

Health Benefits of Plant-based Proteins

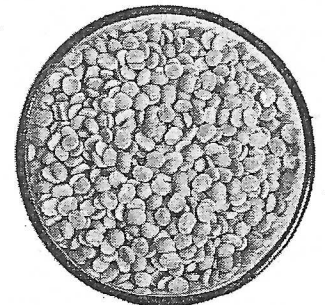
Plant-based protein options are broad and include an array of foods from whole to highly processed. The less processed the option you choose, the more health benefits are likely conveyed. Whole plant foods that are high in protein include beans, peas, soy, lentils, tofu, nuts, and seeds, among others. However, those eating a plant-based diet get protein from a variety of unsuspecting sources such as whole grains and vegetables.

All of these plant sources of protein also contain other healthful nutrients such as low-glycemic index carbohydrates, fiber, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and other phytonutrients. Nuts, in particular, are not only a good source of protein but also healthy fats such as omega-3 fatty acids. In contrast, animal sources of protein, particularly red and processed meats, are higher in unhealthy fats and cholesterol, contain no fiber, and lower levels of most vitamins. Processed meats are also high in sodium and classified as IARC Group 1, carcinogenic to humans.¹

Observational data suggests that legume consumption is associated with better weight management and lipid profiles, potentially due to high fiber content.² Replacing meat with plant-based protein at meals is an easy way to increase vegetable and fiber consumption while limiting intake of red and processed meat. In addition, plant-based protein is often less expensive than purchasing meat and has a much lower environmental impact. When possible, choose whole plant food protein options over highly processed meat analogs which tend to be higher in saturated fat and sodium, while also having a greater environmental impact, than their whole plant food counterparts. (See Introduction section on “Sustainability and Health” for additional information on how dietary choices impact environmental health.)

Eating a varied diet of whole, plant foods provides all needed protein and essential amino acids (i.e., protein building blocks that our bodies cannot make and must consume). While individual plant foods contain varying levels of essential amino acids, this is of no health concern for those eating a whole food, plant-based diet. Anyone consuming sufficient calories from a variety of plant foods including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds also consumes sufficient quantities of protein and required amounts of all essential amino acids.³

1. Bouvard V, Loomis D, Guyton KZ, et al. Carcinogenicity of consumption of red and processed meat. *The Lancet Oncology*. 2015;16(16):1599-1600. 10.1016/s1470-2045(15)00444-1.
2. Polak R, Phillips EM, Campbell A. Legumes: Health benefits and culinary approaches to increase intake. *Clin Diabetes*. 2015;33(4):198-205. 10.2337/diaclin.33.4.198.
3. Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Vegetarian diets. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2016;116:1970-1980.



Amount of Calcium in Non-dairy & Dairy Foods

Non-dairy foods, Serving size	Calcium (mg)	Calories
Fortified ready-to-eat cereals (various), 1 ounce	236-1043	88-106
Soy milk, calcium fortified, 1 cup	368	98
Sardines, canned in oil, drained, 3 ounce	325	177
Tofu, firm, ½ cup	253	88
Tempeh, 3 ounces	100	170
Collard greens, cooked, ½ cup	178	31
Molasses, blackstrap, 1 Tablespoon	172	47
Spinach, cooked from frozen, ½ cup	146	30
Soybeans, green, cooked, ½ cup	130	127
Bok choy, mustard greens, or turnip greens, cooked, ½ cup	158	24
Ocean perch, cooked, 3 ounces	116	103
Oatmeal, plain, instant, fortified, 1 packet prepared	99-110	97-157
Black-eyed Peas/Cowpeas, cooked, ½ cup	106	80
White beans, canned, ½ cup	96	153
Broccoli, cooked, 1 cup	62	54
Kale, cooked from frozen, ½ cup	90	20
Okra, cooked from frozen, ½ cup	88	26
Soybeans, mature, cooked, ½ cup	88	149
Almond butter, 2 Tablespoons	86	202
Almonds, 1 ounce or 2 Tablespoons	83	202
Clams, fresh or canned, 3 oz	78	126
Dandelion greens, cooked from fresh, ½ cup	74	17
Pinto beans, cooked, 1/2 cup	40	122
Black beans, cooked, 1/2 cup	24	140

Dairy foods, Standard serving	Calcium (mg)	Calories
Plain yogurt, non-fat, 6-oz container	334	100
Ricotta cheese, part skim, ½ cup	335	170
Mozzarella cheese, part-skim, 1 ounce	208	90
Cheddar cheese, 1 ounce	205	90
Fat-free (skim) milk, 1 cup	306	83
Whole milk, 1 cup	276	146
Queso añejo, crumbled, 1 ounce	190	100

How to Cook Beans—A variety of options

If you ask 10 seasoned cooks how to prepare beans, you'll probably get 10 different answers. There are many ways to successfully cook beans. A few tried, and true, methods follow.

