

# VEGAN

## *Options*

PRESENTED BY MASON STUDENT  
WEN TRAN



# HI, I'M WEN!

I've been vegan for more than a year now. As I started to reduce my meat consumption, the idea of being a vegan came to me. After a month, I could see a positive change in my mind and body, and it was clear I should continue eating vegan. On my first day at George Mason University, I was concerned about not having adequate food options. I didn't know what or where I could eat.

Everything in the tin trays and on the griddles seemed to have meat, eggs, or milk in them. Back then, I truly thought I would never be able to effectively utilize my meal swipes.

Now, being a senior, I can confidently say that the dining halls have great, wholesome options for vegans, and being vegan on a meal plan doesn't have to be an uphill battle.

Here are some tips I used to enhance my vegan lifestyle on campus.





## EATING TIPS

Veganism has exploded in popularity nationwide, and Mason Dining is working to update and add more vegan options to nourish and accommodate its community. The dining hall menus rotate daily, so meals are versatile. Some tips for vegan students include:

- Check all labels: Listed ingredients can indicate whether or not the meal is vegan.
- Use the Everyday App: This provides nutritional information and labels vegan/vegetarian dishes.
- Do your own research: Be confident about what is, and is not vegan.
- Don't be afraid to ask: If you're not sure of the accuracy of listed ingredients, ask a staff member who will double-check.

These tips are meant to encourage, rather than sway, one's lifestyle as a vegan. While the dining halls are vegan-friendly, there is always room for improvement.

Mason Dining is open to receiving feedback from diners, and is always looking to improve menus for its students.



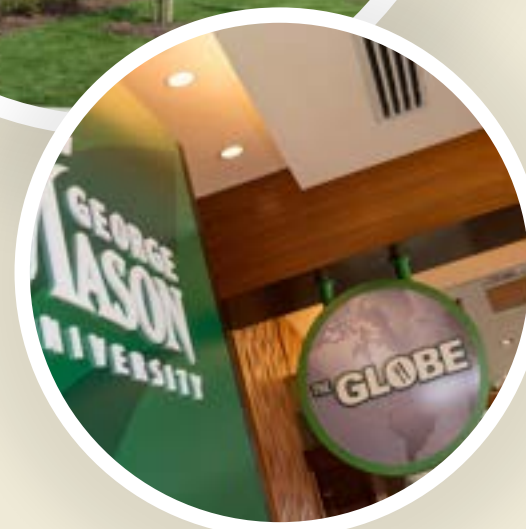


# DINING HALLS

There are three dining halls on the Fairfax campus: Southside, Ike's, and The Globe. Here are some differences between the three:

- All dining halls have options for vegan diners
- Southside and Ike's have allergen-free stations
- Southside and Ike's feature grain, vegan, and salad bars
- Ike's is known for Zack's gelato, which has a vegan sorbet option
- Ike's is a 24-hour dining hall

As I mentioned, each dining hall has a different menu daily. All three are vegan-friendly, but Southside is always my go-to dining hall. Therefore, my focus will be on Southside.



# VEGAN BREAKFAST AT SOUTHSIDE

Though the menu is rotated every day, there are some standard vegan options that are always available. Milk, butter, or other non-vegan products may be incorporated into foods, so be sure to check with the staff.

Sometimes there are not many breakfast options here.

## MAIN ENTRÉE

TOFU SCRAMBLE  
HASH BROWN POTATOES

## SALAD

CANTALOUPE, PINEAPPLE,  
PEACHES, & GRAPES  
PLAIN VEGAN YOGURT

## DESSERT

FRUIT SMOOTHIES  
SLICED BREAD (CHECK  
INGREDIENTS!)

## CEREAL

SOY & ALMOND MILK  
ALL CEREAL OPTIONS ARE  
VEGAN!

## SIMPLE SERVINGS

VEGAN BREAD  
VEGAN BUTTER  
VEGAN COOKIES



# VEGAN LUNCH & DINNER AT SOUTHSIDE

Southside always has a vegan station that showcases Future 50 Foods. Additionally, there is always a vegetarian soup, but double-check to see what type of broth was used. The menu items rotate every day, so don't be concerned if one day there aren't as many options.

