




Alcohol	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beer • Cider • Wine / Fortified Wines • Spirits / Liqueurs • Colorants • Vegetarian / Vegan Alcohol Availability 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many alcoholic drinks, such as beer and wine, will have been clarified/ stabilised (fined) using animal derived products, causing concern for vegetarians and vegans alike. As fining agents are used as a processing aid (as opposed to an additive) in theory none should remain in the final product, however this is impossible to guarantee. • One of the problems faced in determining which products are suitable is due to current EC labelling regulations for alcoholic beverages which states that; "A complete list of ingredients in descending order by weight is currently only required for drinks with an alcoholic strength by volume (abv) of 1.2% or less." This means that only very low or non-alcoholic beers, wines and ciders are required to list all ingredients. • Animal derived products used in the production of alcohol include; Albumin – derived from egg whites (may be caged eggs); Casein – Protein derived from milk; Chitin – derived from the shells of crabs, lobsters, etc; Gelatine – from bones and connective tissues of cows or pigs; Isinglass - obtained from fish swim bladders.
Beer	
<p>Real ale undergoes a secondary fermentation while it is being stored in the cask. Cask-conditioned ales need fining to clear the material, such as the yeast suspended within the liquid. This is typically done by adding isinglass, which is derived from the swim bladders of fish, to gather up the yeast and make it sink towards the bottom of the cask. May 2010 saw the development by West Midlands brewer, Marston's, developing a new technology making real ale suitable for vegetarians. They developed the idea of using 'beads' of yeast held within a permeable membrane to react with the beer, meaning casks can be moved around more easily and stored upright. Bottled naturally conditioned beers will not always have been treated with isinglass. Keg Beers and Lagers are pasteurised and usually passed through Chill Filters, as are canned beers and some bottled beers, however a considerable number of breweries still use isinglass to clear their pasteurised beers.</p>	
Cider	
<p>Some brands may have been fined using gelatine.</p>	
Wine / Fortified Wine	
<p>Again, animal derived ingredients are used in the processing of wines to improve appearance of the finished product. Non animal alternatives do exist in the form of bentonite (impure clay), kieselguhr (sedimentary rock), kaolin (clay mineral) and silica gel. Also, methods such as centrifuging and filtering are becoming more popular. A large number of organic wines do not use animal derived finings but it is always worth seeking clarification if unsure. Fortified Wines include Port and Sherry. Port for example may be fined using gelatine and sherry should be treated in a similar way to wine.</p>	
Spirits & Liqueurs	
<p>Most spirits appear to be acceptable to vegetarians/vegans as they do not tend to involve the use of animal substances. However, some Malt Whiskies may have matured in sherry casks which had previously held sherry that has been treated with animal derived finings. Brandy itself is not produced from wine which has undergone any fining processes. There are many liqueurs suitable for a vegetarian/vegan diet.</p>	
Colorants	
<p>E120 cochineal is may be used as a colorant in a small number of red wines and soft drinks.</p>	
Vegetarian/Vegan Alcohol Availability	
<p>There is a wide variety available both in supermarkets and online, some of which may already be labelled with the manufacturer's own interpretation of what is suitable for vegetarians/vegans. For a full guarantee of product suitability, the Vegetarian Society approves numerous brands of alcoholic beverages which can be viewed on our approved database www.seedlingshowcase.com. Other good places to look are; Vinceremos Organic Wines - www.vinceremos.co.uk and Veggie Wines (info) - www.veggiewines.co.uk</p>	
<p>Any questions regarding this information sheet please contact info@vegsoc.org Last updated July 2010</p>	