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3 Key Reasons to Switch to Cruelty-Free Vegan Handbags

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You love the look of leather – but you don't love the thought of how a leather handbag is made. Good news: there are myriad faux-leather options that can satisfy your desire for the sleek look of a black, brown, or tan leather handbag, while also allowing you to stay true to your animal welfare ideals.

If you're debating making the switch to [a cruelty-free option](#), you may be wondering whether it's worth the change. Here, we'll explore three key reasons why you'll be able to rest easy knowing you made the right decision by going cruelty-free.

Reason #1: It's not just about the animals – it's about the environment.

That gorgeous, deep brown leather color that so many fashionistas love? It doesn't come naturally. [Most leather is chrome tanned](#).

The process of chrome tanning is so destructive to the environment that it's been outlawed in the United States and Europe. Some countries (such as China) that make a large profit off of manufacturing textiles still use the process before selling their products in countries where chrome tanning has been outlawed.

Leather is an organic material, and without going through the tanning process, it would begin to rot over time. As soon as an animal is slaughtered, the tanning process begins. The skin of the animal is put through a machine that removes hair and flesh. The initial tanning process creates a blue tinge to the hide.

The chrome tanning process requires the leather to be treated with a chemical that creates a distinct, brown color – while also creating carcinogenic wastewater that leeches its way into drinking water systems. While this is a problem anywhere, it's especially problematic for developing countries that may not have resources to determine whether water is safe to drink

Reason #2: Animal skin isn't just a byproduct of the meat industry.

Animal skin is far more expensive than animal meat and turns a much higher profit. When a farmer sells animal skin to a company that produces leather goods, they're making a much larger profit than they make from selling meat. The meat and leather industries are interdependent – when one does well, so does the other. If you choose to purchase leather products, you're furthering the meat industry's profits.

Remember, the farming industry focuses on maximizing the use of slaughtered animals. The industry's actors work to maximize profit. Just like a steak, chicken wings, or fish sticks, leather is an animal product. The fact that other parts of the animal are also being used for profit doesn't justify the slaughter of the animal.

The bottom line is clear: when you choose to purchase leather items, you're supporting the meat industry. Many farmers make more money off of animal hides than they do from selling meat.

Reason #3: Animal welfare matters.

If you eat meat, you likely care about how animals were treated before they made it to your dinner plate.

Sadly, many of the animals used for leather come from areas in which their welfare is not a priority. If you care about animal welfare before you bite into a steak, you need to care about animal welfare before you choose a new handbag as well. It's rare to find animals that are ethically raised for leather.

Another horrifying thought: some animals don't even get the chance to meet their mothers before they're killed for their hides. Newborn calves are often used for leather, as their skin has not been exposed to the elements, and is softer than that of other cows.

Some calves are even cut from their mothers before a natural birth and killed immediately. Others are taken from their mothers within hours of their birth, robbing them of the bonding experience of spending time with their mothers. [Studies have shown](#) that this creates incredible stress for both the mother cow and the calf.

Your best bet? Choose a faux-leather option instead.

You already know that making the switch is the right thing to do – now, it's time to put your money where your mouth is. Happy ethical shopping!

Photo by [Artem Beliaikin](#) from [Pexels](#)

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