## MAIN ENTRÉE

THERE IS A VEGAN  
ENTREE AT THE MAIN  
ENTREE STATION

## SALAD

CANTALOUPE, PINEAPPLE,  
PEACHES & GRAPES  
PLAIN VEGAN YOGURT  
MIXED GREENS

## DESSERT

NO VEGAN CAKE!  
NOT ALL SLICED BREAD  
IS VEGAN

## HOT SOUP

ANY KIND OF VEGETABLE  
SOUP

## SIMPLE SERVINGS

FRIED OR BOILED  
VEGETABLES  
RICE  
SALAD

## CEREAL

SOY & ALMOND MILK  
ALL CEREAL OPTIONS ARE  
VEGAN

## GRAIN & VEGAN

RED PEPPER HUMMUS  
EXTRA-FIRM TOFU  
FRESH PICO DE GALLO

## PASTA

CAVATAPPI PASTA  
WHEAT PENNE  
TOMATO BASIL MARINARA





You can use the Everyday App to see daily menus and find the best place to eat. As vegans, accessing delicious, satisfying, and healthy food should never be a concern. You can use the Everyday App to guarantee a balanced meal.



Simple Servings is an allergy-friendly station. All foods served here are free of milk, eggs, wheat, soy, sesame, tree nuts, shellfish, gluten, & peanuts. Nearby, a private fridge called "Simple Zone" offers gluten-free and nut-free alternatives. We are lucky to have designated locations that offer food to all students, regardless of allergies or dietary preferences.





# FOOD RETAILERS ON CAMPUS

Mason's food retailers offer many vegan options on campus. However, vegans may worry about cross-contamination happening in their kitchens or on-site. You can only worry so much, but to avoid any contamination, kindly ask the staff to switch out gloves and/or clarify how their kitchen is organized.

Getting food on the weekends can seem expensive if you pay by card or cash. I think a useful hack is using FREEDOM FUNDS. You can save 6% every time you pay, just by opting in.

STARSHIP is used by food retailers on campus to deliver food directly to your dorm. Fun Tip: Find discount codes online to save money on your purchases.

Most restaurant options are open daily. However, hours of operation are specific to each food retailer. It is also important to know about changes in hours during holidays or school breaks so make sure to check the [Mason Dining website](#).

[www.dining@gmu.edu](mailto:www.dining@gmu.edu)



# BLAZE PIZZA

If you are a vegan pizza lover, Blaze Pizza is the place for you. Blaze offers build-your-own pizzas with a variety of crusts, cheese, toppings, and finishes to choose from.

They have three main salad options, and just like the pizza, the salads can be customized, too.

## MY FAVORITE VEGAN PIZZA:

VEGAN GLUTEN-FREE CRUST  
CLASSIC RED SAUCE  
VEGAN CHEESE  
SPICY VEGAN CHORIZO  
BANANA PEPPERS  
MUSHROOM  
BLACK OLIVES  
RED ONIONS  
FRESH BASIL  
PESTO SAUCE



# EINSTEIN BROS.

Einstein Bros. Bagels is one of the most vegan-friendly retailers. Not only do they offer numerous vegan bagels, but spreads as well. It is definitely your go-to breakfast spot if you're a vegan!

At Einstein Bros., salads change seasonally, but any time of the year you can ask for no dressing or cheese.

## MY FAVORITE BAGELS:

PLAIN, CINNAMON RAISIN, EVERYTHING BAGEL, CHOCOLATE CHIP, AND A BLUEBERRY BAGEL

## MY MEAL CHOICE:

BREAKFAST: AVOCADO TOAST, CARAMEL MACCHIATO WITH ALMOND MILK

LUNCH: AVOCADO VEG-OUT WITHOUT GARDEN VEGGIE SCHMEAR, AND TEA





Despite not offering vegan donuts, there are still plenty of options at Dunkin'! Their bagels, English muffins, and avocado toast are all vegan. There is nothing better than a plant-based drink.

By substituting alternate milks, you can make any drink vegan. Dunkin' offers oat, almond, and coconut milk for non-dairy options.

## NOT TRYING TO BE PUSHY BUT YOU HAVE TO TRY...

THE HASH BROWNS  
ROASTED TOMATO TOAST  
HUMMUS TOAST

The hash browns are just \$1.39!  
So if you need to spend the remainder of your  
bonus funds, Dunkin' is your place.





