



## THINK GREEN



## EAT GREEN

### What's for Dinner?

Remember the commercial from the 90's? The answer was frequently **beef** .... or pork .... or chicken.

Many of us now know that meat at every meal - even meat every day - is not necessary as a protein source, nor is it good for our health. And it certainly isn't good for the environment.



### **We'll start with protein sources.**

Any animal product (meat, fish, eggs, or dairy product) is a "complete" protein. Plants are considered "incomplete" proteins as each one does not have all of the amino acids our body needs. These amino acids need not be consumed in the same meal, but can be obtained through a variety of foods eaten over the course of a day.

Legumes are considered the superstars of plant protein. They are both fiber- and protein-dense, providing many nutrients



and NO saturated fats. The legume family includes beans, chickpeas, lentils, and soybeans – perfect ingredients for hearty soups and vegetarian stews during cold winter months.

**A diet including red meat and other saturated fats** has long been acknowledged in the medical community to increase incidence of cardiovascular disease, stroke or diabetes. A Mayo Clinic Healthy Lifestyle [report](#) on nutrition and meatless meals advises that a switch from a diet with high-fat proteins to a plant-based diet - emphasizing fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, legumes and nuts – is good for us, as well as the planet. Plant proteins are rich in fiber, vitamins and other nutrients. In addition to these health benefits, plant-based protein sources are cheaper than meat.



**As for the environment**, animal agriculture consumes massive amounts of resources to produce a relatively small amount of animal protein. An April 2021 [report](#) from Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future notes that the world's population will grow to 9-10 billion people by 2050 (we've just hit 8 billion). Current industrial agriculture methods consume water, fossil fuels, and topsoil at unsustainable rates. Animal agriculture contributes disproportionately to this problem, as well as adding massive amounts of greenhouse gas emissions to our atmosphere.

The disparity of resource use in producing plant protein for human consumption vs. feeding vast amounts of those crops to animals to grow meat to be consumed by humans is enormous. Simply put, growing grains to feed to animals to produce protein – instead of feeding it directly to humans – is not something our planet can maintain without further degradation of natural resources.

**A viable, nutritionally sound alternative** to animal protein is the production of high-quality plant protein crops. A recently published report by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations includes a [chapter](#) on plant-based alternatives which discusses the environmental issues of raising livestock for protein

vs. raising plant alternatives. The FAO has published another [article](#) "Plant Protein for a Sustainable Future," citing the benefits of pulses. These plants produce a nutrient-dense protein AND have the ability to capture nitrogen from our atmosphere and fix it in the soil, thus building the soil's biomass.



**An education strategy is essential**, especially in countries where plant protein is looked at as something “poor people eat.” The more affluent a society becomes, the more meat that society demands and consumes. In developed nations, consumers must learn the benefits of plant protein – for both human health and that of our planet.

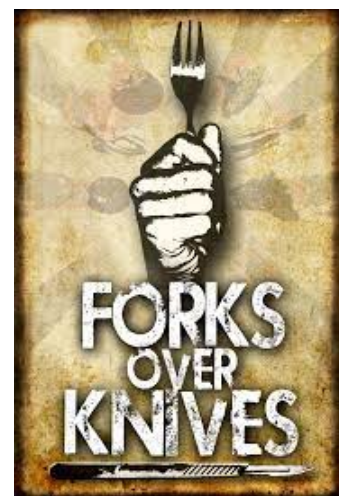


## FILM RECOMMENDATION

***Forks over Knives: the plant-based way to health.*** (2011, 96 minutes)

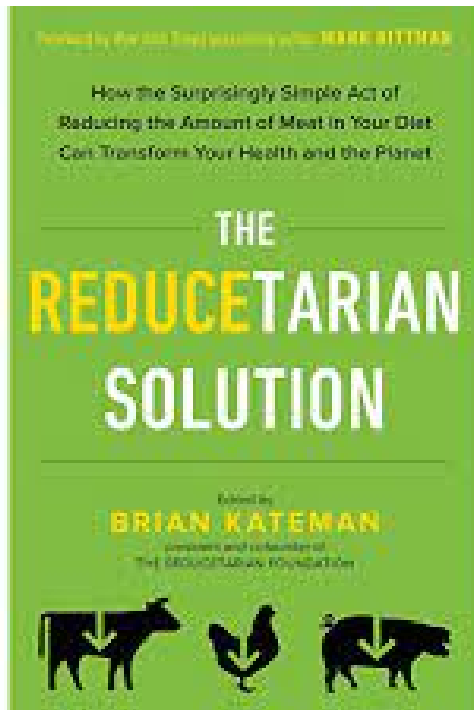
*Forks over Knives* examines the profound claim that most, if not all, of the degenerative diseases that afflict us can be controlled, or even reversed, by rejecting animal-based and processed foods. The idea of “food as medicine” is put to the test.

(Available on DVD at Harford County Public Library and free on [forksoverknives.com](http://forksoverknives.com).)





## BOOK RECOMMENDATION



***The Reducetarian Solution: How the Surprisingly Simple Act of Reducing the Amount of Meat in Your Diet Can Transform Your Health and the Planet***, edited by Brian Kateman (Penguin Random House, 2019).

This collection of essays by influential authors offers explanations of how the simple act of

*slightly* reducing our meat consumption can benefit the reader, animals and the planet.

(available through Harford County Public Library)

## SOME GREEN THOUGHTS



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"Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for

survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a  
vegetarian diet."  
- Albert Einstein

"Protein is most definitely not a synonym for meat."  
- Marion Nestle, molecular biologist, nutritionist, author

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