rights and the devastating impacts of animal agriculture, alongside a strong commitment to Palestinian human rights, anti-militarism, anti-ICE, campaign finance reform, public education, workers' rights, tax fairness, universal single-payer health care (Medicare for All), reproductive freedom, and LGBTQIA+ equality.

While many of these issues are at least part of our national political conversation, animal issues remain conspicuously marginalized despite the staggering cruelty inflicted on sentient beings, the harm to our planet, public and personal health, world hunger/food insecurity, and the routine

exploitation of workers in factory farms and slaughterhouses, who are disproportionately poor people of color. Addressing animal agriculture is not a fringe concern; it is essential to justice, sustainability, and compassion.

In addition to my campaign, I serve as vice president of the Point Loma & Ocean Beach Democratic Club and treasurer of the San Diego County Democrats for Environmental Action. With the support of the animal rights and pro-Palestine communities, I was also elected as a delegate to the California Democratic Party Central Committee from the 77th Assembly District.

Outside of politics, I enjoy reading, walking and hiking, going to the gym, listening to music (I'm deep in a samba phase right now), watching films, and experiencing live theater. Most recently, I saw a live production of Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*—fast-paced, clever, and laugh out loud funny. Exactly what I needed!

Maggie: I go to the gym every morning for a workout, rock climbing, or yoga. During the day, I work as a scientist, and in the evenings, I relax at home with my cats. On weekends, I focus on activism or try to spend time outdoors, going for walks, hikes, or climbing.

Thank you both so much for taking the time to share such thoughtful answers with us! We'd like to invite you to request assistance from the community, in our "Community Ask" section on the last page of the newsletter.

Be sure to visit DxE online!

DxE San Diego : DxESanDiego.com

DxE San Diego Facebook: www.facebook.com/DxEsandiego

DxE San Diego Instagram: www.instagram.com/dxe_sandiego

Main DxE site: dxe.io

Other San Diego Activist Groups

BAAL (Bold Activists for Animal Liberation) [Facebook](#)

Kind Heart Coalition www.kindheartcoalition.org

San Diego Vegan Activists [Instagram](#) [Facebook](#)

Strategic Action for Animals www.instagram.com/sxfaorg

Vegan Justice veganjustice.com

Valentine's Date

Vegans tend to be passionate about their beliefs, so it's only natural that when it comes to dating, compatibility is a high priority. It isn't always easy to find other vegans in daily life, so a variety of dating services, events, and apps have developed to help vegans in search of a love connection. While the major "general population" dating apps (Bumble, Hinge, etc.) allow users to note that they are vegan, more specific events, websites, and apps allow for a more targeted search.

DateNight AI (datenight.ai/peta) offers an online Vegan Speed Dating event in which participants answer a few questions, and are then matched with up to seven other vegan participants to see if the chemistry is right. The early bird cost is \$20, increasing to \$25 on February 12 at 11 pm.

Grazer (grazerapp.com), which bills itself as "the meatless matchmaker" for vegans and vegetarians, is one of two well-known plant-based dating apps. Reviews of the app are generally positive.

Veggly (www.veggly.net) is the other popular dating app for plant-based people. Like Grazer, it lists both vegans and vegetarians, and boasts 1.5 million users, and 5 million "VegMatches."

Facebook: San Diego Vegan Singles (www.facebook.com/groups/939273729494842) is a more naturalistic local opportunity. This is a closed group for single vegans in San Diego (or if not, in town at least 3 months or more per year, and "willing to relocate for love").

Facebook: San Diego LGBTQ+ Single Vegans (www.facebook.com/groups/38106928656950)
From a numbers perspective, the dating pool of vegans is small (but mighty!), and the pool of LGBTQ+ vegans is even smaller. This group is a venue to help queer vegans connect.

Green Singles (www.greensingles.com), part of the Conscious Dating Network, is geared toward helping users find an "eco-conscious partner." On their list of attributes, "Vegan and Vegetarian Lifestyles" and "Animal Welfare and Human Rights" are listed.

Find Veg Love (findveglove.com/about) is a matchmaking service run by Karine Lang, offering a potential introduction to a likely prospect in her database, or a purchased upgrade to more personalized introductions, as well as optional private coaching.

Local vegan speed dating service **Plant Baes** is currently on hiatus, but has plans to return.

And finally, while they aren't specifically dating-oriented, another way to find connections is to participate in meaningful social activities. Attend events by PlantDiego; SD Vegan Hikers & Backpackers; San Diego Vegans, Vegan For the Animals, or Veganista Social Club meetups; activist groups like Kind Heart Coalition, Direct Action Everywhere (DxE), Vegan Justice, Strategic Action for Animals (SXFA), or Bold Activists for Animal Liberation (BAAL); or one of the many groups listed in the VeganDiego directory. Show up regularly and get to know people. Friendship, and maybe love, awaits.



Vegan Cuisine Month

Vegan Cuisine Month, celebrated every February, was created by the American Vegan Society. The goals of the celebration are both to invite non-vegans to try vegan foods, making it something of a sequel to Veganuary, and also to honor heroes in the American vegan community.

