

## Interview with Charlette Hinds of @plant\_based\_pleasures

This month we had the pleasure of speaking with Charlette Hinds of the Instagram account @plant\_based\_pleasures. Charlette lives in the wonderful city of London, and as we love her Instagram page so much, we were thrilled when she agreed to speak to us.

As we are sure you are familiar with, we always begin by asking, when did you begin your plant-based journey? This month was no different.

*I began my plant-based journey in February this year, so I have been vegan now for 6 months 😊*

As Charlette is relatively new to a plant-based diet we wanted to know what spurred this choice of lifestyle change.

*For me it was a mixture of things...I had been keeping my eye on the press, regarding a lot of disease that comes from our diets and so I was trying to be more conscious of what I was putting into my body. On top of that, the maltreatment of animals that we were consuming just didn't sit right with me. How could I enjoy a meal that was treated so badly?*

*The final straw was watching the 'Game Changers' documentary on Netflix. It was a long two weeks after that show that I felt haunted and decided to take the full plunge.*

There are many reasons why people opt for a vegan diet and Charlette makes some very valid points. With awareness of how badly the dairy industry treats animals how can we continue to exploit them for unnecessary purposes. We haven't watched game changers yet but we know there are



such a wide range of documentaries out there to educate people.

As we mentioned previously, London is one of our absolute favourite cities, so we wanted to know what it's like living in London and following a plant-based diet? Is there a lot of variety, are restaurants accommodating? There are so many questions to be asked about this wonderful city!!

*Yes!! There is so much variety and from what I understand there is so much more than there ever used to be which is really exciting. A lot of vegans get offended that some of the new vegans are following trends or being vegan for "fashion" BUT if it means more restaurant options and variety, I am all for it! I find most non-vegan restaurants will also accommodate to our needs happily. There is unfortunately a lack of "high-end" Vegan restaurants...I do miss getting dressed up and going for a swanky dinner sometimes.*

We completely agree, any form of veganism has to be a positive thing, everyone is trying to do their best and should be praised and supported. The more we educate, share stories and support one another the more we can spread the word and help make the world a better place.

Now we've gone all peace and love, another burning question is, are there any recipes in particular that are your favourites?

*Mmmmm This is a good one! I seriously love food so this is a very difficult question for me. My favourite recipe would be one of my favourite meals actually. I LOVE a good salad. So, I have lots of chopped red onion, grated carrot, iceberg lettuce, cherry tomatoes, pomegranate, avocado and I HAVE to finish it with a big dollop of hummus. Mmmmm lovely!!*

We have to say all that talk of a beautiful salad has made us hungry. We love putting together colourful foods and a salad is one of the best ways to do this. There is such a wide range of foods you can add to a salad and it is the perfect summer food.

Aside from the gorgeous salad, what is your favourite vegan meal, either home cooked or to eat out?

*Halo burger. Every single time! Actually, Marli's Kitchen also do a lovely seitan chicken breast which I love with rice or coleslaw, or popped into a burger bun.*

Ok, now we really are hungry! All this talk of food is wonderful and we are now craving a burger with a side salad....and maybe some cheeky fries! Focus!

Ok, moving swiftly on from all talk of food.

There is a quote that we have become familiar with that runs throughout Charlette's Instagram page and that is, 'A Sunday well spent brings a week of content.'

We wanted to know how Charlette spends her Sunday's in order to ensure she has a week of content?

*Oh great question!! Sunday for me is always "MY Day"- a day for pure indulgence to avoid those Monday blues. I ALWAYS have a sleep in Sunday, I never set an alarm and I treat myself to some social media time in bed. I love cooking so I always try to cook something nice or new on a Sunday (even if I bake a dessert) and finally it's all about Netflix or a good movie afterwards!*

We think that sounds like an ideal Sunday, and we agree that alarms should not be set on a Sunday if you have the opportunity to lie in. It seems to us that Charlette deserves this relaxing Sunday as it is apparent from her Instagram account that she leads a very busy life, so again we circled back to the topic of food and we asked, what food is your go to quick fix?

*I work long hours so finding the time to cook nutritious vegan meals is often a challenge! Then being based in the city for work, a lot of vegan options tend to be fast food which is not good for the waist line or your bank balance. If I'm running around a lot, I will try to find a sandwich shop and get them to whip me up an avocado and salad sandwich. Or even a salad on its own actually! I always keep a vegan dressing and vegan mayo in my work fridge for added flavour.*

Eating while on the move can be quite a tricky conundrum to plan for, especially when there are a growing number of fast food vegan options. As Charlette very rightly said this is not great for your health or bank

balance and although it may seem like the easier option it is always worth trying to plan in advance, or maybe take leftovers for lunch. If you are really pushed for time then why not try Charlette's tactic of finding somewhere that will accommodate to your dietary and nutritional needs.

That said this problem is one that has not necessarily been at the forefront in recent times. As most of the country have been in lockdown it has meant that we have had to adapt our lives, and quickly. We took the opportunity to delve further into our love of food and began to experiment with new recipes and ingredients.

We wanted to know if Charlette's experience had been the same, so we asked if she had created/discovered any new recipes during lockdown that could inspire you lovely lot?

*Oh yes! My friend bought me Lucy Watsons "Feed Me Vegan" cookbook and I pretty much loved every recipe! My absolute favourite were her jam doughnuts! Super simple to make and they came out sooo good- I have it on my Instagram page- DM me and I'll send you the recipe 😊*

We love to share food and try new recipes so thank you Charlette for sharing your top tips. It's great to learn that one of our favourite cities is supporting and promoting veganism, but we didn't expect anything less from one of the most multi-cultural cities in the world.

It is always interesting for us to speak to people from all over the world who are in different stages of their plant-based journey, as it is an individual experience for everyone.

As Charlette mentioned no-one should be criticised for the choices they make and even if some people are trying out vegan days, eating vegetarian, having allocated veggie days or beginning to open their minds and mouths to vegan meals then that can only be positive. The only way to ensure that the planet is cared for is by being kind, not only to it, but to each other and actively

answering the questions of the curious or ignorant and being true to your beliefs.

This is why we love to do these newsletter features as there is always something to learn. After this interview we will definitely be purchasing "Feed Me Vegan" and will be taking care to ensure our Sunday's are well spent, to bring a week of content!

Thank you again to Charlette, please check out her wonderful Instagram page @plant\_based\_pleasures which is also a must if you are visiting London as she promotes some great places to eat!

If you have any questions for us or about Charlette's feature then please contact us at [info@soyoi.co.uk](mailto:info@soyoi.co.uk)

*Keep your eyes peeled on our social media accounts as we have a very exciting announcement for our September feature!*