To Soak or Not to Soak:

Soaking beans overnight before cooking helps reduce cooking time and save energy, but it is not necessary. The length of time to soak beans doesn't have to be precise—several hours on the countertop to a few days in the fridge both work as well as soaking overnight. To soak beans ahead of cooking, rinse beans and pick out any debris. Place desired quantity of beans in a container that has room for them to triple in size, fill with water, and cover. If soaking longer than overnight, place in the refrigerator. There is much debate over whether it is better to use the soaking water for cooking or discard it and cook in fresh water—neither option is right or wrong.

The Quick Soak Method:

This is an alternative to the soaking method to that described above. After rinsing beans and picking out debris, place desired quantity of beans in a pot that has at least 4 times the amount of space required for the dry beans. Cover beans with a couple inches (or more) of water, bring to a boil for 2 minutes, turn off heat, cover and allow to stand for 2 hours. Then, proceed with cooking below just as you would with beans soaked overnight.

Cooking Method #1: Boiling on the Stove Top:

Place soaked or rinsed, dry beans in a pot that has room for soaked beans to expand somewhat and dry beans to triple or quadruple in size. Cover soaked beans with 1-2 inches of water (or cooking liquid) or dry beans with a few inches of water. Bring to a boil, and then reduce heat so that liquid is gently simmering. Cook uncovered or partially covered until beans are tender.

Cooking Method #2: Slow Cooker:

It is best to use soaked beans for cooking in a slow cooker or they will take far too long to cook. Soaked beans can generally be cooked on high for 4 hours or low for 8 hours in a slow cooker. Putting them on low to cook right before bed so that they're done when you wake up is a great time-saving tip. Avoid cooking kidney beans in a slow cooker. This is because kidney beans contain a high level of a toxic protein called phytohemagglutinin that requires boiling for at least 15 minutes (though the USDA recommends at least 30 minutes) to reduce to undetectable levels and allow safe eating. This is not a concern with other beans. Slow cookers often don't cook at high enough temperatures to eliminate this toxic protein.

Cooking Method #3: Pressure Cooker:

There are two main types of pressure cookers—stovetop and electric. The former generally cooks at higher temperatures and faster than the latter. Because pressure cookers vary from model to model, it is best to follow the instructions for cooking beans that came with your particular unit. Soaked or unsoaked beans of any type can be safely cooked in a pressure cooker. However, soaked beans cook more quickly and are more likely to stay intact, while unsoaked beans tend to split apart in a pressure cooker. For kidney beans, make sure to use the high-pressure (generally 15 psi) setting to ensure they are safe to eat. You will need at least a 6-quart pressure cooker to cook 1 pound of dry beans.

How to Cook Beans—A variety of options (continued)

How to tell when beans are done:

Beans are done cooking when they are tender in the center and do not taste overly starchy or gritty. However, they should not be cooked so long that they are all falling apart. To get all beans completely cooked, some will generally fall apart. Just make sure they're not all mushy (unless that's what you want!).

Salting beans:

As mentioned elsewhere in the curriculum, from a health perspective, it is best to minimize salt use and cook beans without salting. From a culinary perspective, salt is used to enhance the flavor of beans. However, there is a lot of debate about whether or not to add salt when cooking beans or only during the last few minutes cooking, owing mainly to the (erroneous) concern that salt may prolong cooking time. Either is fine. Adding salt earlier in cooking doesn't actually prolong cooking to any significant degree and can help season them more fully.

Avoid adding acids early:

Do NOT add acidic ingredients—this includes tomato products—until beans are done or nearly done as acid toughens the skins and prolongs cooking.

How to amplify flavors:

To amplify the flavor in beans, add dried or fresh herbs or spices and other aromatics while cooking. A common combination is onion, carrot, celery, bay leaf, thyme, and peppercorns. These flavoring ingredients can be discarded or eaten with the beans, with the exception of bay leaves and whole peppercorns, which should always be discarded.

Food safety:

Make sure not to just transfer a large, hot pot of beans to the fridge after cooking as it will not cool quickly enough to ensure food safety. This is also true of large pots of other hot dishes, like soups. Divide up into smaller containers to refrigerate or freeze for later use. Also, avoid cooking kidney beans in slow cookers as described above.

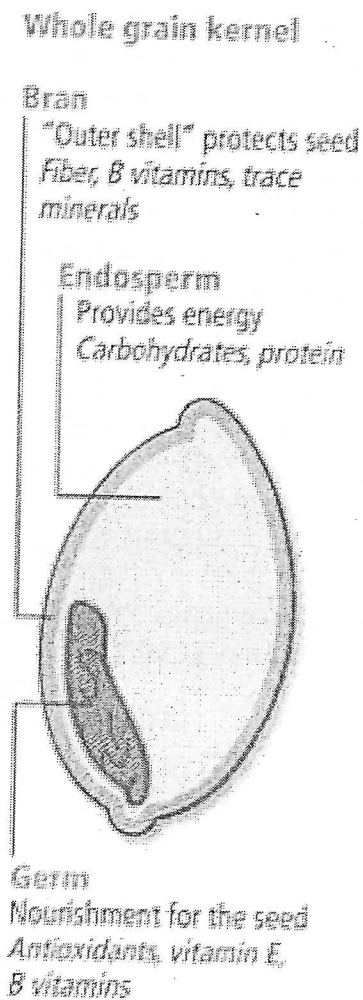
Using dry beans in place of canned:

A pound of dried beans usually yields 5-6 cups of cooked beans. This is equivalent to nearly 4 cans of store-bought beans. Since a pound of dry beans often sells for about the price of a can of cooked beans, dry beans are about $\frac{1}{4}$ the price. Additionally, it is much easier to control the amount of salt in a dish using dry versus canned beans as most canned beans contain high levels of sodium.