The American Vegan Society (AVS) was founded in 1960 by H. Jay Dinshah and Freya Dinshah, following the creation of The Vegan Society in England in 1944. Jay Dinshah served as the president of AVS until his death in 2000, when Freya took over the role. In 1965 Freya published the first vegan cookbook in the U.S., *The Vegan Kitchen*, and was instrumental in the creation of Vegan Cuisine Month.

Vegan Cuisine Month is intended to help people learn about vegan cuisine, celebrate vegan foods, and “create the future,” by getting involved, either in small ways, like asking a pizza parlor to offer vegan pizza, or the larger scale effort of planning a community celebration.

Ideas for community celebrations include finding a venue (e.g., a restaurant, culinary school, or cafeteria), use of the [AVS Catering Guide](#), publicizing events and inviting local media to attend, potentially adding live music, dancing, a speaker, or a documentary, encouraging the venue to offer vegan options regularly, and sending the story and photos of the event to media outlets. A number of resource materials are available on the [AVS website](#).

The second purpose of Vegan Cuisine Month is to honor heroes in the American vegan community. Twenty-eight individuals, organizations, and activities are celebrated on each of the 28 days in February, beginning with Jay Dinshah’s mother, Irene Grace Dinshah, who taught vegan cooking to Freya. Others recognized during the month include organizations such as the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, the Farm Animals Rights Movement, and the Vegetarian Resource Group; food developers, including Tal Ronnen (Crossroads Kitchen, cofounder of Kite Hill), Miyoko Schinner (founder of Miyoko’s Creamery), and Seth Tibbott (founder of Tofurky); and cookbook authors Bryant Terry (*Afro Vegan*), Fran Costigan (*Vegan Chocolate*), and Christina Pirello (*Back to the Cutting Board*).

The American Vegan Society website offers many inspirational ideas and resources for putting together a Vegan Cuisine Month event: americanvegan.org/vegan-cuisine-month



Chani's Donuts

Chani's Donuts in Kearny Mesa, owned by Chantelle and Steven Harris, offers an amazing selection of flavors for their signature mini-donuts. Chantelle sat down to give us the sweet details of their business.

When did you first open your doors? We opened October 28th, 2023. I started my recipe the February before that, and did about 6 iterations to get the basics of the donut that I have now. And then by May, I was buying my donut cart, I did two pop ups. The second pop up that I did, I met Mike next door, and he said that he had a space for me, so I was just really blessed, God opened the doors for me to get in here and be able to get open really fast and help people get a treat.

How did you decide to go into the donut business? I got really sick of not getting a good donut. I've been gluten free since 2005, because I have celiac disease. In 2010, I got alpha-gal syndrome, which means no red meat, any mammal products at all will cause allergic reaction. So, obviously, my whole diet had to change and revolve around that instead of what I wanted to eat. I just wanted a good donut. So we were at the fair in 2022, and I told my husband, "I just want a good donut. I just want something that tastes like a donut that's fluffy and crispy," and he said, "Make your own." I said, "Okay, I will." The next February I started, and by that October, we were open here really fast.

You have so many flavors! What are the most popular choices? Quintessential would be the churro. Everybody loves the churro. But our chocolates are really popular. We use an organic chocolate red cocoa, and we make all of the chocolates here in the shop. So, all of the chocolates are really popular. My personal favorite is the "Butterfinger" right now, which uses the SunButter, and then we use our donut toffee, our donut toffee is made from donuts that are messed up, we take and we dry out in the air fryer, and then we grind them up, add brown sugar and salt, and re-air fry them, and it becomes our donut toffee. I really like the "Butterfinger."

Your donuts are all vegan, but some of your special flavors (Butterfinger, Payday, Skor, Reese's Pieces, etc.) look like they might not be? Everything is vegan. We use the SunButter brand. It's also all gluten free and top ten allergen-free. We're really committed to making sure that everything is safe. We reach out to the manufacturers and get statements about all of our products, to make sure that all of the products are safe for all of the categories that we try and hit. They are good for school parties as well. Because they're allergen free, they're what we consider school safe. We make little bags of donuts, we just put powdered sugar on them. You can get 24 bags of three for \$39.95, or 18 bags of four for the same price. It's very popular, because everybody in the classroom is included, not just some of the kids, and that's important for kids.

Would you describe your mini-donuts as cake or raised? They're a little bit closer to raised, but they don't have any yeast in them. They're definitely not cake donuts. Some people say they're like funnel cake, I've heard that they're like loukoumades, and beignet, and basically every culture has something that's a nice, fluffy fried pastry, and this is ours.

Do you offer anything besides donuts? We also have cupcakes, and cookie dough you can take and eat or take and bake. We have a party pack, with six dozen donuts, five drizzle bottles, and two of our dry toppings for \$49.95. We have frozen donuts that can be air fried or crisped in the oven.

Do you have any special Valentine's Day offers? Our Valentine's Day box is amazing, a box of 25 donuts with all upgraded flavors and a rose for \$25. It can be preordered online. Flavors include raspberry brownie (light chocolate, raspberry jam, and then our cookie crumble), chocolate caramel (which is, again, light chocolate, and then a caramel drizzle), rose gold (which is strawberry with rose syrup), and raspberry truffle and dark ganache. [Preorder](#) by February 12 to guarantee availability. [Order online](#), get instore prices. →



You have 5 out of 5 stars on Yelp! How did you do that? You know, it's just been a huge blessing. We have great customers coming in. And I'm not going to serve something if it's not good. Very rarely will we have something that somebody's like, "Oh, this wasn't what I wanted." So, we just are very committed to making sure that people have a good experience, and a good product.

