

Nutrition and vegetarianism

Sites to really sink your teeth into

by Heather K. Moberly and Amy L. Paster

Nutrition may be defined as the science of food and its nutrients, and their relation to health. This covers a wide variety of subject areas including, but not limited to, physiology, chemistry, agriculture, toxicology, and microbiology. This may also include subtopics such as food preparation, diet analysis, and special-interest topics, such as vegetarianism. This article focuses on nutritional content and analysis tools, associations and organizations, government information, collocative Web site resources, and specialty sites.

As a field of study, nutrition includes such a breadth of topics that it is important to remember the many different general directories that are available such as **Northern Light** (Access: <http://www.nlsearch.com>) or **Yahoo** (Access: <http://www.yahoo.com>). We recommend Northern Light because it organizes the results of the search into "folders," such as education sites, commercial sites, personal pages, etc., in addition to providing the usual straight list. Northern Light also offers the option of searching, and accessing, more than two million articles in their "Special Collection," many of which are from serials commonly held in academic libraries.

We have tried to be balanced in our choice of sites between those that include ready-reference type information (such as nutrient databases) and those that serve as starting points for researchers to explore the Internet for information about the varied

topics within nutrition. Of particular interest in this article is the location of reliable information about vegetarian issues.

We have tried to be judicious in our choice of sites, relying on those that most often offer reliable and scientifically sound information.

Listservs

There are a number of excellent listservs that cover nutrition from the very broad to the very specific. Lists of listservs, newsgroups, and usenets that are keyword/keytopic searchable are available, such as **Liszt: The Mailing List Directory** (Access: <http://www.liszt.com/>). Professional, rather than discussion, listserv nutrition topics may be very specific, for example: **FNSPEC** (for archives Access: http://hermes.ecn.purdue.edu/Links/fnspec_mg/) is for cooperative extension food and nutrition specialists, and **FoodSafe** (Access: <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov:8001/cgi/bin/lwgate/FOODSAFE>) is for food safety professionals.

There are fewer vegetarian listservs. Several of the best informational, not just discussion, vegetarian listservs are Sci-Veg and Veg-News. **Sci-Veg** (Access: <http://www.waste.org/sci-veg>) is devoted to social and natural science topics relating to vegetarianism. Many members are scientists working in health-related fields, and every post is by definition copyrighted by its author and protected under International Copyright law. **Veg-News** (Access: veg-news@

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envirolink.org) is not designed to be a discussion forum, but rather a public news wire providing news and information about vegetarian issues.

Nutrition analysis tools

- **Nutrition Analysis Tool.** The Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign developed this web tool to assist users in analyzing food for a variety of nutrients. Users are guided (with or without step-by-step help) through inputting quantity, type of food, and analyzing it for specific nutrients. The advanced features section offers alternate food sources for correcting excesses or deficiencies in nutrients. Access: <http://spectre.ag.uiuc.edu/~food-lab/nat> or <http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~food-lab/nat>.

- **The "Virtual" Nutrition Center.** This is the nutrition component of Martindale's Health Science Guide '98. Among the categories of resource links found at this site are: metabolic pathways and genetic maps, interactive anatomy browsers, online journals, nutrition literature and patent searches, dictionaries and glossaries, online nutrition calculators, and courses, tutorials, and databases. Martindale's vast array of reference sites is also found here. Access: <http://www-sci.lib.uci.edu/HSG/Nutrition.html#NN3>.

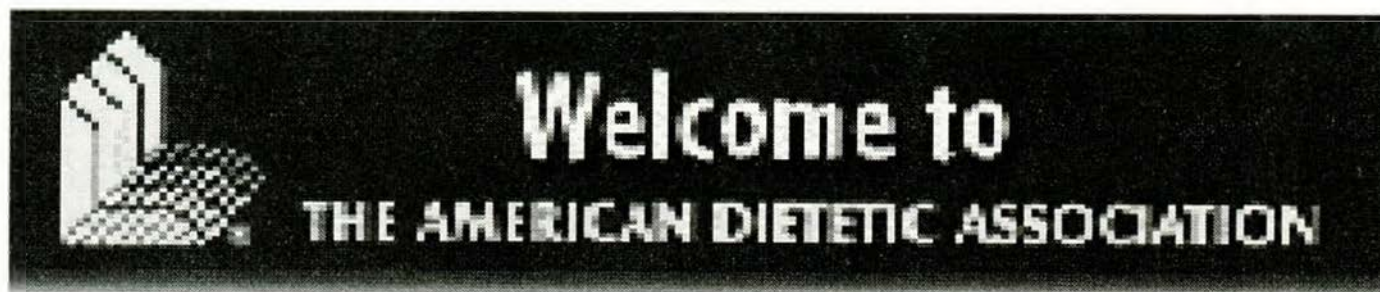
- **Fast Food Facts—Interactive Food Finder.** The information in the database is based on the book *Fast Food Facts* by the Minnesota Attorney General's Office. This site provides a flexible search interface to a database of fast-food restaurant nutritional information. The search may focus on a particular restaurant or particular nutritional components across all or any of the restaurants in the database. Access: <http://www olen.com/food>.

