

The Ultimate Vegan Shopping Guide



**UNICORN
GOODS**

About This Guide

This guide was created by Unicorn Goods. Unicorn Goods is the world's largest vegan store. As a Public Benefit Corporation, Unicorn Goods' mission is to reduce animal suffering by selling and promoting animal-free products. You can shop at UnicornGoods.com knowing that everything is verified to be vegan and cruelty-free.





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Why Shop Vegan?

Shopping vegan means not buying animal products. Leaving animals out of your shopping cart is a great way to buy more ethically. When you shop vegan, you'll reduce your carbon footprint and reward companies that are doing what they can to make the world a kinder place for animals and people alike.





Photo credit: Coquette



Photo credit: FAUX England

This guide is compiled by Unicorn Goods. Unicorn Goods is the world's largest vegan store. We have spent thousands of hours researching vegan products and verifying that they are vegan with companies. We hope you find this guide useful.



Photo credit: Votch



3 Reasons To Buy Vegan

#1

Animals

Every year, billions of animals are used to create products for human consumption. This practice is not only unnecessary, but it's also needlessly cruel. Animals that are raised as a part of this supply chain suffer unnecessarily through their lives and deaths. These products are then put up for sale and then purchase by people. Not buying products that use animals prevents more animals from being raised to produce these products. By effectively boycotting these products, you can save animals.

#2

People

The animal agriculture and animal testing industries are cruel to people, in addition to being cruel to animals. Jobs that require people to harm animals induces psychological distress. Many of these industries are also cited as some of the most inhumane in the world for workers. Industries like slaughterhouses and leather tanning factories have histories of human rights abuses. Frequently, not buying animal products helps make sure that you're supporting industries that treat people well.

#3

Planet

Animal agriculture is the single biggest leading cause of climate change. Buy not buying animal products, you are taking the single greatest step you can take to lowering your ecological footprint. Frequently, the animal-free versions of products are far more environmentally friendly than their animal-based counterparts when you take the lifespan of the animal that went into its production into account.



Photo credit: FruitenVeg

Clothing Bags & Accessories

What you put on your body says a lot about you. For centuries, humans have adorned themselves with ornaments and materials in order to send a specific message. Coming from this rich history of wearable art, modern dressers now look for clothing, bags, and accessories that display their ethics and honor their appearance.

When shopping for vegan clothing, it can sometimes be difficult to determine the materials of specific items. There are ways to identify where your clothing and accessories originate, and more transparency is being provided by companies in response to customers demanding increased information on what they're purchasing.



Examples of Materials To Avoid

Leather

Wool

Cashmere

Mohair

Pashmina

Angora

Silk

Alpaca

Fur

Nubuck

Down

MATT & NAT



Examples of Materials That Are Okay

Modal

Polyurethane

Acrylic

Polyester

Nylon

Thinsulate

Rayon

Primaloft

Hidden Animals

These animals
can all be found
in clothing as
material sources.

Down

Duck

Goose

Wool

Sheep

Rabbit

Mohair

Pashmina

Alpaca

Fur

Fox

Coyote

Mink

Rabbit

Raccoon Dog

Wolf

Leather

Cow

Pig

Sheep

Goat

Dog

Calf

Ostrich

Alligator

Crocodile

Mulesing & Wool & Sheep

Most wool is the product of a process called mulesing ("MULE-sing") in which skin around a sheep's tail area is cut off, often at the same time as the tail (called docking). The resulting scar tissue from the mulesing process is more resistant to flystrike, a condition in which blowfly larva hatch on the soiled hindquarters of sheep and parasitically infest the animal.

Mulesing was developed in the early 20th century by Mr. Mule, who accidentally mutilated one of his sheep in this way when he was shearing it for its wool.

Mulesing and docking both became common practice in an attempt to protect sheep from flystrike in the 1930s. Australia, currently the world's largest producer of wool, still accepts both mulesing and docking as common practice. The procedures are performed after lambs are weaned from

their mothers before their first birthday. The animals are put into metal restraining cages called marking cradles in which their legs are pulled toward their head to expose this flesh.

