

# THE WEEK

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## INSTANT GUIDE

# Los Angeles adopts Meatless Monday: Should more cities follow suit?

The City of Angels becomes the largest in the nation to ask its citizens to go vegetarian one day a week

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Live in L.A.? You might want to put the burger down. The Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously 12-0 to adopt Meatless Monday as part of an international effort to cut down on meat consumption for health and environmental reasons. Los Angeles becomes the largest city in the U.S. to adopt the non-profit initiative, which asks participants to voluntarily go vegetarian one day a week. Who's behind the campaign? And could it catch on in other cities? Here's what you need to know:

### What is Meatless Monday?

The program is an international non-profit health initiative that was kickstarted back in 2003 by the John Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore. The goal is to reduce individuals' weekly meat consumption by 15 percent. According to the campaign's [official website](#) — which claims support from celebrities including Paul McCartney, James Cameron, and Oprah — Monday was chosen because it sets "our intentions for the next six days," making it the "perfect day to make a change for your health and the health of our planet." Los Angeles Councilwoman Jan Perry, who introduced the motion in her city, emphasizes that "a high-meat diet has been linked to health problems such as colon, prostate, kidney, and breast cancers, as well as heart disease," [says Melissa Pamer at NBC Los Angeles](#).

### Will it be enforced?

While the food police won't be peering over Los Angelenos' shoulders, Meatless Monday could have tangible effects in places like restaurants and the grocery aisle. Chef Mario Batali, for instance, [has already vowed to institute the initiative at all 14 of his restaurants](#), including Pizzeria and Osteria Mozza in Los Angeles, and more restaurants



Put down that greasy burger and pick up a carrot: L.A. has become the largest city in the U.S. to embrace Meatless Monday. The first American city to do so was Aspen, Colorado. *Photo: ThinkStock/Digital Vision*


could adopt similar measures. Supermarkets could potentially lower the prices of vegetarian goods like tofu at the beginning of every week.

### Why L.A.?

Los Angeles has the distinction of being both "the spiritual home of the hamburger" and "a haven for the health-obsessed," [says NBC's Pamer](#). Councilman Ed Reyes, who joined Perry in supporting the measure, has a personal investment in the matter — one of his sons has been diagnosed with diabetes. The question, [Reyes said](#), is how does a huge municipality effect change? "If we do it one plate at a time, one meal, one day, we are ratcheting down the impact on our environment... [and] maybe we can change our habits for a lifetime."

### Could Meatless Monday catch on in other cities?

Some bloggers, [like Deborah Kotz at Boston.com](#), think adopting Meatless Monday in other American cities battling health concerns could be a good idea. (Aspen, Colorado, became the first U.S. city to officially adopt the program in 2011.) But not everyone is as supportive. In August, Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) denounced Meatless Mondays on Twitter after the Department of Agriculture came out in support of it:



**ChuckGrassley**  
@ChuckGrassley

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I will eat more meat on Monday to compensate for stupid USDA recommendation abt a meatless Monday

26 Jul 12

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The ensuing backlash from other GOP lawmakers caused the USDA, which also supports the cattle industry, [to renounce its endorsement](#).

**Sources:** [Boston.com](#), [LA Daily News](#), [LA Weekly](#), [NBC Los Angeles](#), [New York Daily News](#), [The Hill](#)