



# Guide to the Aisles

TIPS, TRICKS + MORE FOR  
SUCCESSFUL VEGAN SHOPPING

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# Aisle Be Your Guide!



## HI, I'M KREG

I know shopping for groceries can sometimes be confusing if products aren't clearly labeled that they're vegan. For those that are newly vegan, it can be even more intimidating. I have more than 25 years of experience working in retail specifically in natural foods so I will help you navigate the aisles, labels and ingredients to make sure you're making the right choice for you.

### ABOUT ME

VEGAN SINCE 1994

BASED IN SARASOTA, FLORIDA

FAVORITE FOOD: PEANUT BUTTER



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### BIG BOX TIPS



Store jars of natural peanut butter upside down for easier stirring of the separated oil once opened, then refrigerate.



Keep reusable bags in your car so you always have one available!

100%  
VEGAN

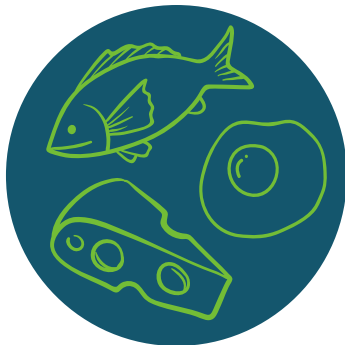
# How do I know?

Truth is without a product being labeled **CERTIFIED VEGAN**, it can be hard to know for sure. Some ingredients while technically containing no animal derivatives may not be considered ethically vegan due to environmental concerns, animal testing in the development of the product and for other reasons. Keep in mind there's no vegan police. I liken veganism to religion where there's an overarching umbrella of tenets to follow then within the movement there are sects of those with differing opinions and beliefs. We are striving for progress not perfection, so don't beat yourself up if an ingredient slips past you. You can go down a deep rabbit hole obsessing over cross-contamination, if sugar has been processed with bone char and more. Vow to do your best and realize it's your journey and that small steps can lead to big change.

## The GREAT EIGHT

The FDA recognizes eight protein derived ingredients as major allergens that are legally required to be disclosed in ingredient lists on packaged products sold in the USA. They are:

- milk
- eggs
- fish
- shellfish
- tree nuts
- wheat
- peanuts
- soybeans



They are usually included at the end of the list of ingredients but are sometimes bolded within the list. **Seeing milk, eggs, fish or shellfish listed is a big red flag that the item is not vegan.**



Although the eight major allergens are a great start to knowing if an item is vegan, most meat or insect by-products will not be disclosed so some things to look for might be:

- **chicken or beef broth**
- **gelatin (made from beef or fish bones)**
- **carmine coloring (from crushed beetles)**
- **confectioners glaze (shellac from insects)**
- **lard (rendered animal fat)**
- **natural flavors (could be animal derived)**
- **vitamin D3 (from lanolin found in sheep's wool)**

A new website called "Double Check Vegan" has a database of over 2,000 items (and growing) that can check to see if something is vegan by copying and pasting a list or single ingredient into their search field. These also include household and beauty products which can sometimes be difficult to determine. **Visit [doublecheckvegan.com](https://doublecheckvegan.com) to get started.**

# But what about...

## CROSS CONTAMINATION

**This statement is a declaration on the label of a prepackaged product that alerts consumers of the possible presence of an allergen in the food.**

Legally, companies are required to disclose that they've manufactured items on shared equipment used to produce items that include any of the major eight allergens. It does not take the place of a deliberate added allergen ingredient warning. Although the products do not contain these ingredients, they may have come in contact with them (or not) and for those that are highly allergic, they disclose this information. You will be limited in choices if you avoid these products but it's a personal choice to buy them or not.

## PROCESSED SUGAR

**Bone char (from cattle) is used by the sugar industry as a decolorizing filter, which allows the sugar cane to achieve its desirable white color.**

Companies often mix lots of refined sugar from other manufacturers. Organic rules prevent the use of this practice so buying organic sugar ensures it's vegan. Conventional brown sugar often has molasses added to cane sugar so it may have gone through this process as well. The practice is becoming less popular but it is an ethical choice to eat items containing sugar where it's not specified as vegan. I feature products containing questionable sugar and let others make their own choice to purchase these products or not.

## CERTIFIED VEGAN

**The Certified Vegan Logo is a registered trademark for products that do not contain animal products or byproducts and have not been tested on animals.**

By ingredients, Certified Vegan products are dairy-free, egg-free, and vegan. However, for those with food allergies, please check the label if potential allergen cross-contamination is an issue for you. Many companies that make vegan products are using shared machinery and vegan certification does not prohibit this practice as long as the manufacturer has taken reasonable steps to avoid it. Many companies like to label items as plant-based to appeal to a wider audience and may not be certified, but are vegan.

## FOOD COLORINGS

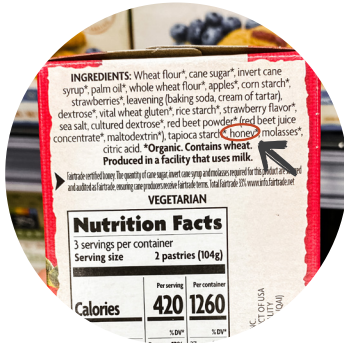
**Food colorings may be derived from natural or synthetic sources. Some come from insects, plants or are completely artificial.**

If a product is labeled vegan, it will contain a plant derived food coloring if present in the product. Although artificial colorants often do not involve dairy, animal products, or any life form, they have most likely been tested on animals for food consumption approval making it an ethical choice to purchase items containing them. Some red colors like carmine or cochineal are derived from insects and like honey would not be widely considered to be vegan. Always best to search online for a specific color ingredient if you're unsure of it's origins and if it's vegan friendly.

# Look on the label!



Here are a few things to look out for when shopping for vegan friendly products. This is not an exhaustive list, but just some things that have tripped me up over the years.



## HONEY

Most vegans will agree that for ethical reasons, honey taken from bees is not vegan. It is not an allergen so it will not be listed and is often at the end of an ingredient list making it difficult to spot sometimes. The tip off here is that this item was only labeled as "vegetarian".

## GELATIN

Gelatin is a protein obtained by boiling skin, tendons, ligaments, and/or bones with water. It is usually obtained from cows or pigs and is a thickening agent. It is in marshmallows, gummy candies and in some shampoos and beauty products as well.



## EGG WHITES

This product should have had eggs listed as an allergen but did not so you may have assumed at a glance that it was vegan. Some meat substitutes contain egg whites as well as some candies and other products so make sure to scan the label.



## NATURAL FLAVORS

Natural flavors can be anything that's not man-made so they could potentially be derived from non-vegan sources. Natural flavors are subject to allergen disclosure so if they contain milk, eggs, fish or shellfish, it will listed as an allergen. There's a chance they could be from meat so if unsure, best to avoid (unless product is labeled vegan) or contact the manufacturer directly for clarification.





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