# STARBUCKS

Starbucks has great grab-and-go snacks, but their labeling is lacking. Although they are not labeled vegan, there are no animal-derived ingredients in some breakfast items.

## MY FAVORITE "HOT BREAKFAST":

CLASSIC OATMEAL, HEARTY OATMEAL  
PLAIN BAGEL WITH AVOCADO SPREAD

At Starbucks, you can opt for vegan options for food and drinks. Starbucks offers many alternate vegan milk options: soy milk, oat milk, coconut milk, and almond milk.

## MY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED DRINKS

MATCHA LATTE (GRANDE SIZE, OAT MILK, 2 PUMPS VANILLA)  
CARAMEL MACCHIATO (GRANDE SIZE, OAT MILK, 1 PUMP  
VANILLA)



# PANDA EXPRESS

If you want to try Asian cuisine, Panda Express is a good place! Although they offer a bunch of vegan options, the dishes are cooked and prepared in the same facilities as meat and dairy. This chain does not claim to be vegan or vegetarian-friendly.

At Panda Express, you don't need to worry about lacking nutrition, as their menu has options for alternate proteins, carbs, and fiber! From rice to veggie spring rolls, Panda Express has delicious options for all to enjoy. Dig in!

## MY FAVORITES ARE:

APPETIZERS: VEGETABLE SPRING ROLLS

SIDES: CHOW MEIN, FRIED RICE WITHOUT EGG, WHITE RICE  
SAUCE: SWEET & SOUR SAUCE, CHILI SAUCE, SOY SAUCE,  
HOT SAUCE



# CHIPOTLE



It's easy being vegan at Chipotle. With customizable options, including building your own bowl, burrito, and burrito bowl, you are guaranteed to leave feeling full. They offer Sofritas, a great high-protein meat replacement, and both black and pinto beans, seasoned with onions, garlic, and a blend of savory spices. With three protein potions, we have to accept that their sour cream is not vegan.

Load up the flavor with toppings like tomato and corn salsa, romaine lettuce, black and pinto beans, and guacamole.  
It is a tasty and healthy option on a busy day.

# CHICK-FIL-A



Despite their name, Chick-Fil-A has vegan options on their menu. Like most places, it's important to be wary of cross-contamination if you are following a strict diet.

## GOOD OPTIONS AT CHICK-FIL-A:

FRUIT SALAD  
HASH BROWNS  
PLAIN BAGEL  
WAFFLE POTATO FRIES  
SPICY SOUTHWEST SALAD WITHOUT CHEESE  
OR CHICKEN, CHILI LIME VINAIGRETTE



# SUBWAY



Subway now supports dine-in or pick-up. They don't have any vegan meat alternatives. However, you can get a fresh salad and load up the veggies and guac.

## MEAL OPTIONS AT SUBWAY:

VEGGIE DELIGHT SERVED IN A BOWL  
THE VEGAN VEGGIE PATTY  
SIDES: APPLE SLICES, LAY'S CLASSIC CHIPS,  
ORIGINAL SUNCHIPS, OVEN-BAKED LAY'S

# PANERA BREAD



Panera Bread's menu includes vegan bread. The restaurant doesn't offer vegan cream cheese, but you can ask for avocado as a substitute.

Their steel-cut oatmeal with fruit is a nutritious choice providing long-lasting energy and keeping you full for hours. If you are on the go, a peach & blueberry smoothie with almond milk or a green passion smoothie is a super convenient breakfast.

Panera Bread also offers lots of tasty salad options, which can be modified to vegan standards.

# ARGO TEA



If you want to have a good view for studying and chatting with friends, Argo Tea is a good spot. They have delicious vegan bread and milk alternatives so every drink can be vegan!

## MUST-TRY VEGAN OPTIONS:

DRINKS: CHAI TEAPPUCCINO (ALMOND MILK, SINGLE ESPRESSO SHOTS)

FOODS: OATMEAL RAISIN COOKIE, CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

# THE HALAL GUYS



If you've never tried Halal Guys, you're missing out on some of the best quick-serve halal food. They have expanded their menu by offering falafel platters made from ground chickpeas and a blend of herbs and spices. The white sauce is not vegan, but you can get vegan gyros instead.

