



The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism: From 1600 to Modern Times

By Tristram Stuart

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“Magnificently detailed and wide-ranging.”—Steven Shapin, *The New Yorker*

Hailed by critics on both sides of the Atlantic, *The Bloodless Revolution* is a comprehensive history of vegetarianism, “draw[ing] the different strands of the subject together in a way that has never been done before” (Keith Thomas, author of *Man and the Natural World*).

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. The word "vegetarian" wasn't coined until the 1840s, but Stuart's magisterial social history demonstrates how deeply seated the vegetarian impulse has been in Western culture since the 17th century. Thinkers such as Francis Bacon and Thomas Bushell contended that a vegetarian diet provided a key not only to long life but also to spiritual perfection: God had permitted Adam and Eve to eat only plants, fruits and seeds, and doing so could restore humankind to Edenic wholeness with nature. Seventeenth- and 18th-century travelers to India introduced the Hindu idea of *ahimsa* (the preservation of all life) as an ideal for a slaughter-free society. Stuart follows the development of vegetarianism through its Romantic proponents Shelley and Rousseau and on into the 19th century, when doctors proffered scientific evidence that human teeth and intestines were more similar to those of herbivores than of carnivores. Looking at literary culture, Stuart notes that Samuel Richardson, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen included vegetarian characters in their novels. Stuart offers a masterful social and cultural history of a movement that changed the ways people think about the food they eat. 24 pages of color illus., b&w illus. throughout. (Jan.)

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From [Booklist](#)

As Stuart points out early in his marvelously researched, deeply revealing, minutely considered history of vegetarianism, it was not till the nineteenth century and the founding of Britain's Vegetarian Society that Western society seriously confronted its conflicted attitudes toward the eating of meat. Before that, ascetics and other fanatics pursued meat-free diets for substantially religious reasons. No less significant a figure than the eminent Jacobean Francis Bacon led the search for a diet that would prolong the human life span. Some radical French revolutionaries regarded meat eating as part of a larger oppression carried on by dissolute upper classes. Vegetarianism gained new momentum with the colonial conquest of India's flourishing Hindu civilization, awash with dietary taboos. Vegetarianism became so strong a cultural movement that it survived even its association in the twentieth century with Adolf Hitler. Recent history has seen the expansion of a correlative animal-rights movement. Students of this phenomenon will be forever grateful for Stuart's immense bibliography. *Mark Knoblauch*

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About the Author

Tristram Stuart has been a freelance writer for Indian newspapers, a project manager in Kosovo and a prominent critic of the food industry. He has made regular contributions to television documentaries, radio and newspapers on the social and environmental aspects of food. His first book, *The Bloodless Revolution*—‘magnificently detailed and wide-ranging’ (*New Yorker*)—was published in 2007, and *Waste* in 2009. A graduate of Cambridge University, he lives in England, where he rears pigs, chickens and bees.

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Dona Henry:

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