

# The good grocery shopping guide

Hundreds of community support groups have launched nationwide during the COVID-19 outbreak – offering shopping and more to vulnerable self-isolating people.

Some supermarkets are also putting together grocery boxes of handy essentials so that vulnerable people needn't leave their homes at this time.

But a whopping 6.4 million people (10% of the total UK population) may have special dietary requirements.

There are many reasons why people may exclude foods from their diet. These include allergies, intolerances, autoimmune diseases, personal beliefs, and religious, philosophical and cultural beliefs.

It is vital that the national effort to shop for the most vulnerable considers these needs.

Here are some simple ways to help ensure that community grocery boxes are inclusive for all.

The free-from section in every supermarket will be worth checking out if you are shopping for someone following a special diet, especially those following a dairy-free, gluten-free or vegan diet.

## A VEGETARIAN BOX COULD INCLUDE:

canned baked beans, soup and pasta sauce; milk; dairy products, such as butter and cheese; bread; rice and pasta; vegetables, such as potatoes, carrots and onions; vegetarian proteins; essential household items.

### Vegetarian proteins could include:

dried or tinned lentils, chickpeas, baked beans, kidney beans, dairy products, eggs, meat replacement products such as Quorn, Linda McCartney, Fry's products, or supermarket own brand products and tofu.

A vegetarian box should be suitable for most **Hindus** and **Sikhs**, who often follow a vegetarian diet. Be aware that some Hindus may not eat eggs. Some Sikhs and Hindus do not consume alcohol so it's important to check first and check labels accordingly.

## A VEGAN BOX COULD INCLUDE:

canned baked beans+, soup+ and pasta sauce+; dairy alternatives, such as vegan spread, vegan cheese and soya or oat milk; bread, rice and pasta; vegetables such as potatoes, carrots and onions; vegan proteins, essential household items, ensuring these are cruelty-free and animal-product free.

+Check the packet to ensure that it's milk-free; not all brands of baked beans are. Soup and pasta sauce; again check the label.

**Vegan proteins could include:** dried or tinned lentils, chickpeas, baked beans, kidney beans, dairy alternatives such as soya milk or yoghurt, meat alternatives such as Quorn, Linda McCartney, Fry's products or supermarket own brand products (check the label to ensure these products do not contain milk/eggs and/or are labelled vegan) and tofu.

A vegan box could also be suitable for someone with a **milk** or **egg allergy** – though always check the allergy warnings. The vegan protein sources could be swapped for non-vegan if needed.