Is Chani's Donuts a family business? We are a family business, which is both a blessing and a curse, because you end up with everybody being busy at once, and trying to find time with family. So that is part of why we're closed on Sundays. Sunday is the day we go to church, and everybody gets a day off, we all know that we have a day to rest. So that's really important to us, to keep that maintained for our family.

What did you do before you opened Chani's Donuts? I was a home school mom. My youngest graduated, and you can't stay home and cry, so I had to do something. I graduated in 2022 with my bachelor's in University Studies with emphasis in business, business management, business admin. So it was just shortly before doing all of this. I went to BYU-Idaho online, and did that over the course of many years, while raising kids and homeschooling, and helping my husband to also do his associates online. So, I was very busy with that. Also, my husband has a junk hauling business, we've done that for the last 12 years, and I've supported him in that. I don't think I know how to sit still.

I'm very committed to serving the communities that we target. We have tried a lot of things, and we just want to make sure that we are staying true to that mission of serving the vegan, gluten free, allergen free communities. We get left out a lot, and when you bring foods that not everybody can eat, you're leaving people out from the table, both emotionally and physically. And I just don't think that's okay. I think that we need to be bringing everybody to the table, especially dessert time. That's a special time for people, I think that there's a lot more bonding and camaraderie around a dessert than there is around, say, a main course. It's really important to me to just stay true to that and keep people safe, happy, and having a good treat.

Chani's Donuts
5250 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 118
(858) 384-6201
chanisdonuts.com

Fruits • Vegetables • Grains • Legumes • Nuts • Seeds • Mushrooms • Pulses • Beans • Carrots • Apples
Broccoli • Oatmeal • Cashews • Lettuce • Oranges • Chia • Cabbage • Bananas • Soybeans • Potatoes •
Almonds • Strawberries • Flax • Lentils • Nutritional Yeast • Pears • Zucchini • Hemp Hearts • Peaches

Vegan Recipes: **Chocolate Truffles**



CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

Ingredients

- Vegan chocolate chips of choice, standard 10-11 oz. package
- Coconut milk, ¾ c (full fat)
- Vanilla, 1-2 t (less if using a flavoring)
- Mix-in options: extracts (rum, almond, mint); instant espresso powder, cinnamon, ginger, cayenne
- Roll-in options: cacao powder, hemp seeds, nuts, coconut
- Dunk: Melted chocolate shell (1 c choc. chips + 1 T coconut oil)
- Finishing salt, optional
- Natural food dye, optional

Instructions

Heat coconut milk. Do not boil. Pour over chocolate chips in a bowl. Add any flavoring that you wish to use here, including vanilla. Stir until blended. Set in fridge for 2-3 hours, until firm. Make truffles: Scoop chocolate to the size desired, roll into a ball. I recommend gloves to prevent hand heat and to ease the mess. Roll-ins? Use any of the listed options OR dunk at this point. Simply melt chocolate & coconut, dip in chocolate & finish with salt, if using. Store truffles in the fridge until ready to serve. These also freeze well. Notes: Use white or dark chocolate or both for dunking or the truffles themselves. Make this recipe your own and enjoy!

Watch video here!

Melanie Kantor teaches vegan education and nutrition, cooking classes, and is a recipe and content creator. She has been plant-based for over 35 years. Follow her on Instagram: <https://tr.ee/bdZlegnqpd>. For business and other inquiries: optimummyouwellness@gmail.com

*Perfect for Valentine's Day.....
or anytime!*

Courtesy of Melanie Kantor, this month's recipe is a versatile chocolate truffle recipe that can be customized many different ways, with mix-in, roll-in, dunking, finishing salt, or food dye options.

Melanie teaches vegan education and nutrition. She has been plant-based for over 35 years. Originally from Portland, Oregon, she now resides in Point Loma, San Diego, with her dog, Nova. When not in the kitchen, you can find her at the beach or hiking throughout this beautiful city.

Follow Melanie on Instagram: <https://tr.ee/bdZlegnqpd>.

YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCewoal3ha9RRIhAAdBBiEw

For business and other inquiries: optimummyouwellness@gmail.com.



Black History Month

February is an opportunity to celebrate the contributions and achievements of African-Americans and other Black individuals. Local Black contributors to the vegan community include:

- Maya Madsen, founder of Maya's Cookies, who started her business in 2015, and has developed it into a thriving San Diego establishment.
- Steven Marcus Releford, who has been developing a career as a vegan comedian. He is out of town on tour as of the beginning of February.
- Makeda Cheatom, the Founder and Executive Director of the WorldBeat Cultural Center, home to the all-vegan One World Beat Café.
- Chef Onyx at the We Be Grubbin' farmers market / popup vendor, known for creating vegan versions of the soul food she grew up with.
- Chef Ke'Anna Dodd of RUE Kitchen, which makes a line of condiments inspired by Creole, Southern, and Caribbean flavors.
- Rosa Adam of Reda's Ethiopian Vegan Cuisine, which offers authentic Ethiopian flavors and recipes, offered at popup markets, farmers markets, and catering.
- While his business is not fully vegan, Candido Gadaga serves Mozambique-inspired vegan cuisine at Sabor Piri Piri, a farmers market and popup market business which recently opened as a restaurant.

