

WELLBEING

VEGAN VIPS

With a long list of A-listers adopting a plant-based diet as a way to stay healthy and in shape, is it time to follow their example? We flesh out the argument for taking meat, fish and dairy off the menu

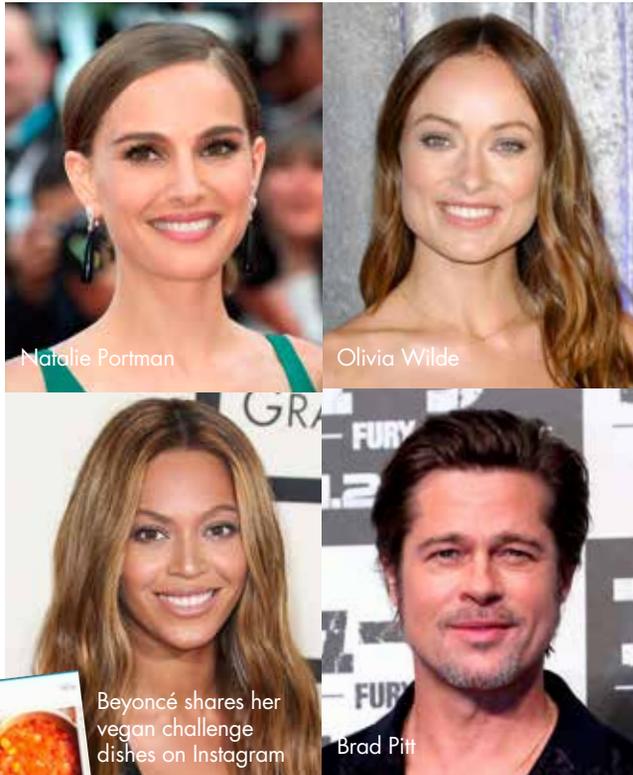
Beyoncé credits veganism with helping her to get in great shape. Olivia Wilde believes it is the secret to long-term health, Pamela Anderson does it for animal welfare reasons and Natalie Portman is motivated by a desire to care for the planet, as well as her body. Even Brad Pitt is said to have tried the diet.

Veganism has some influential advocates, and their reasons are certainly persuasive, but with more than 150,000 vegans in the UK alone, this is far from an A-list fad.

Becoming vegan means following a purely plant-based diet, so meat and fish are banned, as are any foods derived from animals, such as dairy, eggs and even honey. With so many familiar foods out of bounds, going vegan – and ensuring you eat food that is both healthy and tasty – can be a daunting prospect.

But that need not be the case, says passionate vegan and food and lifestyle blogger Áine Carlin, whose forthcoming book, *The New Vegan*, guides people through the process. Her tips include what to tell others about your new diet, what you can eat in restaurants and dealing with cravings. She also includes 90 recipes tailored for those giving up meat, fish and dairy for the first time, as well as how-tos for making your own plant milk, nut cream and vegan-friendly beauty products.

Áine says her decision to go vegan was driven by three concerns: health, animal welfare and saving the planet. “For me, it wasn’t about a life-changing disease – although for others it is – it was all those little niggles that began to mount up until they couldn’t be ignored,” she explains. “When my



Beyoncé shares her vegan challenge dishes on Instagram

health took a bit of a nose dive, the first thing I looked to was my food habits – maybe because I instinctively knew the power food has on our physical and mental wellbeing. Sure enough, staring me in the face was the answer to my lethargy, my brittle nails and hair, my extreme mood swings, weight gain and probably every other minor ailment I was experiencing.

“Animal welfare is a massive part of my veganism,” she continues. “It pretty much surpasses my desire to stay healthy and is on an absolute par with helping to protect the environment. The more I learnt about the food

industry, the more I began to connect with what I was eating. If ever there was a light bulb moment in my life, the realisation that I didn’t need, or want, to eat animals was it.”

From an environmental standpoint, too, she says veganism makes a lot of sense as the meat industry has a big carbon footprint. “From global warming and impending water shortages to the worrying decline of bees, our food demands are slowly but surely destroying the planet. And I can’t think of a better way to remedy the situation than to start with breakfast, lunch and dinner. I bet if we collectively opted out of animal products for even a few days a week, we could turn this thing around in no time.”

Going vegan for weight loss is another popular choice, and is something that Beyoncé has found works for her. She tried trainer Marco Borges’s plant-based programme, the 22-Day Revolution, in 2013, and has stuck with it on and off ever since. Even becoming a part-time vegan – mixing periods of veganism with either vegetarianism or limited meat eating – can help boost your health.

In fact, researchers in the US have found that following a plant-based diet is more effective than traditional weight loss regimes. The study, published in the *American Journal of Medicine*, found that participants who eliminated meat and dairy products from their diet burned a fifth more calories than others trying to lose weight. The reason is that a plant-based diet requires the body to burn more calories to extract the nutrients from the food.

Considering Britain’s soaring obesity rates, going vegan – for at least some of the time – may just be the healthy solution for us all. **W**

• *The New Vegan* by Áine Carlin (Kyle Books, £14.99) is published in December.P

HEALTH NOTES



➤ **Go coco loco** As anyone interested in gut health may know, coconut kefir is currently a hot source of probiotics. Rhythm Health’s Life Shot 200 contains 200 billion of the live kefir cultures, boosted by lactic acid which aims to aid healthy digestion. The company recommends drinking one bottle a day for five days, taken 20 minutes before breakfast. The cost for five bottles is £125, visit rhythmcleanse.co.uk.



➤ **Tick list** Avril Lavigne, Bella Hadid (left) and her mother Yolanda Foster have all been affected by Lyme disease, a bacterial infection spread by ticks. And now experts are warning that the UK’s wet autumn could lead to a 20 per cent increase in tick bites this year. Early signs of Lyme disease include a rash or flu-like symptoms – see your GP ASAP if you have suspect you have been affected.



➤ **Sure thing** Looking for a compact antiperspirant to throw in your gym bag? The new Sure Compressed range, including Shower Fresh, £3 (left), has just won an Eco Beauty Award by reducing the amount of gas needed to deliver the same level of protection – meaning smaller, lighter cans.

HEALTH NOTES

➤ **Krill joy** Found to be a significantly more powerful and effective form of omega 3 than traditional fish oils, krill oil is readily absorbed so you do not need so much of it. What's more, it is absorbed in the intestines, which means no fishy 'burps'. Try Bioglan Red Krill Oil, £17.99 for 30 capsules, from Boots.

➤ **A fresh approach** Antibacterial hand washes tend to be more medicinal than moreish, but three new products from Cuticura are set to change that. Choose from Black Pepper & Pomegranate, Ginger & Manuka Honey, and Lime & Bamboo, £2.49 each, for a hand wash that not only kills 99 per cent of bacteria for up to three hours after use, but smells great

➤ **Very handy** If you find that sweaty hands and feet stop you from making the most of your workout, try Yoga Paws. These sweat wicking, wrist support, extra-grip fingerless gloves and foot grips have been specifically designed for Bikram and Ashtanga yoga fans, and will also work for power Pilates. Available in four colours and four sizes, they cost £32 for a set, from cultbeauty.co.uk, or visit yogapaws.com for a list of UK stockists