



## Bangkok Post Learning: *Test Yourself*

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# Meat-free meals

by Gary Boyle



Photo courtesy of AP

Read the following story by Arusa Pisuthiparn from the *Bangkok Post*. Then, answer the questions that follow.

With the Vegetarian Festival running until Oct 7, a nutrition expert discusses the rise of meat-free diets and maintaining good health

### PLANT WINGS

Late last month, KFC launched Beyond Fried Chicken, a plant-based chicken substitute at a single restaurant in Atlanta, US. According to a New York Times report, they sold as many plant-based wings and nuggets in only five hours as its popular popcorn chicken in an entire week.

As for Beyond Meat, a manufacturer of meat substitute products that replicate the look and flavour of ground beef, their market growth is huge.

Meanwhile, in April this year, Burger King's meat-free Impossible Whopper landed in selected branches across the US. Following extremely positive consumer feedback, the company announced that the burger would be available at all its locations across the country, starting from last month.

In Thailand, vegetarians are yet to be able to enjoy KFC's chicken-free chicken. But meat-free diets are becoming more popular here. For this year's Vegetarian Festival, which runs until Oct 7, a number of chain restaurants up and down the country are offering tempting meat-free options, for a limited period only.

## READY MEALS

Veganism and vegetarianism have become increasingly popular in Thailand in recent years. Achiraya Kamchansupasin, a researcher at Mahidol University's Institute of Nutrition, has seen dietary change in Thailand, especially in urban areas.

"Thailand has seen major developments in eating behaviours," she said. "In our parents' and grandparents' generations, people usually bought ingredients from markets and cooked at home. Then later, people -- especially urbanites -- started to rely more heavily on readily cooked food, usually sold in plastic bags. Now, the trend has moved on to ready meals, where people can just put them in a microwave oven and eat right from the package."

For a long time, ready meals would not have been considered healthy options. However, some ready-to-eat brands have come up with healthier meals -- nutritionally-calculated food sets -- in response to the growing craze for outdoor workouts.

"Exercise has become a phenomenon in recent years," Achiraya went on. "Running and cycling events are often organised one after another. As exercise gains popularity among the health conscious, people subsequently start to pay more attention to their diet. Ready meals with pre-calculated calorie data have thus become popular with working people in cities."

## FAT FACTS

Eating too much meat, according to Achiraya, isn't healthy.

"A 300g piece of steak probably provides too much fat intake. And a lot of Thai diners love barbecue and grill buffets, putting themselves at risk of suffering non-communicable diseases (NCDs) as high blood cholesterol, coronary artery diseases and diabetes," she said.

There remain a number of concerns surrounding vegetarianism, however. It can be harder to eat a balanced meal. Some complain that they are always hungry while on a plant-based diet. Some even fear that vegetarian food might actually increase body weight.

Regular diets, explained Achiraya, contain carbohydrates, fibre and protein derived from meat which can make the stomach full for hours. Vegetarian diets provide a smaller amount of protein and a larger proportion of fibre, which is more easily digested and absorbed. Also, fibre does not yield as much energy as protein does, so many people on vegetarian diets get hungry more easily. For those who are only observing veganism for the duration of the festival, these issues can be particularly acute.

"For meat-eaters, it might take two to three days for the body to get accustomed to meat-free food," she explained. "My advice is that main meals should be at least four hours apart. And they can have fruit or light snacks in between meals if they feel hungry."

There is a rise in popularity of meat substitutes like Beyond Meat and OmniMeat. Achiraya believes that these are good in moderation, but should be adapted to fit in with Thailand's existing food culture. Despite being an interesting alternative for vegetarians, such products should still be consumed in moderation and in combination with a variety of diets.

"Thailand has great food diversity," she concluded. "Food here is widely and easily available, which means our eating culture does not have to revolve around frozen products. Using meat substitute as a cooking ingredient is fine, but make sure you are getting enough fibre, vitamins and minerals from other sources too."

### Section 1

Read through the story and answer the following questions.

1. In which month did KFC launch Beyond Fried Chicken? .....
2. The Impossible Whopper is available in Thailand. True or false? .....
3. People have always thought that ready meals are healthy. True or false? .....
4. Ready meals that show calorie data are popular. True or false? .....
5. Which has more protein – meat or vegetables? .....
6. Which has more energy – fibre or protein? .....
7. Meat eaters adapt to vegetarian diets immediately. True or false? .....
8. Availability of food means Thai diets have less frozen food than others. True or false? .....

### Section 2

Underline one grammatically incorrect word in each of the following sentences. Then, write down the grammatically correct word in the space given.

9. A balance diet is important. ....
10. A various of food gives the body more vitamins. ....

11. The Vegetarian Festival is an annually event. ....
12. According with a survey, people are eating less fast food. ....
13. Some people chosen to be vegetarian because of religious beliefs.....

**Section 3**

Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

Vegetarians and vegans must take their food choices ...14... . With their diets increasing the ...15... of protein and iron deficiency, there may be a ...16... to include dietary supplements like protein shakes or iron tablets. "Eating a ...17... variety of vegetables and nuts is crucial for vegans and vegetarians. Brown rice is also a healthy option because it is ...18... in some vitamins. But for those who are only ...19... meat products for the duration of the festival, they should watch their weight."

- |                |               |                 |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 14. a. serious | b. seriously  | c. more serious |
| 15. a. option  | b. likelihood | c. time         |
| 16. a. need    | b. option     | c. choice       |
| 17. a. many    | b. very       | c. wide         |
| 18. a. healthy | b. wealthy    | c. rich         |
| 19. a. avoid   | b. avoidance  | c. avoiding     |

**Section 4**

Find words that match the following definitions.

20. Something used instead of another thing. ....
21. The process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth. ....
22. The ways in which someone acts. ....
23. Worries. ....
24. Severe. ....

For the answers, find the story online at [www.bangkokpost.com/learning](http://www.bangkokpost.com/learning)

If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the Editor at [garyb@bangkokpost.co.th](mailto:garyb@bangkokpost.co.th)