In the larger community, black vegans and vegetarians have made substantial contributions to the arts, athletics, politics, and science:

Akala [VEGAN](#) English rapper

A\$AP Rocky [VEGAN](#) American rapper, actor, and record producer

Daniel Austin (Daniel Solwold Jr.) [VEGAN](#) American weightlifter / powerlifter, former pro wrestler under the name Austin Aries

Halle Bailey [VEGAN](#) American singer-songwriter / actress: Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* live action film (2023)

Erykah Badu [VEGAN](#) American R&B singer, songwriter, producer

Cory Booker [VEGAN](#) American Senator from New Jersey

Danielle Brooks [VEGAN](#) American actress: Taystee on *Orange is the New Black* TV series

Tabitha Brown [VEGAN](#) American actress, social media personality

Rebekkah Brunson [VEGAN](#) American WNBA basketball player / forward: Sacramento Monarchs (2004–2009), Minnesota Lynx (2010–2018, asst. coach: 2020 -)

Liz Cambage [VEGAN](#) Australian WNBA basketball player / center: Tulsa Shock (2011, 2013), Dallas Wings (2018), Las Vegas Aces (2019, 2021), Los Angeles Sparks (2022)

David Carter [VEGAN](#) American NFL football player/ defensive end: Arizona Cardinals (2011–2012), Dallas Cowboys (2013)

Cedric the Entertainer [VEGAN](#) American comedian/ actor: Cedric Jackie Robinson on *The Steve Harvey Show* (1996–2002), Eddie Walker in *Barbershop* (2002), *The Original Kings of Comedy* specials

Wilson Chandler [VEGAN](#) NBA basketball player: New York Knicks (2007–2011), Denver Nuggets (2011, 2012–2018), Philadelphia 76ers (2018–2019), Los Angeles Clippers (2019), Brooklyn Nets (2019–2020)

John Coltrane [VEGETARIAN](#) American jazz musician

Angela Davis [VEGAN](#) feminist political activist, author, philosopher

Jermaine Dupri [VEGAN](#) American record producer, songwriter, music executive

Omar Epps [VEGETARIAN](#) actor: Dr. Eric Foreman on *House* TV series (2004–2012), Captain Isaac Johnson on *Shooter* TV series (2016–2018)

Kevin Eubanks [VEGETARIAN](#) musician/ guitarist: leader of *The Tonight Show* band (1995–2010)

Kendrick Farris [VEGAN](#) American weightlifter: Olympic competitor

Justin Fields [VEGAN](#) NFL football player: Chicago Bears (2021 -)

Dick Gregory [VEGETARIAN](#) American comedian, actor, writer, activist

Sir Lewis Hamilton [VEGAN](#) British racecar driver: 7 x Formula 1 world champion

Taraji P. Henson [VEGAN](#) actress: *Empire* TV series

Kyrie Irving [VEGAN](#) NBA basketball player: Cleveland Cavaliers (2011–2017), Boston Celtics (2017–2019), Brooklyn Nets (2019–2023), Dallas Mavericks (2023 –)

DaQuan Jones [VEGAN](#) NFL football player/ defensive tackle: Tennessee Titans (2014–2020), Carolina Panthers (2021), Buffalo Bills (2022 -)

DeAndre Jordan [VEGAN](#) American NBA basketball player: Los Angeles Clippers (2008–2018), Dallas Mavericks (2018–2019), New York Knicks (2019), Brooklyn Nets (2019–2021), Los Angeles Lakers (2021–2022), Philadelphia 76ers (2022), Denver Nuggets (2022 -)

Colin Kaepernick [VEGAN](#) American NFL football player/ quarterback: San Francisco 49ers (2011–2016), civil rights activist

B.B. King [VEGETARIAN](#) American blues singer/ guitarist/ songwriter

Coretta Scott King [VEGAN](#) American civil rights leader, wife of Martin Luther King Jr.

Dexter Scott King [VEGAN](#) American civil rights activist, animal rights activist

Kofi Kingston [VEGAN](#) Ghanaian-American professional wrestler: 4 x Intercontinental Champion, 3 x U.S. Champion, World Tag Team Champion

Lenny Kravitz [VEGAN](#) American singer/ songwriter/ actor

KRS-One (Lawrence Parker) [VEGAN](#) American rapper, member of Boogie Down Productions

Carl Lewis [VEGAN](#) American Olympic track and field athlete (9 gold medals, 1 silver)

Leona Lewis [VEGAN](#) English singer, winner of *X-Factor* TV competition

JaVale McGee [VEGAN](#) American NBA basketball player: Washington Wizards, Denver Nuggets, Philadelphia 76ers, Dallas Mavericks, Golden State Warriors, Los Angeles Lakers, Cleveland Cavaliers, Phoenix Suns, Sacramento Kings

Jim Morris [VEGAN](#) body-builder: winner of Mr. USA title

Mýa [VEGAN](#) R&B singer, “Lady Marmalade” (with Christina Aguilera, Lil' Kim, Pink),

