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# Vegan

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# Here's Johnny!

**Guitar god Johnny Marr of The Smiths fame kindly agreed to give Louise Wallis an interview**

**What prompted you to go vegetarian?**

Making a record called *Meat Is Murder*, that was nearly 25 years ago. It wouldn't have been right for me to play that song and not be vegetarian.

**What do you remember about the process of writing and recording the song with Morrissey?**

He gave me the title and I went with a feeling. I came up with a tune that I thought was evocative yet unsettling, and the band captured the right mood one winter's afternoon in Liverpool. It felt heavy but strangely beautiful when we did it. I love that track.



**Was the switch easy, and were there any particular foods that you missed?**

Giving up things doesn't mean sacrifice or misery to me, I see it as the opposite. I "took on" being vegan, I didn't "give up" something, if you see what I mean. I like doing that. All of these things have made me more focused and energised.

**Are your wife Angie and children Nile and Sonny also vegan or veggie?**

My family are all vegetarian. Angie was vegetarian when we met, I was fifteen and she was fourteen. She was clued up. I probably would have become vegetarian even without the song I suppose.

**What's a typical meal in the Marr household?**

Giant salads with lots of tofu. Thai food, pastas, Mediterranean, Mexican, spinach forever. My tour rider looks like the deli in Whole Foods.

**How do you manage food-wise when travelling, or on tour?**

I try to make time to buy what I can when I can. As I say, the US is easier. I live off health bars, rice, salad and white tea. I hang out in Whole Foods and New Seasons far too much and I load up the bus with lots of stuff.

**You recently had a (carnivorous) flower named in your honour at the Chelsea Flower show. Bet you didn't see that one coming?!**

I can honestly say that I never imagined I'd have a plant named after me; a guitar, a pair of sneakers, sunglasses...ok, nice...but a plant? It's pretty cool I think; unusual.

"Giving up things doesn't mean sacrifice or misery to me, I see it as the opposite.

I 'took on' being vegan, I didn't 'give up' something..."

**When did you decide to go vegan, and why?**

I became vegan in 2005 when I moved to Portland, Oregon [not 1985 as previously quoted (source *Observer* interview Sunday 19 July 2009)]. I'd been getting more and more health conscious and at that time I wanted to take things as far as I could. I like the idea of progress, and being progressive. Portland has a very liberal and modern attitude and a few of my friends there were vegan. I'm glad I got into it. It's a lot easier being vegan in the US than in Europe, there's more cultural variety there, and therefore choice.