

## Interview with Izzy & Charlotte aka @hummus\_whores

This month we are excited to be talking to Izzy and Charlotte from the Instagram account @Hummus\_whores. It is an account that has been entertaining us for some time, with their lovely food pics and the fact that in their bio they describe one of the reasons for becoming vegan was to “piss off Piers Morgan”.

We asked these two lovely ladies if they would answer a few of our questions and they happily obliged.

As the Instagram account is a joint effort, we asked them how they initially met? *We met during our first year of college in 2016! We were in the same form group and took a lot of similar classes so became friends through spending more time together and having mutual friends.*

As Izzy and Charlotte's friendship progressed over the years, we wanted to know whether the choice to try a plant-based lifestyle was a joint decision or if one person inspired the other?

*We had both been vegetarian since we met and then in 2019, we both made the choice to try Veganuary and decided to create our account to document our journey. Ever since then we've loved becoming plant-based and getting involve in the online community and learning new vegan recipes and the different options that are available now.*

It seems to us that Izzy and Charlotte are a plant-based power team. It is always wonderful to have the support of friends, family and the online vegan community when beginning your plant-based journey and we think you'll agree by looking at their Instagram page they are inspirational.



So, was it Veganuary that prompted the transition to Veganism, the need to annoy Piers Morgan (which we are fully on board with) or were there other factors at play? *Ha! Well as much as that was a funny inspiration, it mostly came from educating ourselves more on the impact the dairy industry has on the environment and the treatment of the animals there! As we said, we had already been vegetarian for many years and so cutting out meat was already very easy. The hardest part for us was probably cutting out cheese! But when we found Violife extra mature that became a lot easier.*

There are plenty of wonderful plant-based cheeses and milks on the market making the transition a lot easier. As Izzy and Charlotte mentioned, educating yourself is extremely important and there are so many resources out there that you can access to keep informed about the impact the meat and dairy industry is having on our planet.

It's clear from the Instagram page that both Izzy and Charlotte love a good BBQ. Don't we all? We wanted to know if there are any foods in particular that they recommend for a good veggie BBQ, and if there are any foods in particular that they are partial to? *We love a good BBQ! Especially on a sunny day or for a celebration, like a birthday! We both agree that the key to a BBQ is having lots of variety, some favourites of ours are potato salad, roasted vegetable kebabs, sausages/burgers, coleslaw and salad! In regards to favourite meals Izzy's favourite are the vegan kiev's from M&S and Charlotte's are Linda McCartney meatballs!*

Sounds like the girls have BBQ's sorted! We completely agree variety is key and with so many plant-based products flooding the market then you will be spoilt for choice! Another good addition is jerk tofu kebabs, they are a treat! Or aubergine steaks! Both are easy and quick to make and are extremely healthy. Now unfortunately our BBQ has gone away for the Autumn and all this talk has made us wistful with BBQ memories!

Next up we had to ask Izzy and Charlotte about their cupcakes! Anyone who has seen their Instagram page will know that they make some wonderful cupcakes which have resulted in us having slight (ok massive) buttercream envy! We asked what the secret to their amazing buttercream is? As they are such lovely people, they happily obliged and answered our question. *For that buttercream we make sure the butter comes out of the fridge just before we make it so it doesn't go soft. I add extra icing sugar to thicken it up if I'm finding it's going runny.*

Buttercream envy appeased we asked, aside from supporting one another, have they found friends and family supportive of their choice to go plant-based? *We are lucky to have each other for support with everything not just our food journey. Our family and friends have also been very supportive! As we both live at home it has meant our families will now consume a lot more vegetarian and vegan meals and Izzy's mom has now become vegetarian herself. We also have great friends who are always open to trying new vegan snacks that we make or buy.*

Having a strong support network is key and it's also great when your example inspires others. We have also found that many family members and friends have either become vegetarian, vegan or are now living a more plant-based lifestyle. Also people are interested in what we are eating and this opens up discussions about alternatives they can use in cooking. Of course, providing cheeky little snacks for people always helps 😊