Cam Newton [VEGAN](#) NFL football player/ quarterback: Carolina Panthers (2011–2019), New England Patriots (2020), Carolina Panthers (2021)

Thandiwe Newton [VEGAN](#) English actress: *Crash* (2004)/ Best Supporting Actress BAFTA winner

Nneka Ogwumike [VEGAN](#) Nigerian-American WNBA basketball player/ power forward:
Los Angeles Sparks (2012 -)

Rosa Parks [VEGETARIAN](#) civil rights pioneer/ activist

Andre Patton [VEGAN](#) American NFL football player: Los Angeles Chargers (2017–2019)

Chris Paul [VEGAN](#) NBA basketball player: New Orleans Hornets (2005–2011), Los Angeles Clippers (2011–2017), Houston Rockets (2017–2019), Oklahoma City Thunder (2019–2020), Phoenix Suns (2020–2023), Golden State Warriors (2023 -)

Prince [VEGAN](#) musician/ singer/ producer/ actor

Q-Tip [VEGETARIAN](#) rapper: member of A Tribe Called Quest group

Robin Quivers [VEGAN](#) American radio personality: co-host of *The Howard Stern Show*

Phylicia Rashad [VEGETARIAN](#) American actress: *The Cosby Show*

Theo Riddick [VEGAN](#) American NFL football player/ running back: Detroit Lions (2013-2018), Denver Broncos (2019), Las Vegas Raiders (2020)

RZA [VEGAN](#) musician: rapper/ producer of The Wu-Tang Clan

Rev. Al Sharpton [VEGAN](#) American civil rights activist, Baptist minister

Russell Simmons [VEGAN](#) co-founder Def Records

Salim Stoudamire [VEGAN](#) American NBA basketball player: Atlanta Hawks (2005–2008)

Ruben Studdard [VEGETARIAN](#) American singer: winner of season 2 of *American Idol* (2003), 2003 “Best Male R&B Vocal Performance” Grammy nomination for "Superstar"

Garrett Temple [VEGAN](#) NBA basketball player: Houston Rockets (2010), Sacramento Kings (2010, 2016-2018), San Antonio Spurs (2010), Milwaukee Bucks (2011), Charlotte Bobcats (2011), Reno Bighorns (2012), Washington Wizards (2012–2016), Memphis Grizzlies (2018–2019), Los Angeles Clippers (2019), Brooklyn Nets (2019–2020), Chicago Bulls (2020–2021), New Orleans Pelicans (2021–2023), Toronto Raptors (2023 -)

Phillip Michael Thomas [VEGETARIAN](#) American actor: Detective Ricardo Tubbs on *Miami Vice* TV series (1984-1989)

Cicely Tyson [VEGETARIAN](#) actress: *Sounder* (1972, Best Actress Oscar), *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1974, won two Emmys), *The Help* (2011), *How to Get Away With Murder* TV series (2015-2020, 5 Primetime Emmy Award nominations)

Keenen Ivory Wayans [VEGETARIAN](#) American actor/ comedian

Forest Whitaker [VEGETARIAN](#) American actor: *The Last King of Scotland* (2006)/ Best Actor Oscar winner, *Platoon* (1986), *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987), *Bird* (1988)

Persia White [VEGAN](#) American actress: Lynn Searcy on *Girlfriends* series, Abby Bennett Wilson on *The Vampire Diaries* series (2012–2017)

will.i.am [VEGAN](#) singer/ rapper, member of The Black Eyed Peas, producer

Serena Williams [VEGAN](#) American professional tennis player, won 73 singles titles, 23 doubles titles

Vanessa A. Williams [VEGAN](#) actress: Rhonda Blair on *Melrose Place* TV series (S1, 1992-1993), Maxine Chadway on *Soul Food* TV series (S1-5, 2000-2004)

Venus Williams [VEGAN](#) American professional tennis player, won 49 singles titles, 22 doubles titles, and 3 Olympic gold medals

Stevie Wonder [VEGAN](#) American singer, musician, songwriter, producer

Zendaya [VEGETARIAN](#) actress/ singer: *Euphoria* TV series (2019 -), *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017)

VEGAN & CRUELTY FREE: COSMETICS

★Both cruelty free & vegan, †Non-cruelty free company

CRUELTY FREE

★about-face ★Adorn Cosmetics ★Aleph Beauty ★All Earth Mineral ★Ami Colé Amika Anastasia Beverly Hills ★Arches & Halos ★ĀTHR Beauty ★ATTITUDE ★au NATURALE ★Axiology ★Barry M	★Beauty Without Cruelty ★Black Moon Cosmetics ★Bossy Cosmetics Cécred ★Cheekbone Beauty ★Clover Beauty ★Concrete Minerals Deep Steep ★delilah ★Eco Minerals ★Elate Cosmetics ★e.l.f. Cosmetics ★Ella+Mila	Em Cosmetics ★Emani ★Fashion Fair ★Florence By Mills Glossier Jouer Kjaer Weis Kosas LA Girl Lawless ★Live Tinted ★LYS Beauty Makeup By Mario Melt Cosmetics	★Mented ★Merit Beauty ★Milk Makeup Natasha Denona Patrick Ta Beauty Peach & Lily ★Rare Beauty (Selena Gomez) ★r.e.m. beauty (Ariana Grande) ★Rose Inc Saie ★Summer Fridays ★Tower 28 W7 Makeup Wet n Wild
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PARENT CO. NOT CRUELTY FREE