Storing cooked beans and tips for later use:

Cooked beans can be stored in the refrigerator for about 5 days or frozen for months. To make it easy to cook beans ahead and for quick use another day, drain cooked beans and divide into 1-1/2 cup portions for freezing using your choice of container or storage bag. This is the amount of beans found in a typical 14.5 ounce can. You can remove a container of frozen beans and replace 1:1 for canned beans in recipes this way. It is fine to put frozen beans directly into a soup or stew without thawing. If you want to make cold preparation, like a salad or hummus, you can soak frozen beans in warm water to thaw quickly.

What Is a Whole Grain?



Grain is a term encompassing a large group of plant foods including oats, wheat, quinoa, brown rice, barley, and rye, among others. A whole grain is a grain that has not been processed to remove the nutrient-rich parts of the grain. In the processing or refining of whole grains, the carbohydrate and calorie-dense part of the grain is isolated by removing the fiber-rich, bran coating and vitamin-rich germ, leaving only the starchy endosperm. This is how processed grains, such as white flour and white rice, are produced.

Parts of a whole grain:

The technical definition of a whole grain is a grain with all three parts of the grain included: bran, germ, and endosperm.

Bran is the outermost layer of the grain kernel, and contains antioxidants, B vitamins, and soluble or insoluble fiber, depending on the grain. Bran is typically removed in the processing of refined grains.

Germ is another layer of the grain kernel. Germ contains more B vitamins, as well as protein, minerals, fats, and antioxidants.

Endosperm is the core of the grain and the largest portion. It contains primarily carbohydrates, but also some protein, vitamins, and minerals.

Refined grains have been processed, typically to include only the endosperm. Because most of the slow-digesting fiber has been removed, refined grains have a higher glycemic load and cause a higher and faster spike in blood glucose and insulin following a meal than their lower glycemic load, whole grain counterparts. The hyper-palatability of processed grains, which lack filling fiber, may also make them easier to overconsume. Additionally, many nutrients and vitamins are lost in the removal of the germ and bran, making refined grains and

flour more calorie-dense but less nutrient-dense. Many governments enrich refined grains by adding back some of the lost nutrients, such as folate, that are known to be essential to health. However, it is impossible to fully replace all of the nutrients lost in processing. A more healthful choice is to consume grains as whole grains.

Beware of food labels. "Whole grain" is a term you will see on many food labels, especially ultra-processed foods whose packages include health claims. Be wary and check the ingredients. Oftentimes, these processed foods contain a mixture of refined and whole grains, with whole grains making up only a minority of the total grain content. Other foods might be labeled as "100% whole grain", but may also be high in added sugars—granola is a common example of this.

What Is a Whole Grain?

Terms commonly mistaken as “whole grain.” Some whole grain products have different names based on the type of grain. Most flour in the United States is made from wheat, therefore you may see the term “whole wheat” on a label. Processed wheat flour is often called “enriched wheat flour.” Generally, the adjectives “whole” and “brown” are only placed before grains that are commonly sold both refined and whole, such as wheat or rice. Others that are typically sold only as whole grain products, such as quinoa or millet, don’t include these adjectives. Another term that often appears on packaged food labels is “multi-grain,” which refers to the use of more than one type of grain. For example, a bread including corn, oats, and rice might be sold as multi-grain bread. Multi-grain is not synonymous with the term whole grain and doesn’t indicate whether the grains used are refined or not.

Whole grains are healthier than flours made from whole grains. Although processed foods made with whole grains may offer more nutrition and fiber than processed foods made with only refined flours, the act of processing results in a less nutritious food compared with one made with grains in their intact, unprocessed form. For example, whole wheat flour is a better choice than enriched wheat flour, but an intact whole grain, like wheat berries, would be a superior choice. Whenever possible, try to choose whole grains in their least processed form. Try making oat groats or steel cut oats for breakfast instead of instant oatmeal or cook brown rice to accompany a meal instead of white rice. By cooking whole grains at home, you also have more control over other added ingredients and can substantially limit added sugars and sodium.