We recently featured Jordan from Vegan Campout in one of our newsletters, and being based in Nottingham we asked him about the options there for vegans eating out. His opinion was that it was ok but not as good as places such as Brighton and London. We took this opportunity to ask Izzy and Charlotte what they think as they are also based in Nottingham? *I'd say the options are good, and getting better but there is always room for improvement. Most places have a few options and some places do dedicated vegan nights, such as the pudding pantry and café roya which is an award-winning vegetarian restaurant! Cities such as Brighton and London have more restaurants dedicated to being vegan and we'd love to go to some different cities after lockdown to explore the vegan menus a bit more.*

We completely agree, once lockdown is a thing of the past, we cannot wait to stuff our faces and travel to explore different vegan restaurants.

However, being confined to our local area we have discovered new and exciting places that are completely vegan, such as Ultimate Vegan Café in Lichfield! They do oreo and jammie dodger milkshakes need we say anymore!

Next up we asked if there is anywhere, they have visited, pre lockdown, where they were pleasantly surprised with the amount of plant-based options? *Both of our university cities (Lincoln & Newcastle) had some good options which we weren't expecting! We've been particularly impressed with more independent restaurants providing vegan/vegetarian options as well as chain restaurants such as Zizzi's, Wagamama's, Pizza express etc!*

There's no denying that there has been a major influx of plant-based foods, as the demand has increased popular high street food chains have had to adapt to meet the masses. Also, smaller independent traders have had to up their game to keep in competition which is ultimately resulting in more people trying plant-based products. For example, the launch of the Gregg's vegan sausage roll! This whipped up such a stir that we struggled to get our hands on one as non-vegans were rushing to get their hands on them!

This can only be a positive thing and the more people opting for the veggie option the better.

We asked Charlotte and Izzy where they get their inspiration for food from. Their Instagram account is full of wonderful food and inspiration for whatever you're looking for. Whether it be for a BBQ, cupcakes or a quick on the go meal. *We get our*

*inspiration from other members of the vegan community on Instagram! That's why having an account like ours is so good because you can see what other vegans are making and find new and exciting recipes to try constantly! Everyone's so friendly so if you want to know how to make something you can always ask to find out.*

The online Vegan community is a great one! As Charlotte and Izzy rightly said, everyone is extremely welcoming and are happy to share recipes. We have found so much inspiration and tried new cooking techniques just by using Instagram. We even made doughnuts which was extremely exciting! We think the reason for this sharing nature is because Veganism is a mindset, a way of life, where the wellbeing of others is paramount! Also, we know that by sharing recipes a plant-based lifestyle become accessible to more people.

Lastly, we asked the hummus\_whores if they have any advice for people starting out on a plant-based journey or considering doing so?

*Our advice for someone starting a plant-based journey would be to not be afraid of getting things wrong! It's so hard to know which products are vegan to start with as some contain traces of animal products. But, as long as you're trying to help cut down animal product consumption in some way then that's the main thing. It's not about being 100% vegan all in one go, it's about being conscious of the choices you're making and trying to do your own bit to help and make a change.*

We couldn't have put it better ourselves. No-one should be called out or chastised for trying to do their best and hey, we've all ate a packet of crisps to find out there's milk in them! Why do we need milk in salt and vinegar crisps? Anyhow, that is a different discussion for a different time. The point is

everyone makes mistakes and being vegan is about going on a journey. As mentioned earlier, research is key and finding a good support network. There is no right or wrong way to start a plant-based diet, everyone is unique therefore your journey will be too. There is a whole world of people waiting to help you, offer supportive words or share their recipes with you.

So, if you do eat a packet of crisps or drink a glass of wine that you weren't aware contain animals' products don't beat yourself up, instead focus on all the positive things you are doing to make a difference.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Charlotte and Izzy for answering our questions beautifully and for agreeing to be a part of our newsletter. You can follow their Instagram page @Hummus\_whores and follow their plant-based journey and join us in buttercream envy!

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