Aveda (Estée Lauder†) bareMinerals (Shiseido†) Burt's Bees (Clorox†) Buxom (Shiseido†) Chantecaille (Beiersdorf†) Charlotte Tilbury (Puig†) Covergirl (Coty†)	Dermalogica (Unilever†) Fenty Beauty (LVMH†) Hero Cosmetics (Church & Dwight†) Hourglass (Unilever†) ILIA (Clarins†) IT Cosmetics (L'Oréal†) Jones Road Beauty (Bobbi Brown Cosmetics†)	Kylie Cosmetics (Coty†) NYX (L'Oréal†) ORIGINS (Estée Lauder†) smashbox (Estée Lauder†) Tarte Cosmetics (Kose†) Too Faced (Estée Lauder†) Urban Decay (L'Oréal†)
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NOT CRUELTY FREE

Benefit Cosmetics† (LVMH†) Bobbi Brown Cosmetics† (Estée Lauder†) Clinique† (Estée Lauder†) Dior†	Estée Lauder† La Mer† (Estée Lauder†) Lancôme† (L'Oréal†) M.A.C Cosmetics† (Estée Lauder†)	Make Up For Ever (LVMH†) Maybelline† (L'Oréal†) Revlon† Victoria's Secret† (L Brands†)
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NOTE: Some non-cruelty free companies will state "We do not test on animals," but then, sometimes in fine print, acknowledge that they adhere to "local laws" when it comes to testing. China is the main country that has often required non-Chinese products to be tested on animals. Companies which allow their products to be tested on animals in other countries are not considered cruelty free.

Local Resources

VeganDiego, San Diego County's Vegan Directory www.vegandiego.com

A comprehensive listing of vegan restaurants, markets, food services, businesses, and organizations.

San Diego Vegans Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/sdvegans

With nearly 14,000 members, this is one of the best sources of information on the local vegan community.

San Diego Vegans Meetup group www.meetup.com/sandiegovegans

An inclusive group that meets regularly to connect local vegans.

PlantDiego www.plantdiego.com

A San Diego nonprofit vegan social support and education group, which offers monthly gatherings focused on whole food plant based eating and health.

Vegan in San Diego veganinsandiego.com

Website featuring a listing of vegan restaurants, pop ups, and businesses.

Sustainable Market/Night Market events www.viridianproductions.com

Vegan and sustainable festivals and pop-up markets, including the San Diego Sustainable Night Market, North Park Sustainable Market, Vista Sustainable Night Market, and annual San Diego EarthFest and Oceanside Vegan Food Festival. See website for dates and locations.

San Diego Vegan Market, Grantville www.veganrestaurantsd.com

Groceries, snacks, drinks, personal care, cleaning supplies, freshly made deli sandwiches.

Thousand Petal Lotus vegan market, Vista www.thousandpetallotusvista.com

Groceries, snacks, drinks, vitamins, personal care, gifts.

Natural Foods Stores: • Chains: [Baron's Market](#), [Jimbo's](#), [Manolo Farmers Market](#), [Mother's Nutritional Center](#), [Sprouts Farmer's Market](#), [Trader Joe's](#), [Whole Foods Market](#) (owned by Amazon)
• Independent Markets: [Cardiff Seaside Market](#) (Cardiff), [Frazier Farms](#) (La Mesa, Oceanside, Vista), [Jensen's Foods](#) (Point Loma), [Keil's](#) (San Carlos), [Lazy Acres Market](#) (Encinitas, Mission Hills), [Ramona Family Naturals](#), [San Diego Farmers Outlet](#) (Grantville), [Stehly Farms Market](#) (Kensington, Valley Center), [Windmill Farms](#) (Del Cerro)

Vegan Toastmasters www.meetup.com/vegantoastmasters

Public speaking group to help individuals develop self-confidence as a public speaker, persuade as an activist, and communicate effectively with family, friends and coworkers.

Action for Animals app to contact lawmakers and companies regarding [animal welfare](#).

National/International Resources

VEGAN FOOD FINDERS

Happy Cow vegan/vegetarian restaurant finder www.happycow.net

VeggL vegan food options at restaurant chains veggl.com

VEGAN PRODUCT FINDERS/CHECKERS

Vegan Product Checkers: [Double Check Vegan](#) app, [Is It Vegan?](#) barcode app, [Vegan Verify](#) barcode app, [WhatsVegan](#) ingredient label scan app, [Conscious Bunny](#) free website, [Is It Vegan?](#) free website, [Logical Harmony Animal Ingredient List](#)

CRUELTY FREE PRODUCT CHECKERS

[Cruelty Cutter](#) app

CRUELTY FREE PRODUCTS

Leaping Bunny cruelty free certification: www.leapingbunny.org

PETA cruelty free certification: crueltyfree.peta.org/product-type

Cruelty-Free Kitty: www.crueltyfreekitty.com

Ethical Elephant: ethicalelephant.com

VEGAN ORGANIZATIONS

The Vegan Society: Birmingham, England | www.vegansociety.com

The American Vegan Society, Malaga NJ: americanvegan.org

Vegan Outreach: Sacramento, CA | veganoutreach.org

Viva! The Vegan Charity: Bristol, England | viva.org.uk

Vkind (products, companies and services): www.vkind.com

VEGAN and CRUELTY FREE ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Reddit/Vegan: www.reddit.com/r/vegan

