



Nourishing compassion for our bodies, the earth and all beings.

## Ideas for Simple, Plant-Powered Meal Choices

It is sometimes a daunting task to think of new food choices when making the decision to start eating a more plant-centered diet. Check out some of these ideas for simple meal choices.

### BREAKFAST

- Hot cereal or oatmeal with cinnamon, raisins, chopped fruit, nuts or applesauce. A touch of cardamom or pumpkin pie spice makes it exotic tasting!
- Leftover whole grain (brown rice, wheat berries, millet, quinoa) warmed with soy or almond milk, cinnamon, and sweetener (maple syrup, agave nectar, raisins). Add fruit and/or nuts.
- All-Bran or muesli with soy or rice milk and/or berries, peach, or banana.
- Blueberries, apples, strawberries, bananas, oranges or other fruit. Keep frozen berries on hand for fast prep.
- Pumpernickel or rye or whole-grain toast, topped with fruit-only jam (no butter or margarine) or a small amount of peanut butter, with a piece of fruit.
- Fruit smoothie with frozen fruit, banana, spinach or kale, and vanilla. Tofu or chia seeds may be added for extra protein.
- Leftover, baked sweet potato/yam, warmed in microwave and a bowl of blueberries and soy milk.
- Lightly steamed broccoli and tofu, with a piece of fresh fruit.

#### ***If you like extra protein:***

- Occasional low-fat or fat-free meat substitutes (e.g., Gimme Lean fat-free “sausage” or “bacon”)
- Burrito filled with “refried” beans, lettuce, tomato, and salsa (no egg or cheese).
- Tofu scrambler made with tofu, red or green bell pepper, onions, turmeric, and soy sauce.

### LUNCH

- Salads
  - Veggie salad with some nuts or seeds, a whole grain added (quinoa or brown rice are great choices), and some of your favorite beans, topped with a homemade dressing.
  - Garden salad with lemon juice, low-fat dressing, or soy or teriyaki sauce.
  - Legume-based salads: three-bean, chickpea, lentil, tofu or black bean and corn salads.
  - Grain-based salads: whole-wheat noodle, whole-wheat couscous, bulgur, wheat berry or brown rice salads with veggies added.
  - Commercial, bagged salad brands are fine, but look for the fat-free or no-added-fat versions if the dressing comes with them.
- Soups
  - Vegetable-based soups: carrot-ginger, mixed vegetable, mushroom-barley, etc.
  - Legume-based soups: black bean, vegetarian chili, spinach lentil, minestrone, split pea, etc.
  - Instant or prepared soups (as long as they are low-fat and free of animal products).
- Sandwiches/Wraps/Tortilla Meals
  - Black bean dip, peppers, tomatoes, and lettuce wrapped in a whole-wheat tortilla.
  - CLT: cucumber, lettuce, and tomato sandwich with Dijon mustard on pumpernickel, whole wheat or rye bread.
  - Hummus tucked into a whole-wheat pita with grated carrots, sprouts, and cucumbers.
  - Black bean and sweet potato burrito with corn and tomatoes.



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- Sandwich made with fat-free meat alternatives such as barbequed seitan, Lightlife Smart Deli turkey style, or Yves brand veggie pepperoni slices and your favorite sandwich veggies such as tomatoes, shredded carrots, and sprouts. Pumppernickel, rye, or whole-grain breads are preferred. Avoid breads that contain eggs, milk, or butter.
- Black bean or other refried beans (low-fat or no-fat) with red onions and sliced red cabbage, scooped up with baked corn tortilla pieces.
- Fresh fruit or dried fruit with a piece of dark chocolate or some nuts are great for dessert.

## DINNER

Emphasize a combination of vegetables, legumes (beans, lentils, or peas), and whole grains in all your meals. For many, the evening meal is a good place to try new items. Typically you might start with a bean, combine it with rice or other grain or potatoes, and add a couple of raw or cooked vegetables. After you've experimented with different simple combinations, if you have more time you may move on to using recipes for more complex combinations such as a bean and veggie lasagna.

- **Simple Combinations:** Take one item from each of the legume and starch lists, and add your favorite veggies in some combination. Toss these in a large bowl and add your favorite plant-based topping of salsa, hummus, low-fat dressing, soy sauce, or other sauce.
  - **Legumes:** Use generous amounts of legumes - pintos, vegetarian refried beans, black or kidney beans, garbanzos, lentils, or black-eyed peas.
  - **Starches**
    - Whole grains: whole-wheat pasta, brown rice, whole-wheat couscous, or quinoa.
    - Potatoes: Favor sweet potatoes and yams, but red or white potatoes are still good choices.
  - **Vegetables:** Try any vegetables you like. Be adventurous and try new veggies. Eat them steamed, roasted with herbs, or fresh.
- **Main Dishes:**
  - *Pasta marinara:* Some commercial sauces are fine (any brand that has less than 2 grams fat per serving and is free of animal products).
  - *Beans and rice:* Try black beans with salsa, vegetarian baked beans, or fat-free refried beans. Combine with brown rice. Add whatever plant-based, flavored topping you like.
  - *Soft tacos:* Prepare this dish with a flour tortilla, beans, lettuce, tomato, and salsa. For extra flavor add in some fresh basil or shredded red cabbage.
  - *Fajitas:* Lightly sauté sliced bell peppers, onion, and zucchini in a nonstick pan, and add some fajita seasonings. Firm tofu may be added, if you wish. Serve in whole-wheat or corn tortillas.
  - *Chili:* Make your own veggie chili or buy some boxed or canned versions.
  - *Vegetable stir-fry:* Season with soy sauce or other low-fat stir-fry sauce. Use a nonstick pan to reduce oil needed. Serve over pasta, beans, or brown rice.
  - *Vegan burgers:* Look for lentil burgers or other commercial brands, without cheese. Eat on a whole-wheat bun. Black bean burgers are great, and the typical mustard, ketchup, lettuce,

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tomatoes and red onion top them off wonderfully. Salsa is also great on them.

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