

Many fad diets and styles of eating have come and gone over the past few decades. High protein, low carb, Atkins and Cabbage Soup, they have all had their proponents and their critics. In her 2013 *Phoenix Star* article entitled “Nearly vegetarian? Go flexitarian”, Rainey introduces us to another new trend in eating, specifically flexitarianism. The author explains that this term was coined to describe the diet of someone who is primarily a vegetarian, but who once and a while eats meat or fish. Rainey asserts that there are several advantages offered by such a regime. First, although the health benefits of vegetarian diets have been well documented, many people, including the author herself, find them difficult to stick to due to their love of meat. For these people, the freedom to occasionally indulge is enough to satisfy their cravings. Next, Rainey also points out that flexitarian eating can also benefit the wallet, since vegetable based meals tend to be cheaper than those centred around meat. Few people would refuse the opportunity to save money, especially in today’s economy. Finally, the author argues that a flexitarian diet can also be environmentally friendly, because meat production is responsible for a significant amount of the greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. For these reasons, Rainey suggests that a flexitarian diet is an excellent alternative for most people, allowing them to reap the benefits of vegetarianism while still occasionally satisfying their desire for a juicy steak or hamburger.

Although Rainey’s argument makes a lot of intuitive sense, she makes a couple of points with which I disagree. First, she suggests that a vegetarian diet is useful for all people, particularly if it is “adjusted” to flexitarian by adding meat from time to time. However, for people who are diabetic, like myself, such a diet must be used with caution, due to its high concentration of carbohydrates. Although plant based foods such as fruits, vegetables and grains contain many vitamins, minerals and fibre, they also have a significant impact on the blood sugar, something that can be very dangerous for those of us who already have a problem in this area. Secondly, the option of flexitarianism would not appeal to people who reject meat for ethical reasons. For example, one of my friends believes so strongly that animals should not be harmed that not only does she not eat meat, she also does not buy or use leather in any form, such as for shoes or furniture. Finally, Rainey states that a vegetable inclined diet is cheaper, but I question whether that is really true, particularly in a country like Canada with a

relatively short growing season that makes locally grown produce a rarity for much of the year.

Moreover, even when Ontario fruit and vegetables are in season, they are often more expensive than imports, although they are fresher and better tasting. In my family, we are by no means vegetarian, nor flexitarian, and yet fruit and vegetables account for more than half of our weekly grocery bill. I can only imagine how expensive it would be if we were to rely primarily on these foods.

In conclusion, flexitarianism seems to offer a “best of both worlds” solution in terms of eating, allowing most people to enjoy the benefits such a diet offers, in terms of health, budget and environmental protection, while still occasionally enjoying the meat they crave. In the future, it is likely that this style of eating will continue to increase in popularity, as our population ages and people strive to stay healthier longer while living on more limited budgets.

Reference:

Rainey, S. (2013, January 26). Nearly vegetarian? Go flexitarian. *Phoenix Star*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/canadiannewsmajor/docview/1281894244/fulltext/9FD53F52D28547C7PQ/1?accountid=9744>.

citation information

main ideas

thesis

response to main idea

transition expression

reporting verb