

Wait, why is Ben Carson a vegetarian?

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At the risk of going all [Get Religion](#) over nothing: it's a little weird to read articles about Ben Carson's vegetarianism that fail to mention that the presidential candidate is a member of a church that [promotes vegetarianism](#).

Nathanael Johnson [celebrates the optics](#), while Samantha Rollins [wonders about the politics](#). Jenny Hopkinson [cites health concerns](#) as Carson's main motivation. [Arthur Delaney and Ashley Alman](#) note that Carson once stated his hope for a time when "there will no longer be a reason for most people to eat meat." Only one of these links mentions "his religion," and none finds space for the term "Seventh-day Adventist."

Both Delaney and Alman and Hopkinson refer to a 1990 profile of Carson in the *Vegetarian Times*. [That piece](#) credits both Carson's Adventist faith and his health concerns—which, to be clear, are hardly separate categories. Healthy living and a healthful diet have [long been](#) Adventist distinctives, little emphasized by most other Christian denominations but a significant part of Adventist identity.

Carson's diet may well cause him trouble on the campaign trail, [as it has already](#). I hope the reporting on this acknowledges that people avoid meat for a lot of different reasons, and Carson does it at least partly because his church encourages it. A candidate's specific denomination isn't always relevant; we don't need to be reminded each time that Hillary Clinton or Lindsey Graham tosses off a poll-tested Bible quote that she's a United Methodist and he's a Southern Baptist. But sometimes it's odd to leave it out—especially when it's a church farther from the American mainstream and a teaching most other churches don't share.