Modified wool sheers, basically giant scissors, are used to cut away flesh. The procedure is generally done by unskilled persons without the use of anesthesia. The animals suffer notable pain upon procedure and during the healing process, which can last up to two weeks.

Ironically, flystrike is largely a man-made problem. Merino sheep, the most commercially used sheep breed, have been bred to produce as much wool as possible, meaning that current merinos have undulating wrinkled skin. More surface area = more wool. But this thicker, wrinkled skin is harder to keep clean, and the hind area holds more urine and fecal matter, which attracts blowflies and causes flystrike.

In our attempt to squeeze as much money out of sheep as possible, we created a breed that inevitably suffers more, with or without humans making matters worse.

Considering that sheep were no longer mulesed or docked, wool is still an unethical product unless it is guaranteed to be done in a humane way. The over-bred sheep often suffer from heat exhaustion from their surplus of unnatural wool. Sheep are often sheered too early in the season and die of exposure to cold, since waiting could result in the natural shedding of wool in the fields. Sheering is done by unskilled laborers who are paid by volume and abuse the sheep in the process of trying to get the most wool possible in the shortest amount of time. Cuts and infections are common. And the amount of water needed to clean the resulting wool is egregious.





Plucking & Down & Ducks

Humans have been using down as an insulator for centuries, dating back to as far as the 1600s. Down is the fluffy under feather layer that birds use to stay warm. When birds are babies, all of their feathers are down, and then they molt in adolescence to gain an extra waterproof top layer of fly-worthy external feathers.

Down feathers are plucked from geese and ducks, and are collected two different ways. There is postmortem (or “after death”) plucking, which is when the geese or ducks are plucked of their down feathers after they have been killed for meat. Yes, if you buy an animal by-product you’re still participating in the economy of killing the animal. You’re not exempt just because it’s not going in your mouth.

Live-plucking is the other method: farm workers at down collecting facilities will restrain geese or ducks and begin to pluck handfuls of feathers in order to get at the underlayer of down. This will happen a few times during the goose’s or duck’s life span. The results? Geese and ducks are left with large bald patches and torn skin, particularly around the neck and belly. Open wounds, if they are noticed by workers at all, are sometimes sewn up unprofessionally and oftentimes without anesthesia. The process is so stressful and painful that many of the birds involved die in the process.

Down is an outdated and inferior material, and there are many better alternatives. Synthetic materials perform way better than down ever has.

A hand is shown from the top left, reaching downwards. Three white feathers are falling from the hand, trailing behind them as they descend. The background is a solid, light blue color.

**8 Reasons Why
Down is Inferior
To Synthetic Insulation**

#1

Down doesn't stay warm when wet. Its thermal properties are virtually eliminated if it comes into contact with moisture like, say, snow or sweat. The insulating property of down is linked to its fluffiness and its ability to hold a layer of air. When wet, the feathers collapse and don't hold any air, and therefore cease to insulate.

#2

Down is an allergen. People are allergic to down, specifically the molds and dust mites that down fosters. Think of that pillow - it isn't as cuddly as it seems.

#3

Down mildews. You can't really wash it, and if it does and it doesn't dry out right away (which is what happens when you air dry it) it reeks with an odor that will never fully dissipate.

#4

Down stinks. Literally. It smells like animal. Besides that, it's stench will grow as it ages as it absorbs and retains odors.

#5

Down clumps up. As hard as manufacturers try to keep down in place by stitching cells into their products, down gathers up and creates an inconsistent clumpy layer and look.

#6

Down doesn't age well. Down feathers tend to become more allergenic as they age.

#7

Down is uncomfortable. Remember those little spiky things that stick out of your coat and duvet? That's a stray down feather. You can't pull them out because then more feathers will come with it. And you can't push them back in.

#8

Down is inhumane. On top of all of this, down is an incredibly inhumane material for the animals involved.

