

ovolo
HOTELS



Plant'd Playbook

All Veg. No Bull.

VEG OUT

HOW TO SWITCH YOUR HOTEL TO VEGETARIAN CUISINE

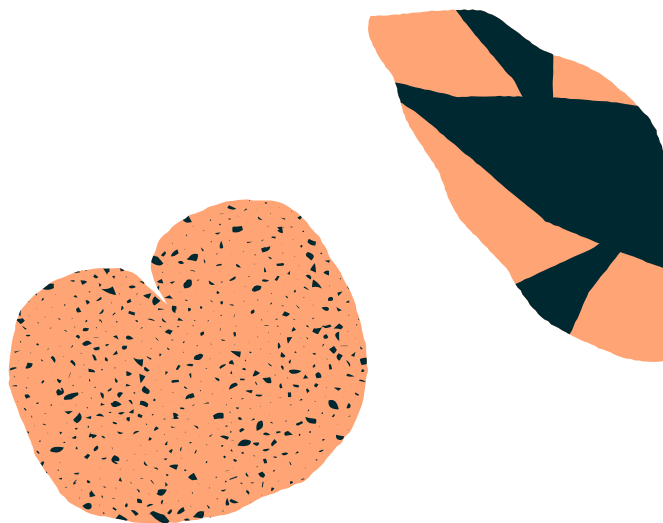
It was a peach of an idea. On 1 October 2020, Ovolo Hotels announced the Year of the Veg. For 365 days, all of the restaurants and bars in the eight Ovolo Hotels committed to ditching meat from the menu and serving up vibrant vegetarian and plant-based cuisine.

With 40% of our venues already serving plant-based cuisine, we decided to go the full 100%.

It was a strategic move, particularly in the middle of a global pandemic, but Ovolo is a brand that is full of beans. We pride ourselves on our commitment to the environment, wellness, on being an industry leader, and on daring to do things differently.

And so chops got the chop, and we turned our Ovolo kitchens to full plant-power. As it turns out, it was a blooming marvellous idea, with guests loving not just our meat-free menus, but also the philosophy behind them. Note to self: never underestimate your guests!

At Ovolo Hotels, meat is now off the menu - events and the By Ovolo Collective Hotels offer other cuisine options based on preference. For anyone considering making a similar move, we want to make it easy. Read on to discover some of the insights we picked up along the way.



WHY GO VEG?

There are plenty of reasons to start serving plant-based cuisine. These are ours.

1. The environment

Ovolo treats the environment with love and respect.

We aim to be self-sufficient, self-sustainable and locally sustainable.

Ovolo wants to be conscious about what we're consuming, aware of our impact on the environment and on humanity.

2. Conscious cuisine

Ovolo believes in eating good to feel good, in your body and your mind.

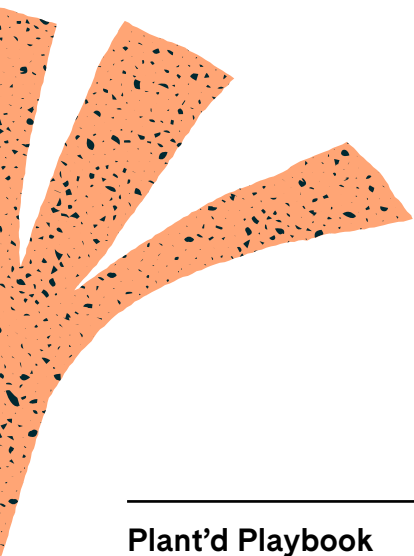
We believe in vibrant vegetarian cuisine that delivers big doses of macro-nutrients through a balance of fats, carbs and proteins.

We love supporting local producers and suppliers.

3. Celebrating

Ovolo wants to celebrate the rise of vibrant vegetarianism.

We want to improve the perception of vegetarian food, promoting it as a delicious cuisine that is alive and kicking. We are rewriting what it means to vegetarian.



WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO VEG?

INTERNAL MESSAGING

- **Know your why**

Going veg is a big step.

Make sure your staff understand why you are doing it, and why it makes sense for the brand.

- **Have leadership on board**

Change creates uncertainty. The bigger the change, the more the uncertainty.

A strong message from the top lowers the fear factor among staff.

- **Be prepared for negative feedback**

Ovolo had an overwhelmingly positive response to its switch to plant-based cuisine, but not every single customer was happy. You will lose some customers, but you will attract plenty of new ones.

- **Let the food do the talking**

Don't waste time debating. Instead, use tasting sessions for staff to help overcome internal resistance.



WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO VEG?

EXTERNAL MESSAGING

- **Create a sense of excitement**

Don't focus on what's no longer on the menu – keep the focus on your exciting new food. A program of events and media will get the word out.

- **Don't blindside your guests**

A surprised guest is an unhappy guest. Make sure the plant-based message is included in all your marketing materials.

- **Provide context**

Whether your driver is sustainability or wellness, explain why your company is going veg – and how that fits in with the rest of your offering.