Cooking Chart for 1 Cup* of Dry, Whole Grains

1 Cup* Dry Whole Grain	Water**	Cooking Time (unsoaked)	Soaked overnight	Yield**	Standing time
RICE (all gluten-free)					
Brown Rice (Long, medium or short grain; Basmati; Jasmine, Texmati, Sweet brown)	1-3/4 cups	35-40 min.		3 cups	10 min.
Wehani rice (red rice)	1-3/4 cups	35-40 min.		3 cups	10 min.
Wild Rice	2-1/2 to 2-3/4 cups	50-55 min.			10 min.
Forbidden rice	1-1/2 to 1-3/4 cups	30 min.		3 cups	10 min.
OTHER GRAINS					
Quinoa (gluten-free)	1-3/4 cups	12-15 min.		3-1/2 cups	(fluff first) 10 min.
<i>Amaranth</i> (gluten-free)	2 to 2-1/2 cups	20 - 25 min.		3-3 1/2 cups	10 min.
Teff (gluten-free)	3-1/2 to 3-3/4 cups	15 min.		3 cups	(fluff first) 10 min.
Millet (gluten-free)	2-1/4 to 2-1/2 cups	25-30 min.		4 cups	(fluff first) 10 min.
Buckwheat, groats, roasted (gluten-free)	1-3/4 to 2 cups	20 min.		3 1/2 cups	10 min.
Barley, hulled	3 to 3-1/2 cups	60 min.		3 1/2-4 cups	10 min.
Barley, pearled	3 to 3-1/2 cups	60 min.		3 1/2-4 cups	10 min.
Kamut*	2-1/2 to 3 cups	90 min.	30-45 min.	2 3/4 cups	10 min.
Oat groats*	1-1/2 to 2 cups	1 hour	35 min.	2 1/2 cups	10 min.
Rye, berries	3 to 3-1/2 cups	1-1/2 hours		3 cups	10 min.
Spelt*	2-1/2 to 3 cups	1-1/2 to 2 hrs	45 min.	2 1/2 cups	10 min.
Wheat Berries, Hard (Red)	2-1/2 to 3 cups	1-1/2 to 2 hrs		3 cups	10 min.
Wheat Berries, Soft (White)	2-1/2 to 3 cups	1 hour		3 cups	10 min.
Bulgur (alternate: steep - see below)	1-3/4 cups	10 min.		3 cups	10 min.
Wheat, cracked	2-3/4 cups	20 min.		3 cups	10 min.
GRAINS THAT CAN STEEP (don't rinse, just stir in boiling water, cover and rest for time given for "standing.")					
Couscous, whole wheat	1-1/4 to 1-1/2 cups	1 min.		2 1/2 cups	10 min.
Bulgur	2 cups boiling water			3 cups	1 hour

*1 cup uncooked, dry, whole grains weighs approximately 170-185 g; **1 cup water is measures ~240 ml or ~0.25 L by volume; ***1 cup cooked grain weighs ~200 g and bv volume measures about 0.25 L