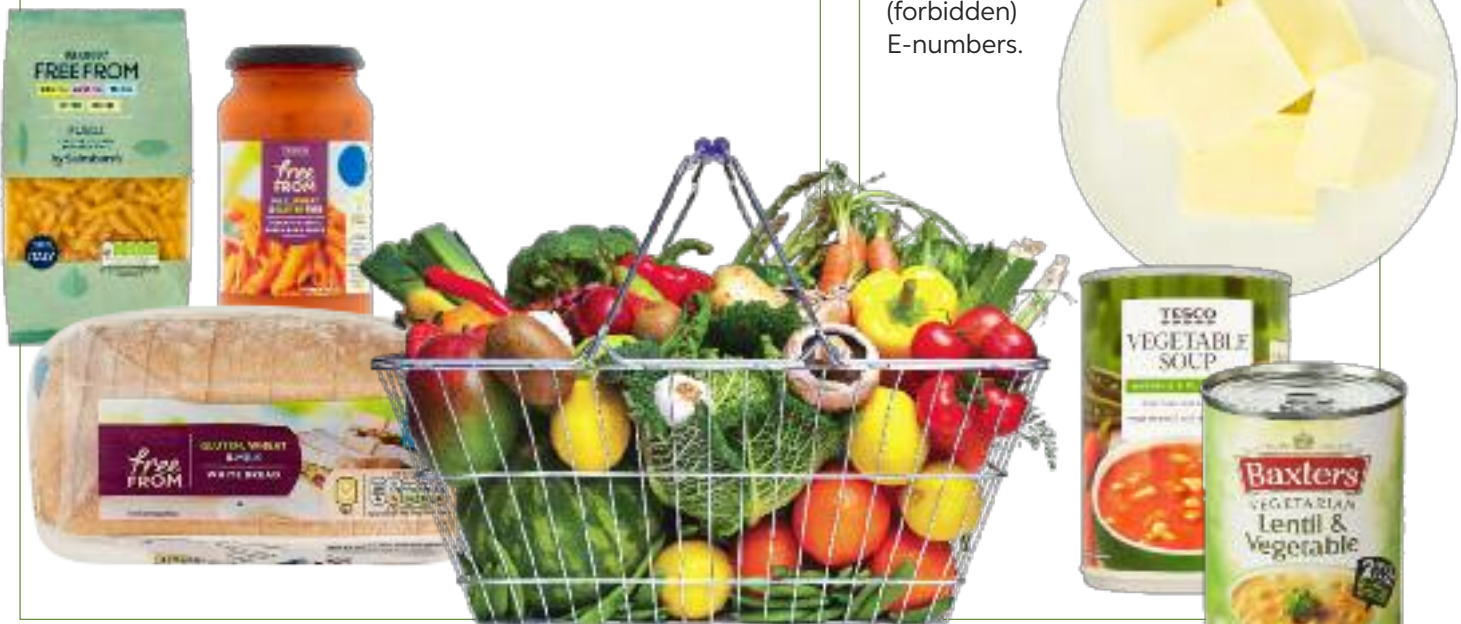
Plenty of biscuits are 'accidentally vegan', such as Lotus biscoff caramelised biscuits, most Oreos, most ginger biscuits, most bourbon biscuits, and many digestive, nice and rich tea biscuits.

For more information, see Vegan Womble [veganwomble.co.uk](http://veganwomble.co.uk)



**A COELIAC BOX COULD INCLUDE:** canned baked beans\*, soup\* and pasta sauce\*; milk; dairy products such as butter and cheese; gluten-free bread; rice and gluten-free pasta; vegetables, such as potatoes, carrots and onions; vegetarian proteins\*; essential household items.

\*Check the packet to ensure that it's gluten-free; not all brands of baked beans are. Soup and pasta sauce; again check the label and ingredients. Vegetarian proteins can often contain gluten, so again check the label. Common products such as stock cubes and soy sauce are not gluten-free. For more information, check out Coeliac UK: [coeliac.org.uk](http://coeliac.org.uk)



**A HALAL BOX COULD INCLUDE:**

canned baked beans, soup and pasta sauce; milk; dairy products such as butter and cheese; bread; rice and pasta; vegetables, such as potatoes, carrots and onions; halal protein sources; essential household items.

Check that products don't contain alcohol or any haram (forbidden) E-numbers.

## Look on the packet

Vegetarian products will usually be labelled, so look out for the V symbol, or the words 'suitable for vegetarians'.

Products that are suitable for vegans are not always labelled as vegan, and may be labelled as vegetarian.

Look on the ingredients list for highlighted allergens such as dairy products. You also need to look out for honey and any E-numbers that would be unsuitable for vegetarians and vegans. This guide from The Vegan Society highlights some

of the common E-numbers to avoid: [vegansociety.com/whats-new/blog/how-avoid-buying-non-vegan-products](http://vegansociety.com/whats-new/blog/how-avoid-buying-non-vegan-products)

When shopping for those following a religious diet it is also important to check the label. Vegan products will usually be suitable for most as long as they don't contain alcohol.

Please don't make assumptions about people's diets. Always ask the individual that you are shopping for first. They'll be the best person to tell you what they do and don't eat.



### Dietary diversity in the care sector

A guide to catering for people with allergies, intolerances, and religious, philosophical and cultural dietary beliefs



For more information, visit [vegetarianforlife.org.uk](http://vegetarianforlife.org.uk) to download a free copy of [Dietary Diversity in the Care Sector](#). You can alternatively order a copy from the charity by calling 0161 257 0887. Hard copies of the guide are available for just £2.75, including P&P.