

Foods That Shockingly Aren't

Eat This, Not That!

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From orange juice to ice cream to bananas, even the most seemingly safe and uncomplicated of foods can hide bizarre animal products capable of making a carnivore cringe. (Photo: Shutterstock)

“Nothing written in fine print is ever good news,” said my friend John once. Come to think of it, that’s true if you’re a credit card holder wary of hidden fees, a Facebook user navigating a maze of privacy settings, or a vegetarian looking for a fish-free banana, or a bagel that’s not made with duck feathers.

Wait, what?!

I admire people who choose to eat vegan or vegetarian, whether for issues of health or humaneness—and many more are these days, with 41 percent of Americans saying they’ve eaten less meat in the last 12 months, and meat-substitutes predicted to be a \$5 billion business by 2020.

So it irritates me to no end that food manufacturers often sneak animal parts into foods that the average herbivore would swear fit in with his or her vegetarian lifestyle. From OJ to bananas, even the most seemingly safe and uncomplicated of foods can hide bizarre animal products capable of making a carnivore cringe. Ladies and gentlemen: the vegetarian black-list — 12 seemingly vegetarian foods that actually aren’t. And while we’re on the subject of eye-opening discoveries, don’t miss our latest Eat This, Not That! exposé: [24 Astonishing Nutrition Myths—Busted!](#)

1. WHITE SUGAR

If you’re eating ... White Sugar

You’re also consuming ... Animal Bones

Refined white sugar is bleached in a process that entails running the sugar through “bone char” or “natural carbon” — both fancy terms for charred cattle bones. Confectioner’s and brown sugar can also be culprits, as they are variations of white sugar.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Stick to organic cane or turbinado sugar.

2. ORANGE JUICE

If you're drinking ... Orange Juice

You're also consuming ... Fish Oil & Sheep's Wool

Oranges, however nutritious, aren't naturally "heart-healthy." In order to market a juice as such, manufacturers add Omega-3s, which, unless they're synthetic, are sourced from anchovies, tilapia and sardines. Also, the vitamin D in some fortified juices comes from lanolin, a waxy substance from sheep's wool.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Tropicana and PepsiCo escape the black-list, but steer clear of Coca-Cola juices, which contain lanolin-derived vitamin D. Better yet, start your morning with all-natural, fat-blasting tea! Green tea, white tea, barberry, rooibos and Pu-erh have proven so effective at melting fat, we made them part of our brand new weight-loss plan, [The 7-Day Flat-Belly Tea Diet and Cleanse!](#) Test panelists lost up to 10 pounds in just one week!

3. VANILLA ICE CREAM

If you're eating ... Vanilla Ice Cream

You're also consuming ... Beaver Butt Juice

The "natural flavor" you see listed on your favorite vanilla ice cream may actually come from a beaver's rear end. Castoreum is the technical term for the all-natural ingredient — a fragrant, brown slime that beavers use to mark their territory, and food scientists use to give products a musky, vanilla scent.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: The FDA has ruled that because there's no harm in eating castoreum, food manufacturers are not required to list it in the ingredients. Your best bet is to stick to vegan-OK ice creams like Soy Delicious, or to look for real flavors and avoid the generic "natural flavoring."

4. REFRIED BEANS

If you're eating ... Refried Beans

You're also consuming ... Pork Fat

Beans can be a great source of protein for our veggie friends, especially when coupled with whole grains (Hello, complete protein!). However, most traditional Mexican restaurants have a beefy secret: Their refried beans are made with lard (pork fat).

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Ask before ordering. Taco Bell's beans are safe, but there's beef gelatin in their sour cream and chipotle sauce. Learn the secrets behind all your favorite restaurant menu, revealed here in [The Top Chain Restaurants—Graded by Health](#).

5. BANANAS

If you're eating ... Bananas

You're also consuming ... Shellfish

Your banana has crabs. According to Science Daily, Chitosan, a bacteria-fighting compound derived from shrimp and crab shells, has made its way into spray-on preservatives that extend the shelf life of bananas and can infiltrate the fruit. That's bad news for vegetarians, vegans, and anyone with a shellfish allergy.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Watch for new warning labels that read: “This product may contain shellfish by-products.” Or buy organic.