Cooking Chart for 1 Cup* of Dry, Whole Grains

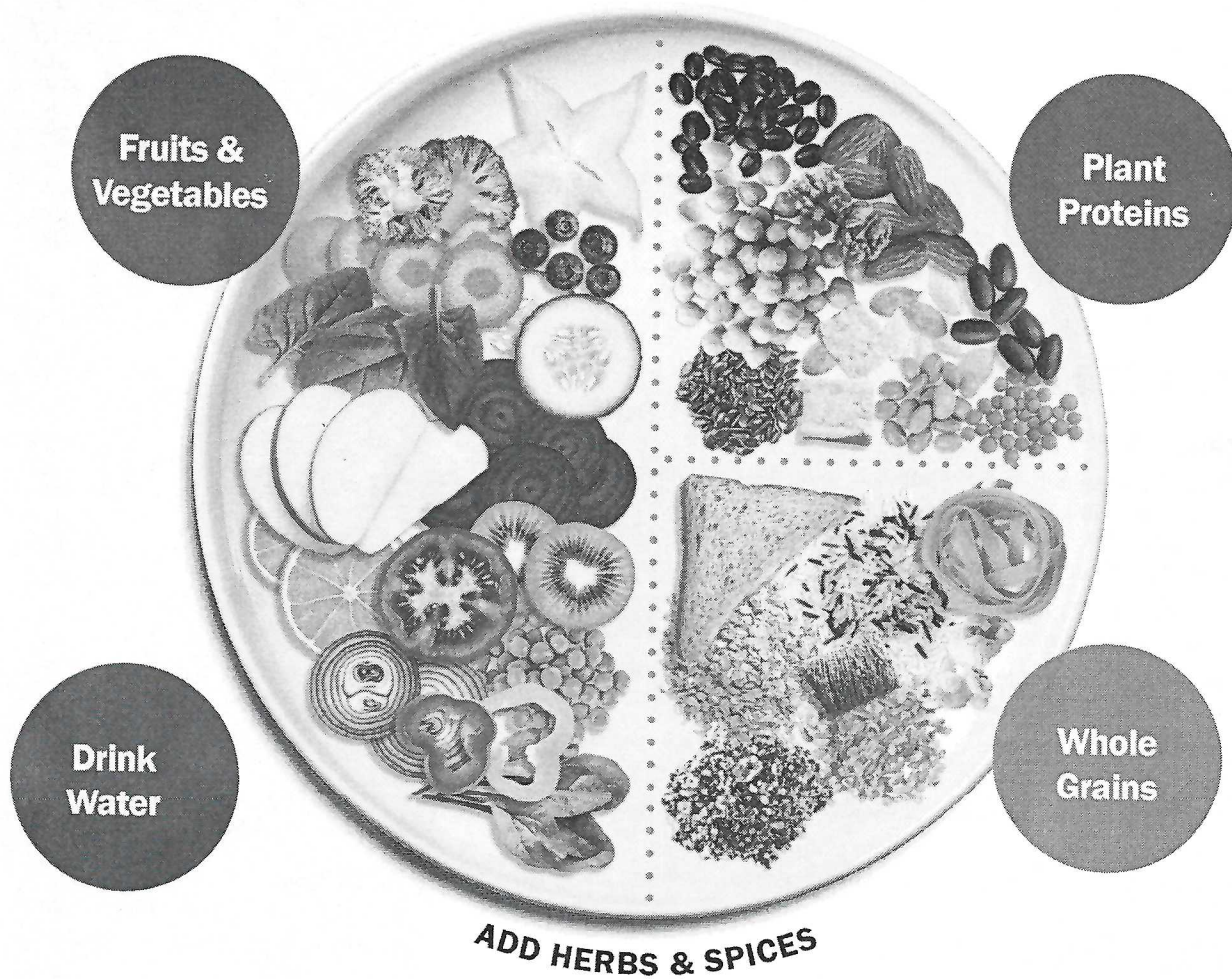
1 Cup* Dry Whole Grain	Water**	Cooking Time (unsoaked)	Soaked overnight	Yield**	Standing time
RICE (all gluten-free)					
Brown Rice (Long, medium or short grain; Basmati; Jasmine, Texmati, Sweet brown)	1-3/4 cups	35-40 min.		3 cups	10 min.
Wehani rice (red rice)	1-3/4 cups	35-40 min.		3 cups	10 min.
Wild Rice	2-1/2 to 2-3/4 cups	50-55 min.			10 min.
Forbidden rice	1-1/2 to 1-3/4 cups	30 min.		3 cups	10 min.
OTHER GRAINS					
Quinoa (gluten-free)	1-3/4 cups	12-15 min.		3-1/2 cups	(fluff first) 10 min.
<i>Amaranth</i> (gluten-free)	2 to 2-1/2 cups	20 - 25 min.		3-3 1/2 cups	10 min.
Teff (gluten-free)	3-1/2 to 3-3/4 cups	15 min.		3 cups	(fluff first) 10 min.
Millet (gluten-free)	2-1/4 to 2-1/2 cups	25-30 min		4 cups	(fluff first) 10 min
Buckwheat, groats, roasted (gluten-free)	1-3/4 to 2 cups	20 min.		3 1/2 cups	10 min.
Barley, hulled	3 to 3-1/2 cups	60 min.		3 1/2-4 cups	10 min.
Barley, pearled	3 to 3-1/2 cups	60 min.		3 1/2-4 cups	10 min.
Kamut*	2-1/2 to 3 cups	90 min.	30-45 min.	2 3/4 cups	10 min.
Oat groats*	1-1/2 to 2 cups	1 hour	35 min.	2 1/2 cups	10 min.
Rye, berries	3 to 3-1/2 cups	1-1/2 hours		3 cups	10 min.
Spelt*	2-1/2 to 3 cups	1-1/2 to 2 hrs	45 min.	2 1/2 cups	10 min.
Wheat Berries, Hard (Red)	2-1/2 to 3 cups	1-1/2 to 2 hrs		3 cups	10 min.
Wheat Berries, Soft (White)	2-1/2 to 3 cups	1 hour		3 cups	10 min.
Bulgur (alternate: steep - see below)	1-3/4 cups	10 min.		3 cups	10 min.
Wheat, cracked	2-3/4 cups	20 min.		3 cups	10 min.
GRAINS THAT CAN STEEP (don't rinse, just stir in boiling water, cover and rest for time given for "standing.")					
Couscous, whole wheat	1-1/4 to 1-1/2 cups	1 min.		2 1/2 cups	10 min.
Bulgur	2 cups boiling water			3 cups	1 hour

*1 cup uncooked, dry, whole grains weighs approximately 170-185 g; **1 cup water is measures ~240 ml or ~0.25 L by volume; ***1 cup cooked grain weighs ~200 g and by volume measures about 0.25 L

A WHOLE FOOD, PLANT-BASED PLATE

Nutrition Prescription for Treating & Reversing Chronic Disease

The American College of Lifestyle Medicine Dietary Lifestyle Position Statement for Treatment and Potential Reversal of Disease: ACLM recommends an eating plan based predominantly on a variety of minimally processed vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds.



Include a wide array of fiber-filled, nutrient-dense, and antioxidant-rich whole plant foods at every meal. Use a variety of herbs and spices to enhance flavors.

- **Focus on whole fruits and vegetables and eat a rainbow of color.**

Vegetables: Dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, arugula, etc.), broccoli, squash, zucchini, carrots, tomatoes, beets, peppers, mushrooms, onions, celery, cauliflower, cucumbers, white & sweet potatoes, green peas, cabbage, whole plant fats (avocados, olives), and more.

