

THE VEGAN CAUSE IN THE SPA INDUSTRY

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*vē-gān: a strict vegetarian who consumes no animal food or dairy products; also: one who abstains from using animal products.
(Merriam Webster Online Dictionary)*

Of the many arguments that vegans have, one of them is very relevant to the spa industry: the environmental cause. Green spas would be remiss to ignore the environmental contention of veganism because it is profound and overwhelmed with evidence and compassion.

Over simplified and grossly abridged by this writer, the vegan perspective has three critical points:

(1) Depletion of natural resources: The amount of fossil fuel energy invested in animal protein is over ten times greater than the amount used for grain protein production, and these statistics aren't just relegated to vegan publications. Several unbiased academic sources, including the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, echo the same facts.

(2) Clear-Cutting of the Rain Forest: Meat consumption is partially responsible for the logging and clear-cutting of the Amazon rainforest. South American governments, like those of Peru and Brazil, allow the clear-cutting of rainforests for cattle grazing in order to satisfy the western demand for beef.

(3) Pollution: Factory farms are some of the most culpable air, land, and water polluters in the United States. Factory farms are owned by corporations that have literally outgrown themselves and the natural resources that surround them, creating a surplus of legal cases and EPA violations.

While these three points are devastatingly bleak, the cause isn't hopeless. In fact, spas are on the forefront of positive change –thanks to their concerned clients.

Over the last few years, clients have demanded vegan products for ethical and environmental reasons. They have challenged cosmetic/personal care product manufacturers to cease replacing natural, plant-based ingredients with cheap slaughterhouse by-products. In fact, major vegan brands have emerged like SpaRitual®, the finest in spa eco-luxury. Furthermore, a quick search on SpaFinder® yields fifty-six results for spas that offer vegan treatments and vegan dining options, and the numbers continue to grow.

Essentially, vegan clients practice the “live and let live” doctrine; they're concerned about the environment and have compassion for all living creatures. Spas that present vegan treatments and cuisine

continued on next page...



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continued from first page...

offer benevolent refuges for vegans and non-vegans alike. Beautifully simple, the vegan theory is this: If consumers insist on vegan products (and consequently a vegan diet), the demand for meat and animal by-products will plummet. Accordingly, if the demand for animal flesh drops, the meat industry will no longer have the means or the need to clear-cut forests or build factory farms, thereby preventing a great quantity of pollution and forest depletion. Arguably, one could say that if it came to fruition, the vegan theory would resemble a strong shimmering chain of reactions that would ultimately hold the earth in perfect balance.



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