

Interview: MARANDA PLEASANT

TIPS ON EATING CLEAN FOR TRAVELERS, STAYING FIT + FUELED, AND LESSONS IN BUSINESS

ALEXANDRA PAUL

HEALTH COACH. PLANT-BASED NUTRITION EXPERT. ENTREPRENEUR. ACTOR

Instagram: @AlexandraCoaching

Q: What is the hardest part about traveling and being a vegan?

A: Most people have trouble eating healthily when traveling, and vegans have some extra challenges! My solution is to bring my own food. Just this week, I flew to both Vegas and Maine, and each trip I packed fresh fruit I cut beforehand, individual packets of peanut butter, vegan protein powder, oatmeal packets, and some granola. And a metal water bottle, so I don't have to use plastic bottles. Once I get somewhere, I stake out the nearest grocery store for things like hummus, fresh vegetables, and more fruit. I like popcorn as a snack and it keeps well.

Q: What were some huge influencers for you becoming vegan?

A: I think all the messages I received added up to me becoming vegan. The people I knew who were vegan, the videos I saw online, the things I read. Now I cannot imagine not being vegan. I became vegetarian when I was 14 after reading *Diet for a Small Planet* by Frances Moore Lappe. Her arguments were environmental, but a couple years later I read Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* and that made me aware of animal rights. I stopped wearing leather, wool, or silk and using products tested on animals after I met Chris DeRose, the founder of Last Chance for Animals, 29 years ago. My brother Jonathan has been vegan for decades, so he was a major influence. I wish I had gone vegan sooner. It has had a profound effect on me; it has changed my life for the better.

Q: How do you stay fueled? What does a day eating look like for you? What are some of your favorite snacks?

A: I eat all day long! I love fruit, especially watermelon, which I top with a sprinkle of berry protein powder. I love vegetables, especially bell peppers, dipped in babaganoush or hummus. I really only drink water, an occasional herb tea, no coffee, juices, or soda. I like making soups that I can throughout the week and I love plain ol' kale. I also love eating natural, unsalted peanut butter out of the jar. I swim in ocean races up to 14 miles, so when I am in the midst of a race, I fuel with protein shakes and bars.

Q: How do you stay flexible and strong? What do you practice?

A: I have a bad lower back, so I do yoga at home for 45 minutes every other day. It is not a zen practice, as I listen to NPR's *This American Life* or TED talks while I am stretching, but it keeps me pain-free. I am actually grateful for my back issue, because without it I would never do yoga, and yoga has so many other benefits too. I lift weights a couple times a week and I do an hour of cardio six mornings a week. I hate sitting because it hurts my back and I just prefer to move, so I walk every chance I get. I walk outside on conference calls and I have a treaddesk in my office, so I am walking when I am answering emails or writing.

Q: Are there any natural wellness products or ingredients that you swear by?

A: I am a big pusher of B12, especially for vegetarians and vegans. Check your homocysteine levels, and if they are high (common among vegans and vegetarians) make sure you increase your B12 intake.



Q: Tell us a little about your health coaching business.

A: I help people achieve their health and fitness goals when they cannot do it on their own. My clients struggle to eat well or fit exercise into their lives and they all want to lose at least 10 pounds, so I work with them to develop healthy habits. Change is hard. Human physiology is wired to fight and remain the same, which is why so many people in America today cannot get out of the cycle of bad eating, little exercise, too much stress and not enough sleep. But I am trained in the science of change and motivation, so when people are stuck I can guide them out.

Q: What is the biggest lesson you've learned running your own business, being an entrepreneur and artist?

A: I have learned how important marketing is for my coaching business, and how different it is these days. I am being forced to be more consistent on social media. As an actress, I spent the first 20 years of my career with publicists who did everything for me, and I just had to show up for premieres and do magazine and TV interviews. So it has been an adjustment for me to daily reveal a more personal side for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and to be wholly responsible for it.

“

I wish I had gone vegan sooner. It has had a profound effect on me; it has changed my life for the better. ”

Alexandra Paul is a health coach, with clients globally. Her expertise includes a certification from Cornell University's plant-based nutrition course, as well as certification from Wellcoaches School. She was a certified EMT for 23 years. As an actress, Alexandra starred in over 75 films and television shows, and is internationally recognized for her role on the TV series Baywatch. Visit AlexandraCoaching.com for a free 20-minute consultation with Alexandra.