Associations/organizations

- **American Society for Clinical Nutrition (ASCN).** ASCN is the premiere organization for clinical nutritionists in the United States. This site provides a variety of information including position papers, press releases, house testimony, meetings, em-

ployment opportunities, and external links to other organizations and resources. Many of the resources are full-text in HTML and PDF formats. Access: <http://www.faseb.org/ascn>.

- **American Dietetic Association (ADA).** The ADA is the largest group of food and nutrition professionals in the United States. This site provides access to ADA-produced resources, many of them full-text, such as position papers, food pyramids, bibliographies, and nutrition fact sheets. Addi-

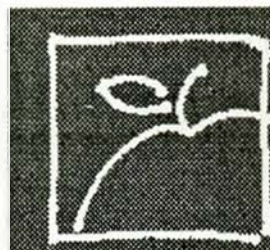


tionally, links to professional societies, assistance in locating a dietitian, and employment opportunities are featured. The newly updated ADA position paper on vegetarianism is also available at the site. Access: <http://www.eatright.org>.

- **Food For All.** Part of the primary mission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is to "raise levels of nutrition and standards of living . . . of rural populations." This site is the major information dissemination point for FAO. Among the best features of this multilingual resource, the FAOSTAT database, a collection of statistics primarily in nutrition and agriculture, is available at the site. Nutrition specific databases include: Commodity Balances in Crops Equivalent or Livestock and Fish Equivalent, Food Aid, and Population in Annual Time Series. The Food and Nutrition Division provides publications focused on food quality and nutrition. Access: <http://www.fao.org>.

- **International Food Information Council (IFIC).** IFIC was established in 1985 to distribute scientifically based information about food and nutrition by food and beverage companies. It was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1990. Their primary mission is to disseminate scientifically sound information about food safety and nutrition. This site includes a variety information, much of it full-text, about food safety and nutrition; an extensive directory of organizations, agencies, and associations; and

a glossary of food-related terms. One of the best features of this site is that it includes information tailored to the needs of reporters and educators. Access: <http://ificinfo.health.org>.



Food and Nutrition Information Center

National Agricultural Library
Agricultural Research Service
United States Department of Agriculture

- **International Vegetarian Union (IVU).** Established in 1893 and successor to the Vegetarian Federal Union, the IVU's membership is comprised of vegetarian societies worldwide for the purpose of "promoting vegetarianism as a means of advancing . . . the well being of mankind." This multilingual site offers access to a variety of resources including: an article index (for articles produced by its members), extensive links to its member organizations, recipes, news, events, and special-interest combinations such as the Jewish Vegetarian and Ecological Society. It also features a listing of vegetarian phrases used around the world. The site includes a search engine. Access: <http://www.ivu.org>.

- **Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG).** The VRG is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to provide the public with information about vegetarianism and interrelated issues. The *Veg-News* listserv, *Vegetarian Journal*, and numerous other publications and software programs are produced by VRG



and available through this site. The site also includes a number of full-text documents about vegetarian nutrition and lifestyles, including often-difficult-to-locate information about vegetarian choices at fast food restaurants, vegetarian food for institutions, and vegetarian options for travel. The site includes a search engine. Access: <http://www.vrg.org>.

Government information

- **USDA Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC).** FNIC is one of the specialized information centers at the National Agricultural Library. Nutrition databases, publications, audiovisuals, and software that were developed by FNIC and other branches of the USDA are available through this site.

Specialized topics include information about healthy school meals, WIC, HACCP training materials, food safety, and foodborne illness education. Many of the publications are available full-text. Extensive links to external sources are well organized. The site includes a search engine. Access: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic>. FNIC is also the food and nutrition information specialist for the Agriculture Network Information Center (AgNIC). Access: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/cgi-bin/agnic>.