Fruits: Apples, bananas, grapes, citrus fruit, berries, peaches, pears, pineapple, kiwi, plums, watermelon, starfruit, mangoes, just to name a few.

- **Drink water for hydration.**

- **Eat a variety of plant protein.**

Legumes: Peas and beans, including kidney beans, pinto beans, white beans, black beans, lima beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas and lentils, edamame, tofu.

Nuts and seeds: Almonds, pistachios, walnuts, pecans, nut butters, pumpkin/sunflower/chia/flax seeds, and more.

- **Choose whole grains.**

Amaranth, barley, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, popcorn, rye, quinoa, whole oats, whole grain bread/tortillas/cereals/flours, to name a few.



TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED ON A WHOLE FOOD, PLANT-BASED DIET

Take your journey to a healthy lifestyle step-by-step.

- **STEP 1: Enjoy** – Keep plant-based meals you already enjoy in your meal rotation.
- **STEP 2: Adapt** – Give your favorite recipes a plant-based makeover.
- **STEP 3: Explore** – Begin incorporating new plant-based foods into each week.

Plan ahead.

- Use meal planning apps or a simple calendar to plan meals in advance.
- Set aside time to batch prepare ingredients so meals can be thrown together quickly on busy weeknights. Pre-chop vegetables and cook large portions of grains and beans.

Make the 'healthy choice' the easy choice.

- Keep fresh produce in a bowl on the counter and at eye-level in the fridge so it is the first thing you reach for when wanting a snack.
- Stock your pantry with staple ingredients that can be assembled into a quick meal.

Work with a Registered Dietitian to assist in transitioning to a 100% plant-based dietary lifestyle, the health-protecting, disease-fighting prescription.

© 2019, American College of Lifestyle Medicine. All rights reserved. Terms of use on www.lifestylemedicine.org.

Game plan for eating away from home and traveling.

- Check menus ahead of time. Pair side dishes together to create a hearty meal.
- Ask if the kitchen is willing to make a dish with vegetables, beans and whole grains.
- When traveling, pack your own meals or stop at grocery stores instead of fast food.

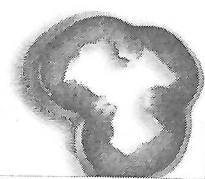
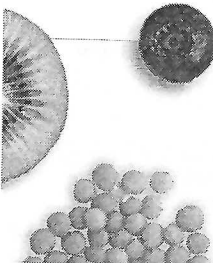
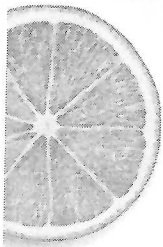
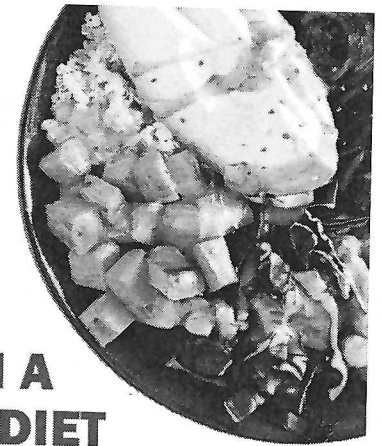
Include the entire family.

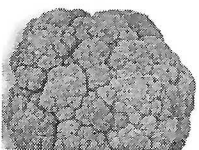
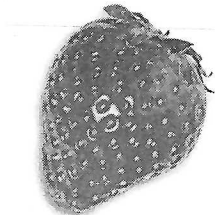
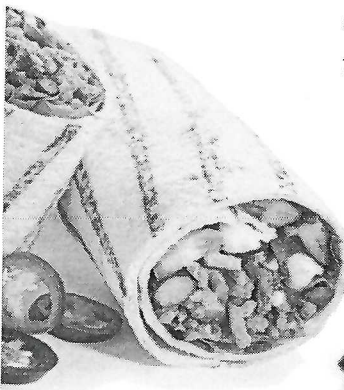
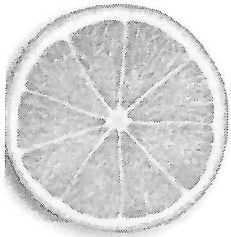
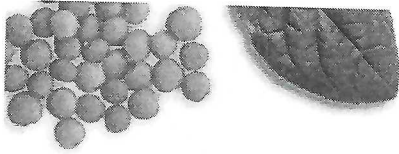
- Allow children to pick a new fruit or vegetable to try each week.
- Start a tomato plant on the porch and have children water and take care of it.
- Assign age-appropriate kitchen tasks to everyone in the family.

Set goals each week on your journey to improved nutrition.