Reddit/Cruelty Free: www.reddit.com/r/crueltyfree

VEGAN CERTIFICATIONS

Vegan Society, Vegan Action/Vegan Awareness Foundation, American Vegetarian Association, BeVeg, V-Label International, VegeCert vegecert.com

VEGAN HOUSING

VegVisits: vegvisits.com

CRUELTY FREE INVESTING

Cruelty Free Investing; crueltyfreeinvesting.org

ACTIVISM OPPORTUNITIES

PCRM Actions: www.pcrm.org/take-action

PETA Action Center www.peta.org/actioncenter

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 <u>2 The Rescue Animal Sanctuary: Rock Painting Fundraiser</u>, Ramona 10 am-12 pm</p> <p><u>Veganista Social Club: Comedy Night Fundraiser</u> 5-8 pm</p> <p><u>PlantDiego: Veguary Challenge</u></p>	<p>2</p> <p><u>Eris special: All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12), 12-2 pm Mon-Fri →</u></p>	<p>3 <u>Tacotarian special: Taco Tuesday, tacos \$1 off</u></p> <p><u>Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm</u></p>	<p>4 <u>Tacotarian special: Dorado tacos \$1.99</u></p> <p><u>Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm</u></p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 <u>San Diego Sustainable Night Market</u>, Miramar 5-9 pm</p> <p><u>Veggie Friends Circle/Hsi Fang Temple</u> University Heights 5:30 prep, 6:30 meet, 7:30 dinner</p>	<p>7 <u>PlantDiego: Getting to the Root of Heart Disease (short talk & potluck)</u> Point Loma 11:30 am</p> <p><u>Direct Action Everywhere: Iron Mountain hike, lunch at El Veganito</u>, Poway 9:30 am</p>
<p>8 Final day of service at <u>Vulture and Dreamboat</u> in University Heights</p>	<p>9</p> <p><u>Eris special: All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12), 12-2 pm Mon-Fri →</u></p>	<p>10 <u>Tacotarian special: Taco Tuesday, tacos \$1 off</u></p> <p><u>Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm</u></p>	<p>11 <u>Tacotarian special: Dorado tacos \$1.99</u></p> <p><u>Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm</u></p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 <u>North Park Sustainable Market + Valentine's Day Skate Party</u> North Park 12-4 pm</p> <p><u>Sale Ranch Animal Sanctuary: Petals & Pie Workshop</u>, Temecula 1-3 pm</p>
<p>15 <u>Spirituality for Animal Advocates</u> online 1-2:30 pm</p> <p><u>PlantDiego: Felicita Park Hike</u>, Escondido 9:30-11:30</p> <p><u>Vegan Speed Dating by DateNight AI</u> 5pm</p>	<p>16 <u>Lunar New Year Dinner & Magic Show (ticketed event)</u>, Vista 6-8 pm</p>	<p>17 <u>Tacotarian special: Taco Tuesday, tacos \$1 off</u></p> <p><u>Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm</u></p>	<p>18 <u>The Plot Garden Project inaugural celebration</u>, Oceanside 4-7 pm</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 <u>Vista Sustainable Night Market</u>, Vista 5-9 pm</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 <u>Cooking Class: Vibrant Vegan Sushi With Chef Paulo</u>, Kensington 2-4 pm</p>	<p>23</p> <p><u>Eris special: All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12), 12-2 pm Mon-Fri →</u></p>	<p>24 <u>Tacotarian special: Taco Tuesday, tacos \$1 off</u></p> <p><u>Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm</u></p>	<p>25 <u>Tacotarian special: Dorado tacos \$1.99</u></p> <p><u>Maya's Cookies \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tue-Wed 4-5 pm</u></p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>

Deals & Discounts

RESTAURANTS

[Ben & Esther's Vegan Delicatessen](#) (Rolando): Rewards program offers points with purchase

[Chani's Donuts](#) (Kearny Mesa): Free sample donut

[Donna Jean](#) (North Park): 10% off, valid Wednesday and Thursday, coupon in [VeganDiego](#)

[El Veganito](#) (La Mesa): \$1 off, coupon in [VeganDiego](#)

[Eris Vegan Food Co.](#) (Oceanside): The All-In Lunch (sandwich + a drink for \$12), Monday-Friday, 12-2 pm
"Buy one, get ones" on Tuesday nights for loyalty program members

[Evolution Fast Food](#) (North Park): Free soft serve with purchase of a sandwich or burger, coupon in [VeganDiego](#)

[Gorilla Eats Sushi](#) (College Area, in SDSU at Aztec Food Hub): 10% off cash "call in for pickup" orders

[Ike's Love and Sandwiches](#) (Hillcrest, Midway, Poway, Sorrento Valley): Omni shop with many vegan options
With app, free sandwich on birthday month, periodic specials and offers

[Maya's Cookies](#) (Grantville, San Marcos): \$2 chocolate chip cookies Tuesdays & Wednesdays 4-5 pm