3 Materials Superior To Down

#1

PrimaLoft

The charge for down alternatives was led by the US Army. After finding that down was too expensive and that it failed when wet, the US Army began looking for something better to clothe soldiers. The resulting drive in research and development led to PrimaLoft. PrimaLoft was developed for the US Army in the 1980s as a superior down alternative that stayed warm when wet. Unlike down, PrimaLoft is able to retain 96% of its insulating capability when wet. Not only that, but it's water repellent. Today, PrimaLoft is one of the largest producers of synthetic down. You can even get PrimaLoft with recycled polyester content.

#2

Thinsulate

Thinsulate, which predates PrimaLoft is another great alternative that, as its name suggests, insulates without the bulk of down.

#3

Aerogel

Aerogel is even older, dating back to the 1930s. It's the material NASA uses to keep astronauts warm. There is now a company making cold weather gear for us normal humans from this awesome material.





Photo credit: Veggani

Buttons

Many buttons are made from shell, and some are made from bone. This is especially prevalent in nicer men's and women's dress shirts and oxford shirts. When shopping for pieces of vegan clothing that have buttons, double-check that the buttons are made from non-animal materials like wood, resin, or plastic. Corozo is becoming increasingly used for buttons and is made from a nut, making it vegan.

Labels

Most jeans and some casual jackets, bags, and backpacks will have leather patches as the brand label. Synthetic leather is becoming increasingly common, especially for jeans, since it's less expensive and washes more reliably.

Zippers

While zippers themselves are not generally made from animal products, zipper pulls usually are. A zipper pull is an accent detail that's normally added on to the end of the zipper handle to make the zipper look more finished and easier to use. It's still very common for zippers to have small pieces of leather straps or leather tassels on them.

Linings

Most jackets, blazers and bags have inner linings, and silk is still a common choice for this finishing layer. This can still be the case if the item is labeled or marketed as vegan by the company that makes it.

Toggles

Toggles are traditionally made from horn. Most toggles, like the ones you find on winter coats, are now made from plastic, but you should make sure before you buy.

Cases

Sunglass and eyeglass cases are often made from leather, especially for nicer frames. Since the case is not attached to the actual product being sold, but rather included as a complimentary item, most descriptions of sunglasses and eyeglasses don't specify the materials that the case is made from.

Shoes

There are many materials that are now coming to replace animal skin leather, especially when it comes to shoes. Shoes can now be made for anything from cork to apples to pineapples. Emerging fabrics include leathers made from mushrooms and grapes.

Insoles

Many shoes that don't use animal products on the outside still use animal products on the insides. Insoles are frequently made from a separate material than the outside of the shoe and should be paid special attention to.



Examine Your Sole

Shoes often have marks on the soles that can help you identify whether or not the shoe is vegan. Here's how you can read your sole.

Shoe Part Symbols



Upper



Lining and Inner Sole



Outer Sole

Material Symbols

Vegan



Textile



Synthetic / Other

Non-Vegan



Leather



Coated Leather

The Environmental Impact of Synthetic Leather



Photo credit: Coquette

Synthetic leat

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Taken from the Global Fashion Agenda
& The Boston Consulting Group's Report
"Pulse of the Fashion Industry" Published in 2017

Which is better for the environment: animal leather or synthetic leather?

A pair of real leather shoes is at least 2-20x times worse for the environment than a pair of fake leather shoes. Most fake leather is made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or polyurethane. Producing a pound of polyurethane foam emits 3.7 pounds of CO₂. Producing a pound of PVC emits 9 pounds of CO₂. Producing single pair of real leather shoes, Timberlands for example, emits 22-220 pounds of CO₂ per pair.

Real leather is far worse for the environment than fake leather, by carbon footprint alone.

This doesn't even take into account the toxins involved in the tanning process for

leather. Most tanneries use chromium, a toxic carcinogenic, in the tanning process. Not only is this element still present in the final product, but it's also dumped into the surrounding ecosystem. And the waste from vegetable tanning, which often contains lethal bacteria, can be just as bad.

For both real leather and fake leather, there are companies doing the process better. You can buy bags made from recycled materials, reclaimed materials, and from factories with better ethics. But in the end, if everything the same (which it's not), would you rather kill something or not? Go for the fake leather.



