



# Decoding labels

**W**hile at first it may seem that avoiding animal products is fraught, there are many websites to help you and encouragingly, savvy food companies recognise that a vegan-lifestyle is an important part of their market share and are assisting with labelling their products.

In order to make an informed choice around the consumption of animal-based products it is necessary to know the names of certain animal-based ingredients that are hidden away in everyday food stuffs. The good thing to know is the more you eat minimally processed foods, the less likely you are to encounter them.

## **Hidden dairy**

Vegans avoid dairy and therefore animal rennet, a coagulate commonly used in cheese making. Other dairy-based ingredients to watch out for are: casein, whey, lactalbumin, lactose, lactulose, nougat candy and ghee (derived from butter) and the Indian dairy-based cheese paneer. Lactic acid is used in beer, sauerkraut, pickles and products that use bacterial fermentation.

## **Hidden seafood products**

Anchovies are hidden away in caesar dressings and many brands of worcestershire sauce, while fish sauce is a common ingredient in Thai curry pastes and takeaways. Isinglass, a fish-based gelatine-like product can turn up in alcoholic drinks and jelly desserts.

## **Hidden meat products**

Gelatine is in marshmallows, gummy-style confectionery and is a common coating for pills. Sugar can be refined through bone char, though this is not the case with Australian produced sugar. Tallow, animal shortening, pops up in refried beans, tortillas and ready-made pastries.

## **Hidden egg products**

Egg yolk is common in dried ribbon pasta. Albumin, derived from egg whites may be used as a fining agent and may not be declared on wines and liqueurs labels. Check websites for vegan-friendly brands.



**Whilst there is no official vegan logo, Vegan Australia is attempting to make it easier for all those choosing vegan.**