## MY FAVORITE RECIPE AT HALAL GUYS:

FALAFEL PLATTER  
RICE  
LETTUCE, TOMATO  
VEGAN GYROS

# AKENO SUSHI



If you are craving hot soup, sushi, and ramen, Akeno Sushi is your spot. Many vegan options are not authentic Japanese dishes.

## MY FAVORITE DISHES AT AKENO SUSHI:

SUSHI ROLLS: VEGETABLE COMBO  
VEGETABLE POKE BOWL  
VEGETABLE MISO RAMEN  
VEGETABLE UDON  
VEGETABLE SODA  
TARO BUBBLE MILK TEA

# MANHATTAN PIZZA



The best part about Manhattan Pizza is the vegan crust. The restaurant has expanded its menu by adding hummus and falafel as protein alternatives, but they still do not offer vegan cheese.

## VEGAN OPTIONS AT MANHATTAN PIZZA:

VEGETARIAN PIZZA WITHOUT MOZZARELLA CHEESE  
FOR SALADS: FALAFEL VEGAN BOWL WITH SPECIAL  
HOMEMADE TAHINI DRESSING.  
FOR APPETIZERS: ONION RINGS, FRENCH FRIES,  
AND HUMMUS & FALAFEL



# STEAK'N SHAKE



One thing you need to know is that the Steak'n Shake menu changes based on location. Due to possible cross-contamination, there are no vegan options for main courses on campus. This leaves only the Thin'N Crispy Fries as a vegan option.



## GOLD RUSH

At Gold Rush, located in Southside, a meal swipe can be used to order snacks, sandwiches, salads, and/or drinks before class. Although they have vegan options, it is not always stocked.

However, there are some vegan chips and desserts, as well as fresh fruit and drinks. The salads might contain cheese, so just make sure to check the labels.

# CONVENIENCE STORES

One Stop and Express are convenience stores located on campus.

If you're out of something, this is your one-stop shop to get it.

There is now a vegan refrigerator section for quick access in Express.

I highly recommend checking what's available at One Stop using the Starship menu. This just ensures everything you need is in stock before you leave your dorm.

## MY FAVORITE FOOD PICKS AT ONE STOP:

NONGSHIM SHIN RAMYUN VEGAN. IT IS A GREAT  
INSTANT NOODLE MEAL WHEN YOU ARE  
LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SPICY.  
FOR A QUICK SPAGHETTI: BARILLA SPAGHETTI  
WITH PREGO SAUCE  
NAKED JUICE

## VEGAN FOOD PICKS AT EXPRESS:

HUMMUS SANDWICH  
DOLE FRUIT BOWL MIXED  
PRINGLES ORIGINAL  
THE CRUNCH AND FRUIT & NUT GRANOLA BARS  
ALL CLIF BARS ARE VEGAN-FRIENDLY EXCEPT  
THE PEANUT BUTTER & HONEY



## THE VEGAN SOCIETY

THERE IS A VEGAN COMMUNITY CALLED  
THE VEGAN SOCIETY AT GMU.

THE CLUB'S PURPOSE IS TO BUILD A STUDENT COMMUNITY BY SHARING THEIR IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE VEGANISM LIFESTYLE. THEY PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT DIET, ADVOCATE FOR MORE VEGAN OPTIONS ON CAMPUS, AND PROVIDE A SPACE FOR LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE TO CONNECT.



## THE DIETITIAN

ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS SHOULD BE COGNIZANT OF THEIR VITAMIN INTAKE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO PARTAKE IN A VEGAN DIET. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO KNOW WHAT A BALANCED DIET LOOKS LIKE AND HOW TO ACHIEVE IT. THANKFULLY, MASON HAS A DIETITIAN NAMED BROOKE TRESCH WHO IS AVAILABLE FOR FREE CONSULTATIONS. WITH HER, ALL STUDENTS CAN MAINTAIN A SUSTAINABLE DIET.



## MASON DINING

MASON DINING HOSTS LOTS OF VEGAN EVENTS FOR STUDENTS. THEY POST ALL THEIR EVENTS TO THEIR INSTAGRAM, AS WELL AS DAILY STORIES SHOWING LUNCH OPTIONS. IN SEPTEMBER 2023, THEY HOSTED TWO EVENTS, AT WHICH I WAS ABLE TO ENJOY GOOD FOOD AND MEET PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR LIFESTYLES.