- **Think about events and conferencing**

Ovolo chose to keep some meat options on the events and conference menu, while prioritising plant-based foods. Make sure your market knows what's available.

- **Don't just target vegetarians and vegans**

Plant-based food is for everyone. Reassure your guests that no matter what their dietary style, they are in for an amazing dining experience.



DESIGNING YOUR MENU

• Define your concept

“Vegetarian” isn’t a restaurant concept. Our restaurants include Melbourne’s Latin American-influenced Lona Misa, Brisbane’s Tel Aviv-inspired ZA ZA TA and Sydney’s classic-meets-cutting-edge Alibi Bar & Kitchen.

• Be creative with your dishes

Many vegetarian menus rely heavily on salad and comfort food. Balance your menu with dishes that range from light to heavy, with a variety of textures, flavours and techniques, from smoking to fermentation to molecular techniques.

• Give yourself options

How flexible is your menu? Scale up your choices by including dishes that can pivot from vegan to vegetarian with the addition of cheese or eggs.

• Don’t limit yourself to dinner

Why not do a vegetarian brunch, or a vegan high tea? Vegetarians love an experience as much as the next diner.

• Enlist the experts

Don’t reinvent the wheel – use the knowledge that exists. Bringing on Ian Curley, Matthew Kenny, Roy Ner and Shannon Martinez as consultants gave us access to decades of experience in plant-based cuisine.

• Expect some turnover in your kitchen

Not everyone wants to be a vegetarian chef, but those who choose to leave will be replaced by others excited by what you are doing.

• Sustainability is about more than just ingredients

Almost every F&B element can be tweaked to make it more planet-friendly, from prioritising local wines and choosing glass bottles over plastic to rethinking how you treat food waste. Some of our venues use Orca technology, which turns food waste into an environmentally-safe liquid.



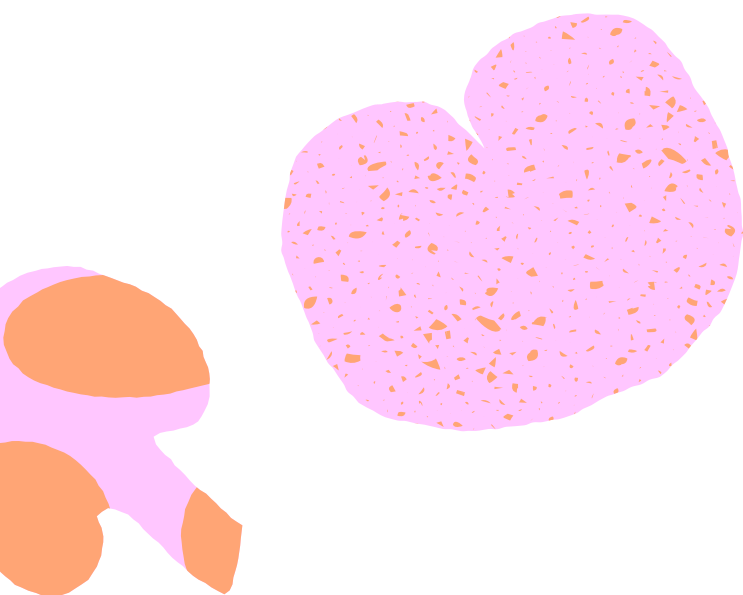
DON'T FORGET THE DRINKS

- **Here's cheers to vegan cocktails**

Audit your cocktail list for non-vegan ingredients and look for simple swaps, such as aquafaba instead of egg white.

- **Creativity doesn't stop at the bar**

If you are busting food boundaries, your drinks list has to keep pace. Consider adding a seasonal focus and check whether your non-alcoholic drinks are as enticing as your cocktails.



KNOW THAT THIS IS JUST THE FIRST STEP

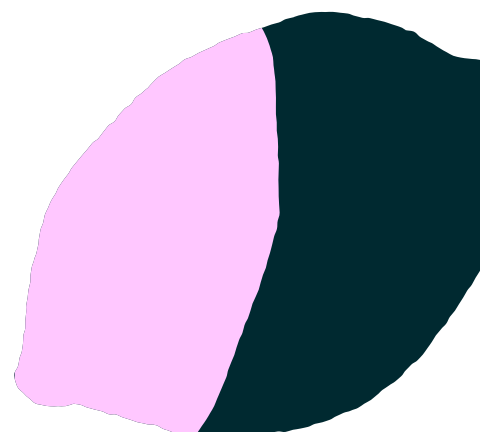
Shifting to a more sustainable approach is not one big change but a series of small steps, many of which take place behind the scenes.

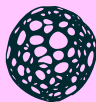
These may include:

- **Switching to free-range eggs**
- **Opting for a biodynamic and natural led wine lists**
- **Choosing refillable water containers**
- **Using more planet-friendly paper on the menus and for takeaway containers**
- **Working with suppliers and using alternative options for straws to eliminate plastic**
- **Implementing the ORCA innovative food waste solution system**

Know that the further you go in this process, the more like-minded people will find you.

At Ovolo, we continue to calibrate our F&B operations, and look forward to where the journey takes us.





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