Photo credit: FruitenVeg

Makeup

Makeup has a history of using animal byproducts in its production, from pigment derived from crushed beetles to emulsifiers derived from whale oil. Makeup, cosmetics, and skincare that is free from animal products is often better for your skin and your overall health.

Removing many of the harsh, synthetic or animal-derived ingredients also often removes the need for stabilizing agents and preservatives, as well as animal testing. This not only makes the production of vegan and cruelty-free products healthier, but it makes the user healthier, too.





Photo credit: 100 Percent Pure





Eyelashes

Eyelash extensions often use animal furs from animals such as mink. Vegan eyelashes don't use animal fur, and are often marked as cruelty-free or synthetic.

Brushes

Makeup brushes are historically made from animal hairs. Vegan brushes use synthetic fibers that last longer and are often more sanitary since their shafts aren't fractured. This means that the fibers don't hold and harbor detritus and bacteria, leaving complexions clearer and the makeup application process more sanitary.

Honey & Beeswax

Honey and beeswax are not vegan because they use animals in their products. Honey is bees' food stores, and wax is their building material. Harvesting beeswax and honey and the industrial beekeeping system could not only be harming insects unnecessarily, it could also be contributing to colony collapse, a mysterious disappearance of bees around the world.





Photo credit: Kat Von D Beauty



Ingredients to Avoid

Retinol

Lanolin

Collagen

Gelatin

Gel

Gelatine

Isinglass

Estrogen

Estradiol

Cochineal Dye

Guanine

Tallow

Squalene

Ambergris

Polypeptides



Did You Know?



A mink's rich glossy coat in its wild state is brown and looks silky, but farm-bred mink can vary from white to almost black.

Mink & Eyelashes

False eyelashes are commonly made with mink fibers, which is strange considering that mink don't even have eyelashes.

Even if minks did have eyelashes, taking them to use on humans is weird, to say the least, and cruel. But what really happens is far worse. Minks are killed and their furs are turned into fake human eyelashes. It seems that marketing tactics have succeeded in depicting mink lashes as a luxury items. This practice is far removed from the reality of industrialized fur farming. Mink fur farms are inhumane and cruel. By buying mink lashes, you are killing cute minks in horrible, terrible ways.

The minks behind mink eyelashes are raised in captivity on fur farms. They live their entire lives in cages, without the ability to move more than a few steps. They stand on grated cages that hurt their sensitive paws. Minks, like all living animals, are not meant to be kept in crowded

confinement. In response to these tortuous conditions, minks sometimes self-mutilate or resort to cannibalizing one another.

Many people assume that producing lashes does not mandate that minks be killed; this is an insidious misconception. In fur farming, the only minks kept alive are those used as breeding stock; the rest are killed. Their fur is harvested to make clothes, mostly, but the oil, fat, and feces they produce are harvested as well. Purchasing mink lashes directly contributes to the growth of the mink farming industry as a whole. Thirty-one million minks are killed in the U.S. each year, making up approximately 90% of the total animals on fur farms.

Mink farming is also an environmental issue. Producing one kilogram of mink fur has five times the environmental impact of producing the next highest-scoring textile. For these reasons, it is vital that people be aware of the many existing alternatives to mink lashes.





Cruelty-free

Versus

Vegan

Cruelty Free and Vegan are not the same thing. If a product is vegan, it means that it does not contain any animal products or animal byproducts. If a product is cruelty-free, it means that it is not tested on animals. A product could not contain any animal products, but be tested on animals, and visa-versa.

Every year,
over 200,000 rabbits are
used in lab testing for products
ranging from beauty & body products
to makeup & cosmetics, making them
the second most commonly used animals
in research and testing after guinea
pigs. In 2012, 205,482 rabbits were
held in laboratories for such use
as in experiments that cause
pain and suffering.*



*According to the
American Anti-Vivisection
Society as of 2018

What is the difference between "cruelty-free" & "vegan"?

Cruelty-free and vegan are different things. If a product claims to be cruelty-free, it means that a product is made without animal testing. If a product claims to be vegan, it means that it is made with animal products or byproducts.

The terms "cruelty-free" and "vegan" can overlap, or they can not. Generally-speaking, in industry standard terms, they do not overlap. Products that are cruelty-free may not be vegan, and visa-versa.