6. BAGELS

If you’re eating ... Bagels

You’re also consuming ... Bird Feathers

Here’s what it takes to make a plain bagel: flour, water, salt, yeast. Unless you’re a popular bagel chain. Then you throw in some duck and chicken feathers. Many processed bagels and bread products contain the enzyme L. Cysteine, a “dough conditioner” sourced from duck and chicken feathers. (Although it can also be made from human hair.) Einstein Bros. and Dunkin Donuts have both confirmed using L. Cysteine in all of their bagels. Poultry feathers also make an appearance in the garlic bread at Pizza Hut, and in Mickey D’s honey wheat rolls, cinnamon rolls and apple pies.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Carefully read labels, find a favorite local bakery, or make your own! And if you’re shopping for frozen varieties, Lender’s and Thomas’s bagels are both veg-friendly carbs. Speaking of, don’t miss the eye-popping [10 Awesome Things That Happen to Your Body When You Cut Back on Carbs!](#)

7. RED CANDIES

If you’re eating ... Red Candies

You’re also consuming ... Crushed Beetles

Watch out for “Natural Red #4.” She’s a real heartbreaker! Just kidding. Natural Red #4 is what gives most red candies their coloring, and it refers to carmine, a pigment extracted from the female *Dactylopius coccus* Costa insect. It’s sometimes listed as “cochineal,” “carminic acid” or “carmine.” Guys, it’s crushed-up beetles, and it’s more pervasive than you might think; wine, vinegar and colored pasta also boast the beetle juice.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Steer clear of “Natural Red #4,” “cochineal,” “carminic acid” or “carmine.”

8. HARD-COATED CANDIES

If you’re eating ... Hard-Coated Candies

You’re also consuming ... Bug Juice

Most candy coatings are made from shellac, a resin secreted from the rear end of the female lac bug. It’s usually listed as “confectioner’s glaze” in the ingredients. You may have heard of shellac before, like when you get a manicure that lasts 3-4 weeks. Yea, same stuff. Shellac is also found in furniture polish, hairspray, and agricultural fertilizer. Yummy.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Not all hard-shell candies are culprits. Milk Duds, Junior Mints and Jelly Bellys have shellac; M&Ms are safe! And if you need an extra energy boost, get it from healthy snacks, like the ones on this ultimate list of the [50 Best Snacks for Weight Loss!](#)

9. BEER AND WINE

If you're drinking ... Imported beer or wine

You're also consuming ... Fish Bladders

Mmm this cab has notes of currants, vanilla, and ... sturgeon? Some brands of beer and wine, particularly those made in Britain, are clarified using isinglass, a gelatin from the air bladder of certain freshwater fish. Vegetarian clarifiers can be made from clay or algae.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Peruse the Vegan Alcohol Directory at Barnivore.com.

10. PEANUTS

If you're eating ... Salted Peanuts

You're also consuming ... Pig Hooves

Some brands use gelatin as an additive to help salt and other spices adhere to the peanuts. Gelatin is derived from the collagen in cow or pig bones, hooves, and connective tissues.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Buy peanuts in the shell. Here's the added bonus of cracking your own: a study published in the journal *Appetite* found that eating shelled nuts can result in a 22% calorie savings. Discover more split-second hacks that could result in major weight loss in this FREE guide: [14 Ways to Lose Your Belly in 14 Days!](#)

11. POTATO CHIPS

If you're eating ... Potato Chips

You're also consuming ... Chicken and Beef Fat

Many chips, especially barbecue flavor, contain chicken fat (or schmaltz).

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Read food labels carefully. For example, while Lay's "Country Flavor" BarBQ chips are vegetarian-safe, Lay's KC Masterpiece Barbecue chips and BBQ Baked Lay's are not. I did some legwork for you BBQ lovers and found that Fritos and Boulder BBQ varieties are also vegan-OK.

12. CAKE MIX

If you're eating ... Cake Mix

You're also consuming ... Pork Fat

Believe it or not, it's common for pork fat, or lard, to find its way into the dry ingredients of boxed cake mixes.

Eat This, Not That! Tip: Check the label for "lard"! And have your cake and slim down, too, following these [Top 20 Diet Experts' #1 Weight Loss Tips!](#)

FOR 10 MORE VEGETARIAN FOODS THAT SHOCKINGLY AREN'T—
including popular cereals, cheeses and brand-name "vegetable" soups—[click here!](#)

AND STRIP AWAY BELLY FAT and lose up to 16 pounds in just 14 days—while eating the foods you love—with secrets from [Zero Belly Diet!](#) Or download the new [Zero Belly: 14-Day Plan app now!](#)