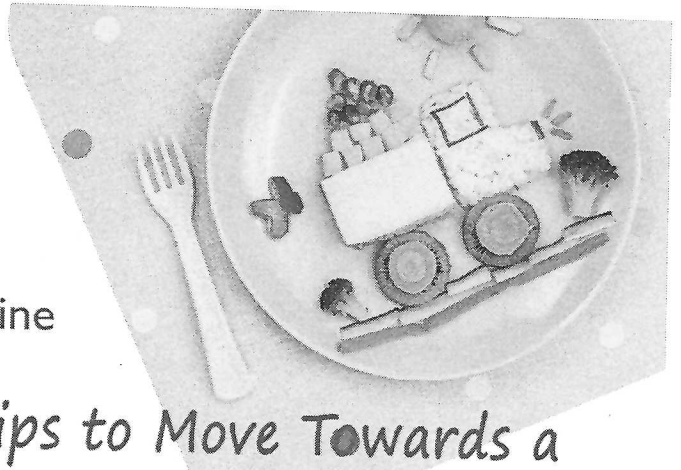
- Identify specific, measurable and attainable steps you can take each week. Instead of "eat more vegetables," set a SMART goal to "make half your dinner plate vegetables five nights this week."
- Celebrate success each and every step of the way!

lifestylemedicine.org





AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
Lifestyle Medicine



Kid-Friendly Tips to Move Towards a Whole Food, Plant-Based Eating Plan

Take your family's journey to a healthy lifestyle step-by-step.

- Identify plant-based foods your family already enjoys like apple slices or bean burritos, and serve them more often.
- Gradually introduce your family to new foods by pairing them with familiar favorites.

Make the healthy choice the easy choice.

- Keep fresh produce in a bowl on the counter and at eye-level in the fridge so it is the first thing you and your kids reach for when wanting a snack.
- Stock your pantry with staple ingredients that can be assembled into a quick meal.



Get your children involved.

- Allow children to pick a new fruit or vegetable to try each week.
- Start a tomato plant on the porch and have children water and take care of it.
- Assign age-appropriate kitchen tasks to everyone in the family.

lifestylemedicine.org

© 2019, American College of Lifestyle Medicine. All rights reserved. Terms of use on www.lifestylemedicine.org.

Have fun!

- Share the plate illustration with kids, and help them assemble their plate to match.
- Come up with fun, creative names for foods, like "power peas," "dinosaur tree broccoli," "x-ray vision carrots."

Lead by example.

- All eyes are on you! If children see you trying and eating certain foods, they will be more likely to try them too.
- Turn off screens and put away electronic devices during meals to make it a calmer environment and a time to reconnect about the day's activities.

Work with a Registered Dietitian to understand how to adopt a plant-predominant dietary lifestyle—one that's optimal for growing bodies that sets the course for a health-filled lifetime.



Cuban Black Beans

Enjoy these flavorful black beans over rice, grains, baked sweet potatoes, or wrapped in a burrito. Blend to make soup. Top with chopped fresh vegetables and herbs as desired. So much better than canned beans! Gluten free, dairy free, and vegan.

Servings

10 SERVINGS

Prep Time

25 MINUTES

Ingredients

- 1 pound dried black beans 1 3/4 cups dried or 4 cups cooked
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 6 cups water
- 1 medium red onion
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 medium bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons dried ground cumin
- 3/4 teaspoon dried crushed oregano
- 3/4 teaspoon dried ground chipotle or cayenne
- 2 medium bell peppers
- tomatoes or bell peppers diced, optional topping
- Creamy Cilantro Dressing optional topping
- hot sauce optional topping

Instructions

1. Pick through beans, removing any stones or twigs, and rinse well. Put beans, salt, and water in a slow cooker or a medium pot on the stove, stir, and cover. Soak beans for up to twelve hours if you have time. Soaking for even a few hours saves cooking time and energy. Add onion, garlic, and spices just before you turn on the heat. You can add the bell peppers now too if you like, but I wait so they keep their shape better. See my master recipe and video on how to cook dried beans to find the right mix of cooking styles and soaking to fit your schedule.
2. About an hour before the beans should be done, bite a few to check for tenderness. When beans give but are still crispy, stir bell peppers into beans. Cover and simmer for another hour, until beans and peppers are tender.

3. Remove bay leaves. Serve over rice or sweet potatoes, wrap in a burrito, or whirl into a soup. Optionally, top with diced tomatoes, peppers, Creamy Cilantro Dressing, or salsa. Keeps refrigerated for a week or frozen for a year.

Recipe Notes

- You can cook Cuban Black Beans in a pressure cooker too, with or without soaking. Put beans and all other ingredients in the pressure cooker. Cook following the manufacturer's instructions for dried beans. After releasing pressure, go to step 3 above.
- Always count bay leaves when you put them in so you know how many to take out, especially if you will be making soup or serving children or the visually impaired.
- This recipe is an updated version of one from my book *Wildly Affordable Organic*. I've upped the quantity of beans so this recipe now makes a pound at a time, switched to red onions, tinkered with the spices, simplified the instructions, and added the nutritional information. Yum either way!