For example, a product could contain honey, but not be tested on animals. Or a product could be tested on animals, but not contain any animal products or animal byproducts.

Certifications

Both Vegan and Cruelty Free statuses are not regulated by any international or national agencies. A good way to verify if a product is either cruelty-free or vegan – or both – is to look for a certification from a trusted third party.



3 Reliable Cruelty-free Certifications



PETA's Beauty Without Bunnies Program

This program, based out of the USA, is one of the largest cruelty-free accreditation programs and includes over six hundred different companies. | Mandates: This program requires that no new animal testing can take place at any phase of product development a certified company, its laboratories, or ingredient suppliers. | Accountability: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) believes that a company puts its image at risk if it falsifies cruelty free claims. This economic risk and potential damage of public perception to hold companies accountable.

Leaping Bunny Program



This international program was formed by eight national animal protection groups who came together to form the Coalition for Consumer Information on Cosmetics (CCIC) which administers the Leaping Bunny Program. | Mandates: To become certified a must agree that company does not and shall not conduct, commission, or be a party to animal testing this includes formulations and Ingredients of such products. The program also requires a supplier monitoring system be put in place. Companies also cannot allow animal testing to be performed by or for submission to regulatory agencies in foreign countries. | Accountability: A company's supplier monitoring system must be submitted to an independent audit.