- **USDA Nutrient Data Laboratory.** This site provides access to a large number of food composition databases. Individual databases include information about the sugar, selenium, trans-fatty acid, carotenoid, Vitamin D, and Vitamin K content of selected foods. The USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference Release 11-1 contains the nutrient content of over 5,900 foods. These databases and their documentation may be searched by keyword and downloaded in a variety of formats. Access: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp>.

- **Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 1995.** The USDA Dietary Guidelines, revised in December 1995, are available full-text at this site. An HTML file (including graphics and tables) and a PDF version of this publication are provided. Access: <http://www.nalusda.gov:80/fnic/dga/dga95.html>.

Meta sites

- **Arbor Nutrition Guide.** This site includes links to clinical, applied, and food science sites. Topics covered range from sports nutrition to nutrition-related diseases. There are also links to sites containing information about nutrition software, pictures, and multimedia. This guide features a free e-mail update option, which will alert users to new Internet nutrition resources as they are found. A no graphics version is also available. Intended audience seems to be the nutrition professional. Access: <http://www.arborcom.com/>.

• **Arizona Health Sciences Library Nutrition and Health Page.** The Arizona Health Sciences Library has created an extensive site that is easy to use and understand. The subjects include herbs and herbal medicine, nutrition and food industry, and consumer information. A majority of the links include a brief description that is helpful when it comes to some of the names of the sites. For example the **MAD Scientist Network** is described as "From Washington University School of Medicine. Collection of scientists provide online answers to young people's questions about anything to do with science, which includes nutrition and food subjects." *Access:* <http://www.ahsc.arizona.edu/nutrition/>.

• **Blonz Guide to Nutrition, Food Science and Health.** The Blonz guide is one of the larger meta sites for nutrition available today. In addition to the hundreds of links, there is a huge selection of search engines to choose from. The search engines are divided into various categories including single engine searches, multi-site search engines, usenet searchers and gopher searchers. The guide itself is comprised of the traditional subject areas i.e., food resources, companies and associations; nutrition, food and health resources; and health, medical and wellness publications. This is a graphic-intensive homepage that may take a long time to load. *Access:* <http://www.wenet.net/blonz/>.

• **Nutrition Navigator.** The Tufts University Nutrition Navigator is an online rating and review guide to nutrition sites. The Web sites are reviewed by Tufts nutritionists and are updated quarterly. The reviews include the date of the review, site name (the URL is not listed but the site name is hot linked), sponsor, type of organization, intended audience, the sections reviewed, ratings of the content and usability, an overall rating, and commentary. *Access:* <http://navigator.tufts.edu>.

• **Useful Links to External Food-Related WWW Resources.** Produced by the University of Reading, (UK) Department of Food Science and Technology, this site's contents are organized by geographic region and special topic areas. This is a good source of international information, food safety, and food engineering information. From this site

you can jump to <http://www.fst.rdg.ac.uk/misc/sites.htm>, which has links to academic sites and other broader areas of nutrition, including food manufacturers and retailers. *Access:* <http://www.fst.rdg.ac.uk/people/swallop/foodnet.htm>.

Specialty sites

• **Nutrition Links.** Nutrition Links is produced by the USDA Cooperative Extension Service at Kansas State University. The purpose of the page is to "provide links to various sites that focus on nutrition and nutrition-related areas." There are ten categories including lifespan nutrition, government sites, and organizations. The organizations site is further divided by nutritional, health, exercise and fitness, and other. *Access:* http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/ext_F&N/Nutlink/n2.htm.

• **Ohionline-Food.** Principally produced by Ohio State University Extension, this site contains full-text fact sheets, bulletins, and other educational materials. In addition to extension materials, it includes resources of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, The Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, and the Agricultural Technical Institute. *Access:* <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~ohionline/lines/food.html#FOODN>.

• **PENpages.** This site provides full-text information relating to the agricultural sciences, human nutrition, aging, family, and other related issues. It contains over 13,000 research-based reports, newsletters, bibliographies, and fact sheets. The information is provided by researchers and experts in all areas of Cooperative Extension from around the nation, including the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Colorado State University, Iowa State University, and The Pennsylvania State University, College of Agricultural Sciences. *Access:* <http://www.penpages.psu.edu/>. ■

"Internet Resources" authors needed

If you'd like to submit a topic for the "Internet Resources" column, please send your topic and a brief description of your expertise in this area to Mary Ellen Davis, editor-in-chief, at medavis@ala.org.