

# 'I Only Date Men Who Eat The Same Food As Me'

Vegan-only dater Lena Gobine, 39, tells *Look* why finding a guy with a similar diet is non-negotiable



**P**ing! My phone buzzes with a new message. "Hello! I think you and me would get on. Let's meet up." It's a guy from a dating website. I browse his profile. Hmm... nope. "Cheers for the message," I reply. "But I don't think we're going to be a good match. Best of luck in your search." Polite, right? I thought so, which is why I wasn't prepared for the barrage of abuse I got back. "What do you mean? Why don't you like me? What's your problem? Are you actually Joanne, the woman who's been scamming me on that other site?"

What is it with online dating nutters? Especially ones who think that because you have one thing in common, you're bound to fancy each other. See, I'm

not signed up to the usual dating websites. I'm signed up to vegan and vegetarian-only sites. If it's hard finding a tall, dark, handsome drum and bass fan on a so-called 'normal' site, imagine it on a site that caters for only two per cent of the population. Slim pickings doesn't cover it.

I was vegetarian for 20 years, but nine months ago, I made the change to vegan. I was training as a nutritionist and became uncomfortable with all the ways we digest animals – in food, cosmetics and clothing. So as soon as I graduated, I gave away my milk, cheese, butter, leather clothes and a whole load of make-up. (You wouldn't believe how many lipsticks contain beeswax.) And I felt better, not just morally, but physically, too.

**“I know there’s a vegan out there for me”**

WORDS: LOIS MAR PHOTO: LOU DENIM HAIR & MAKE-UP: NIKKI PALMAR AT LEPAN QUOTIDIEN CO.UK  
VEGAN MEAL IS AVAILABLE FROM LEPAQUOTIDIEN.CO.UK

**On The Search For Vegan Males**  
Lena, 39, is looking for love on diet-specific websites

But being vegan is a choice that affects your whole lifestyle. Whereas before, as a vegetarian, I could go to 20 restaurants for lunch, now I'll be able to go to one. But you just work around it. Try telling that to some guys, though. They can just about get their heads around vegetarians, but vegans? Forget it. "Humans are meant to eat meat. We're *designed* to eat meat," they'll say. "Actually, we manage to chew meat, but our teeth aren't designed to do it," I'll retort. We end up going back hundreds of thousands of years, trading 'fact' for 'fact'. I'm constantly defending myself.

I've dated meat eaters before. They'll say: "I'll try veggie food with you," then grab a McDonald's on the way home, which is fine. But in the longer term, my eating habits become an issue –

usually because I chew their ears off about it. I dated my ex for eight years and grated on him so much that he eventually became a veggie just to shut me up. Now I'm a vegan, the stakes are even higher. That's why I decided to prioritise finding someone who felt the same way. I didn't want to force anybody to change.

But it hasn't been straightforward.

"I'm a passionate lady looking for a man," my strapline initially read on the first dating site I joined. That was a mistake – I got around 100 messages a day – so I changed it to "I'm looking for vegans, veggies or veggie wannabes" in a bid to narrow it down. But with those criteria in place, I figured I might as well sign up to some vegetarian and vegan-specific dating sites. And there are

loads. I'm now on [Datingvegetarian.co.uk](http://Datingvegetarian.co.uk), [Vegandatinguk.co.uk](http://Vegandatinguk.co.uk), [Veggeromance.com](http://Veggeromance.com), [Veggieconnection.com](http://Veggieconnection.com) and [Ethicalsingles.com](http://Ethicalsingles.com).

It's a whole new world – albeit a sometimes snobby one. Turns out, vegans can look down on vegetarians. One profile actually read: "I'm only interested in vegans. Vegetarians need not apply." When I was a veggie, I got so worked up about it, I wrote on mine: "If you're one of those vegans that's going to get all funny about me eating cheese and eggs, then you can jog on."

But now I can totally see their point! So even though my profile says I'm up for dating vegetarians, I'd really love to have a vegan.

But I'm not being unreasonably picky. "Although it might be terribly tempting to scoff at the idea of diet-specific dating, it's founded in common sense," relationship expert Judi James told me. "If you hold strong beliefs, it can be difficult to live with someone who's tucking into steaks

## LOOK Report

### Foodie Dating Sites To Try

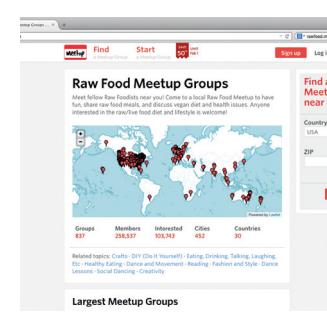
There's something to suit every taste



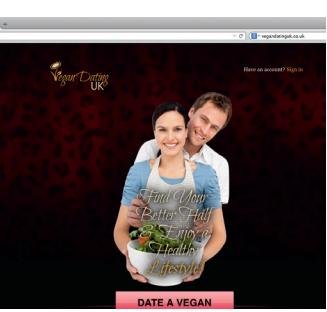
**1 Foodielover.co.uk** For wannabe chefs (or actual chefs) who want to wine and dine those turned on by a great wine pairing.



**2 Datingvegetarian.co.uk** Sign up for free to find kindred spirits who share your lifestyle, whether you're vegetarian or completely vegan.



**3 Rawfood.meetup.com** Select your city and you'll see a bunch of events hosted and attended by like-minded, raw food-loving people.



**4 Vegandatinguk.co.uk** Create a free basic profile and you can search for fellow vegans who will love dining out with you.

on a regular basis, and asking them to conform to your lifestyle could cause rifts. While there are loads of veggie/carnivore relationships that work, if you're turned off at the thought of kissing someone who's just devoured a bacon buttie, it makes sense to stick with a quinoa kind of guy."

Unfortunately, it's not as easy as just trading numbers with the first cheese-free guy who messages me. It's such a stereotype, but some vegans can be pretty dry, meditating all day or thinking they're a yogi. No drinking, dancing or even coffee. Meanwhile, I'm a drum and bass DJ, go clubbing, and drink vegan wine and beer. Sure, I'm spiritual, but these guys? They're hardcore.

Sometimes I wonder whether I should relax my values and open my eyes (or stomach) to guys who don't meet my relationship requirements. But I know there's a vegan out there for me, and if you ask me, this is one date that's worth the wait. As long as we get to meet up over dinner.'