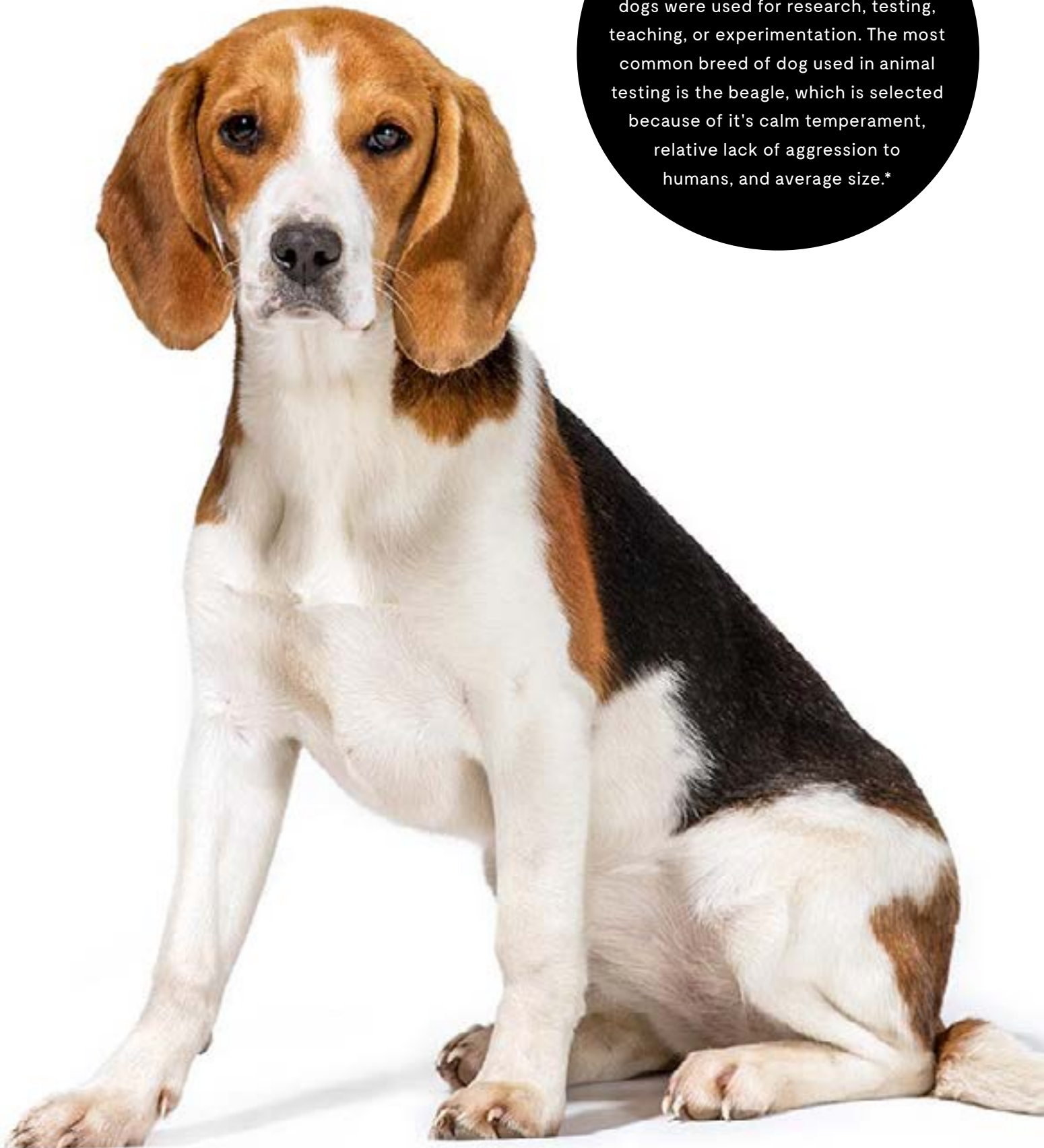
Choose Cruelty Free



This Australia-based nonprofit organization accredits companies and actively campaigns for an end to animal testing of cosmetics, toiletries and other household products. | Mandates: They will not accredit companies unless all parent and subsidiaries are also accredited (think the Body Shop, owned by L'Oreal). Companies must fit one of two criteria (1) The company meets the never tested rule: none of its products and none of its product ingredients have ever been tested on animals by it, by anyone on its behalf, by its suppliers or anyone on their behalf. (2) The five year or more rolling rule: None of its products and none of its product ingredients have been tested on animals by it at any time within a period of five years immediately preceding the date of application for accreditation. | Accountability: Accredited companies sign a legally-binding contract to the effect that what they have said in their application is factual.

*According to the USDA
as reported by the
American Anti-Vivisection
Society as of 2018

Every year, over
60,000 dogs are used in
animal research. In 2016, 60,979
dogs were used for research, testing,
teaching, or experimentation. The most
common breed of dog used in animal
testing is the beagle, which is selected
because of its calm temperament,
relative lack of aggression to
humans, and average size.*



Animals Commonly Used In Animal Testing

Mice

Chimpanzees

Rats

Monkeys

Rabbits

Beagles

Primates

Dogs

3 Reliable Vegan Certifications

Vegan certifications are available for products that can prove that they are made without incorporating animal products or animal byproducts. Certifications are provided by nonprofits for products and companies that make items completely devoid of animal products and animal by-products.

Even though it is up to the companies that use these marks themselves to self-report on the vegan status of their products, companies enter into a formal agreement with the nonprofits that pledge themselves to the truthfulness of their claims.

Look for These Symbols







Skincare + Bodycare

Many skincare and bodycare products may be made with animal byproducts hidden in their ingredients lists. Without being specified, there is no way of knowing what the derived origins of the ingredients are without asking the company directly.

Historically, byproducts derived from animals were less expensive than synthetically produced equivalents. This is now no longer the case, as synthetic processes create materials and ingredients that are less costly to producers. As such, many companies are switching from animal-based ingredients to vegan ingredients by default as a cost-driven decision.



Photo credit: Pūr-lisse

Ingredients to Look Out For

Palmitate

Vitamin B-Complex Factor

Caprylic Acid

Glycerin

Choline Bitartrate

Glycerol

Oleyl Stearate

Glycerols

Glycreth

Lecithin

Provitamin B-5

Oleic Acid

Oleyl Oleate

Palmitic Acid

Palmitamine

Palmitamide

Panthenol

Dexpanthenol

Panthenyl

Stearic Acid

Food

Processed foods can have animal-derived ingredients as a part of their recipes. These highly manipulated additives often have names that are not attributed to their source.





Ingredients to Avoid

Whey

Resinous Glaze

Shellac

Lactic Acid

Rennet

Gelatin

Beeswax

Honey



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