[Nibble Chocolate](#) (Old Town's Fiesta de Reyes): 10% off coupon in [VeganDiego](#)

[Phattie's Bake Shop](#) (Point Loma): Rewards program, 1 point for every \$2 spent

[Plant-Power Fast Food](#) (Encinitas, Escondido, Ocean Beach, UCSD): Rewards program offers points with purchase to redeem for products + birthday surprise

[The Plot](#) (Oceanside): Special Valentine's Day menu Thu, Feb 12-Sun, Feb 15, 4 pm through dinner service

[The Purple Mint Vegan Restaurant](#) (Grantville): Free birthday surprise at www.purplemintbirthdayclub.com
VIP program offers secret menus, special offers/discounts, loyalty rewards

[Rayluca Chocolate](#) (Mira Mesa): For online orders, use code "LOVE15" for 15% off.

[Tacotarian](#) (North Park): Tuesdays: \$1 off tacos, Wednesdays: Dorado tacos \$1.99

[Veggie Grill](#) (Carlsbad): Rewards Program offers points with purchase, periodic offers, free birthday entree

[Vulture](#) (University Heights) offers an "Early Birds" discounted menu

FREE / DISCOUNTED EVENTS

[San Diego Sustainable Night Market](#), Miramar - free admission: Fri, Feb 6, 5-9 pm

[North Park Sustainable Night Market + Valentine's Day Skate Party](#) - free admission: Sat, Feb 14, 12-4 pm

[Vista Sustainable Night Market](#), Vista - free admission: Fri, Feb 20, 5-9 pm

[Lunar New Year Dinner & Magic Show](#), Vista - ticketed event. Use discount code vpfriend to get \$15 off a general admission ticket, ticket sales end on 2/9.

STOREFRONT MARKETS

[Sprouts Farmers Market](#): Frequent Buyer program - purchases earn cash rewards, digital coupons

FUN PAGE

Terrible Vegan Joke of the Month

“Two of my vegan friends just got married. They’re on their agavemoon right now.”

Trivia

Several actors in The Avengers films are vegan or have tried a vegan/vegetarian diet, including Benedict Cumberbatch/Dr. Strange (vegan), Robert Downey Jr./Iron Man (pescatarian after trying vegan), Chris Hemsworth/Thor (former vegan), Mark Ruffalo/the Hulk (advocates plant-based eating), Scarlett Johansson/Black Widow (reportedly flexitarian, vegan diet at times), Chadwick Boseman/Black Panther (said he was “mostly vegan”), Don Cheadle/James “Rhodey” Rhodes (mostly plant-based), Natalie Portman/Dr. Jane Foster in *Thor* (vegan). Veg-leaning actors in other Marvel films include Ian McKellen/Magneto in the *X-Men* films (vegan), and Zoe Saldana/Gamora in *Guardians of the Galaxy* (“starting to move in the direction of becoming a vegetarian family”).

Name That Vegan!

- I’m from Stevenage, Hertfordshire, England.
- I’ve worked to promote racial justice, human rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and animal rights.
- I’ve won seven Formula One World Drivers' Championship titles (tied for most titles ever won)

(Answer at the bottom of the page)

Valentine’s Vegan Quote

“Vegan is just pure love. Love for animals, love for the planet, and love for yourself.”
- Mischa Temaul, author

Vegans in the News

Sadie Sink (best known as Max on the *Stranger Things* TV series) has been cast in the upcoming film *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*, scheduled for release on July 31, 2026. Esteemed moral philosopher **Peter Singer** (*Animal Liberation*) joined a [conversation on 6Degrees](#) about animal suffering, effective giving, and assisted dying. Sir **Ian McKellen** appeared in the “Out in the Hills” LGBTQIA+ festival in Port-Na-Craig, Scotland, giving a reading of the new play *Equinox*. Fresh off of her role as Elphaba in *Wicked: For Good*, **Cynthia Erivo** is slated to open a one-woman adaptation of *Dracula* in London’s West End, performing all 23 roles, in a 16-week run from February 4 to May 31. **Dr. Neal Barnard** of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) briefly [responded to](#) the concerning new US Dietary Guidelines.

The Last Word: Community Ask

There are many groups and organizations which could benefit from community support in furthering their vision. Community Ask is an opportunity for these groups to request whatever assistance would be most helpful. Below, Dave Engel and Maggie Bellah share what would help Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) better serve the community.

Stay updated on our actions and events by following us on Instagram [@dxe_sandiego](#) and on Facebook at [Direct Action Everywhere – San Diego](#). We are continuing our campaign to ask the San Diego City Council and the Padres to cancel the rodeo. You can take action here: www.bansandiegorodeos.com. To follow all DxE campaigns, visit dxe.io

Next Issue

March promises to be a bustling introduction to Spring, with the Art Walk at the North Park Sustainable Market (not to mention the other Sustainable Markets), St. Patrick's Day and Eid al-Fitr celebrations, and Spring events at the local animal sanctuaries, including the annual Sale Ranch Animal Sanctuary "Spring Open Ranch" event.

As always, we would love submissions from the community: news, interviews, a restaurant spotlight, recipes, or cruelty free & vegan products. Get in touch with us at info@vegan-news.org

Vegan News
San Diego