



30 Pounds Lighter, I'm Hiking Glaciers and Reaching New Highs on a Plant-Based Diet

By Monika Kurasiewicz
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Monika Kurasiewicz had resigned herself to a life of weight gain and health problems. Then she adopted a plant-based diet and unleashed her full potential.

I started my whole-food, plant-based journey in September 2016, when I went to Poland to visit my sister. She was already on the plant-based diet herself, and her husband introduced me to the book [How Not to Die](#) by Michael Greger, MD. At that point I was 35 years old and 165 pounds. My mom and my dad are overweight, and both have high blood pressure and diabetes. So I was on my way down a path that I thought I couldn't change.

But after leaving my sister's and coming back home to the United States, I decided to try a detox cleanse. After completing it I felt much better—no more sugar cravings or heartburn—and I figured that if I could do a strict detox for two weeks, I could do anything. I had seen the [Forks Over Knives](#) documentary; I started digging further and stumbled upon [Forks Meal Planner](#) and [Forks Over Knives](#) cookbooks. I committed to making the change. I went 100-percent whole-food, plant-based.

The hardest parts were getting over cravings for comfort foods, such as burgers and other fatty foods, and transitioning to no-oil cooking. But I learned new recipes and gradually it got easier. My favorite meals became stir-fried vegetables and tofu; chickpea-flour tortillas with veggies; and soups and stews with zucchini, peppers, tomatoes, and beans.

I did not see a big change in my weight at first, but after one year, I'd dropped over 30 pounds. I now weigh 123 pounds, and I have never felt better—not just physically but mentally and emotionally, as well.

The year proved to be the most challenging and rewarding of my life. I believe the diet helped me

rediscover myself and find my inner strength and light again. I got out of an emotionally abusive marriage with a man who turned out to not be the person I thought I married. I started hiking with my dog. I hiked a glacier in Alaska, and I even hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back, carrying a 35-pound pack. I got my scuba-diving certificate. I became an independent, strong, and beautiful woman, a good example to my two beautiful boys.

Now I know that we are not destined to our parents' diseases and bad diet choices. We can change by changing our eating habits, one day at a time. It's as simple as that. You really are what you eat.

After all this, sometimes I still find it difficult to talk with people about my transition to a plant-based diet. People almost react like I'm offending them, and they ask a lot of questions: "What about [protein](#)?" "Don't you need milk to get [calcium](#)?" etc. Usually, I just tell them to watch the [Forks Over Knives](#) documentary, since it was life-changing for me.

Thank you, [Forks Over Knives](#), for opening my eyes to my new life!

Ready to get started? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.