

# VegNews



## Whole Foods Co-Founder Opens First Vegan Restaurant Under Love.Life Wellness Brand

John Mackey—who co-founded Whole Foods Market four decades ago—opens the first vegan restaurant of many under his new Love.Life wellness brand.

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Entrepreneur John Mackey is known for his passion for wellness, which led him to co-found Whole Foods Market in 1980 in Austin, TX. Now, the longtime vegan is turning his attention to Love.Life, a new platform that takes an integrative, plant-based approach to wellness. This week, Mackey opened the flagship vegan restaurant under the Love.Life umbrella in Culver City, CA. The new Love.Life restaurant boasts a health-forward menu that combines nutritional science with culinary inspiration.

"I have been passionate about healthy eating since the inception of Whole Foods and believe the food we eat is the most powerful choice we can make when it comes to health," Mackey said in a statement. In 2021, the Love.Life platform acquired Love Life Cafe in Miami in 2021 where it accelerated its research and development for the menu at Love.Life, which is built around local, seasonal, nutrient-dense foods.

"We want to create a different kind of plant-based restaurant that takes things a step further," Michael Robertson, President of the Southern Pacific region at Love.Life, said in a statement. "We're focused on health and are fully transparent, so customers know exactly what they are ordering."





### On the menu at Love.Life

The Love.Life restaurant operates on the same food standards as Whole Foods, but without animal products. This means the menu does not contain hydrogenated fats nor the more than 200 common preservatives, flavors, colors, and additives found in food.

Love.Life opens at 7am as a juice and coffee bar with breakfast options such as overnight oats, warm sandwiches, homemade granola, and açai bowls. Then, from 11am to 10 pm, Love.Life is open for full lunch and dinner service.

At the menu's center is a pizza program built atop a 48-hour cold-fermented whole wheat sourdough crust and hearty vegetable-centric dishes such as Chili-Roasted Whole Cauliflower, Thai Green Curry Bowl, and Mushroom Farro Risotto.

Crafted by Executive Chef Brooks McCarty, the Love.Life menu also boasts colorful dishes that push the health envelope further and include ingredients that are clinically proven to promote benefits. Denoted with an "optimize" icon, these dishes include Beet Tartare, Oyster Mushroom Carnitas Tacos, and Shepherd's Pie.

What would Mackey order at the Love.Life restaurant? "The portion of Love.Life's menu that is dedicated to optimization is my personal favorite," Mackey said.

*"Not only are these dishes super healthy and delicious, they also contain foods that promote longevity and have the potential to improve the health of people who suffer from chronic health conditions," Mackey said.*

Guests are encouraged to scan the QR codes on the menu to gain insight into the nutritional information of each dish, which is crafted without added oils, sodium, and sugar and can be customized to fit dietary needs. Deep-frying is also off-limits at Love.Life.

### The Love. Life vegan wellness platform

The Love.Life restaurant is just one piece of the wellness platform, created to give consumers access to optimal health with a focus on a whole foods, plant-based diet. In 2024, the platform will expand to include additional eateries, along with physical wellness centers.





To support its wellness mission, in March, Love.Life acquired Plant Based TeleHealth, a virtual medical care company, and rebranded it as Love.Life.Telehealth. the new portal is dedicated to helping people lead healthier lives with access to licensed physicians who approach illness and wellness through a lifestyle medicine model—that focuses on fostering healthy habits rather than pharmaceuticals.

As part of the acquisition, Anthony Masiello—Plant Based Telehealth co-founder and CEO—joined the leadership team of Love.Life.Telehealth.

“Whether you’re someone seeking overall wellness, preventative care, or a better path for treating existing conditions, our physicians make achieving personal health goals attainable by looking at the total health of an individual, addressing root cause of disease, and creating an environment where the body can heal,” Masiello said in a statement.

### **Beyond Whole Foods: John Mackey’s new vegan ventures**

Mackey co-founded Whole Foods Market—which was acquired by Amazon in 2017 for \$13.7 billion—during an era marked by the rise of processed convenience foods. After more than 40 years, Mackey left his position as CEO in 2022 to focus on making plant-powered wellness more accessible.

In 2020, Mackey, co-founded Love.Life parent venture Healthy America with other Whole Foods executives, Walter Robb (former co-CEO) and Betsy Foster. Like Whole Foods, Healthy America’s goal is plainly stated in its name.

For Mackey, the telehealth portion of the platform removes geographical limits to accessing plant-based healthcare, giving people with chronic diseases or medical conditions the chance to achieve a happy, healthy, active, and long life.

The new platform is taking patients from all 50 states and Washington, DC who can sign up for 30- and 60-minute appointments (\$175 and \$350, respectively) using its online portal. The plant-based lifestyle medicine platform is also available internationally in 27 countries.





"Our doctors are fantastic, and the collective knowledge of the group is part of what makes our telehealth care so special," Mackey told VegNews. "There are many other services that we will be introducing in the coming months that will enhance the experience for patients, so this is really just the beginning."

Physical Love.Life wellness centers will incorporate the telehealth medical and lifestyle services alongside the Love.Life restaurants to give consumers a chance to experience the benefits of a plant-based diet directly through food.

### **Plant-based diet for optimal health**

While Love.Life.Telehealth addresses the idea of wellness with a holistic approach based on the best available science—which is increasingly pointing to the health benefits of a plant-based diet.

And dietary interventions have been shown to improve many common chronic and debilitating illnesses. When it comes to type 2 diabetes, the most recent study—published last month in medical journal Diabetes Care—found that a low-carbohydrate diet slashed the risk of premature death among people with the illness by 24 percent.

Heart disease has been the leading cause of death in the US since the 1950s with more than 640,000 Americans dying of the illness every year. Numerous studies have linked a plant-based diet to reduced heart disease risk.

And when it comes to overall longevity, a plant-based diet has proven results. A study published in 2022 in PLOS Medicine found that people who follow a plant-based diet, especially early in life, can increase their life expectancy by up to 10 years.

Whole foods-focused diets that are free from animal products have also been associated with improving cholesterol levels, lowering risks of certain cancers, and contributing to gut health, among other benefits.

"Plant Based TeleHealth and Love.Life are both mission-based companies and we're thrilled to be part of an integrated health solution that aspires to move beyond medical care that simply treats symptoms and manages disease with medications," Masiello said.