Nutritional Information

The nutrition label is for one serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Cuban Black Beans	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 151	Calories from Fat 4
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0.4g	1%
Saturated Fat 0.1g	1%
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.1g	
Monounsaturated Fat 0.1g	
Sodium 579mg	24%
Potassium 129mg	4%
Total Carbohydrates 33g	11%
Dietary Fiber 8g	32%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 10g	20%
Vitamin A	29%
Vitamin C	129%
Calcium	8%
Iron	18%

Building Healthy Bowls

Steps:

- 1) **Pick a whole grain**
- 2) **Pick a bean**
 - a. Can be plain, cooked beans, seasoned beans, or beans turned into a dip (e.g., like hummus). Alternatively, try the “Create Your Own Veggie Burgers and Patties” recipe.
- 3) **Pick produce toppings**
 - a. Think about raw, roasted, steamed, or sautéed veggies and fresh or dried fruit.
- 4) **Pick a sauce or dressing (see below)**
 - a. Remember that if you choose a fat-free dressing option, add nuts, seeds, avocado, or olives to make sure you absorb the fat-soluble vitamins in the dish.
- 5) **Optional—add other flavoring ingredients.**
 - a. These could include fresh or dried herbs and spices, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, etc.
- 6) **Assemble attractively in a bowl and enjoy!**

Sauces & Dressings

The following are sauces/dressings using flavor profiles from around the world that can be used to pull together simple, healthy, but delicious bean and whole grain bowls. However, any dressing from the “Vinaigrettes, Lower-oil, and No-oil Dressings” handout would work beautifully for a bowl.

Creamy Balsamic Dressing (no-oil)

- 1 small clove garlic, minced
 - ¼ cup (60 ml) balsamic vinegar
 - 1 ½ tsp (7.5 ml) white or light miso
 - ¼ cup (60 ml) water, or more to adjust taste, consistency
 - ¼ cup (60 ml) mashed silken tofu
 - 1 small date or 1 tsp (5 ml) liquid sweetener, optional, if needed to adjust sweetness (a must for cheaper, younger balsamic vinegars; unnecessary for higher quality and aged varieties)
 - ½ tsp (2.5 ml) Dijon mustard, optional
 - Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Add ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth. Season to taste.

Lemon Tahini Dressing (no-oil)

- ¼ cup (60 ml) tahini (roasted, if possible)
 - 1 tbsp (15 ml) maple syrup
 - Juice of 1 large lemon (about 3 tbsp [45 ml] juice)
 - ½ tsp (2.5 ml) salt
 - ½ tsp (2.5 ml) garlic powder (or 1 clove garlic, grated)
 - ⅛ tsp (0.6 ml) cayenne pepper
 - 3 tbsp (45 ml) water to thin, as needed
- Blend, whisk or shake all ingredients together. I like to make this in a 1-cup (240 ml) canning jar with a lid that can double as a storage container and allows easy shaking for later use if the dressing has separated.

Easy Peanut Sauce/Dressing (no-oil)

½ cup (120 ml) unsalted, natural creamy peanut butter

1 ½ tbsp (22.5 ml) low-sodium soy sauce or tamari

2 tbsp (30 ml) packed brown sugar (or date paste)

Juice of ½ lime, or to taste

1 tsp (5 ml) chili garlic sauce (can substitute 1/8 tsp ground cayenne pepper plus 1 clove minced garlic)

½ tsp (2.5 ml) freshly grated ginger

Approximately 4-6 tbsp (60-90 ml) hot water

¼ cup (10 g) finely chopped cilantro, optional

¼ cup (25 g) finely chopped scallions, optional

- Whisk together peanut butter, soy sauce, brown sugar or date paste, lime juice, chili garlic sauce and ginger; thin with hot water to desired consistency. You can either stir cilantro and scallions into the sauce or set aside and use them for garni.

Creamy Pesto Dressing (no-oil)

3 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

½ cup (120 ml) mashed silken tofu

2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) lemon juice, adjust to taste

2 tbsp (30 ml) raw cashew butter

½ cup (120 ml or about 15 g) packed fresh parsley, tough stems removed*

3 cups (720 ml or about 90 g) packed fresh basil leaves*

¼ cup (30 to 40 g) toasted pine nuts or walnuts

1/3 cup (25 g) nutritional yeast

A couple dashes mild curry powder, optional

¼ tsp (1.25 ml) salt, or to taste (may need up to ½ tsp [2.5 ml])

Water to thin, if needed

- Place all ingredients into a blender or food processor and blend/process until well-combined. Season to taste with salt and lemon juice. Thin with water to desired consistency.
- *if omitting parsley, use 3 ½ cups (840 ml or about 100 g) basil.

Soy Sesame Ginger Dressing (low-oil)

1 clove garlic, minced

2 tsp (10 ml) grated ginger

¼ cup (60 ml) unseasoned rice vinegar

¼ cup (60 ml) low-sodium soy sauce or tamari

2 tbsp (30 ml) toasted sesame oil

¼ cup (60 ml) untoasted/regular sesame oil or olive oil

1 tbsp (15 ml) agave syrup

- No need to blend—can be made by shaking ingredients together in a jar or whisking together in a bowl like a traditional vinaigrette.

Vinaigrettes

Vinaigrettes are very simple to make and are cheaper and taste better than the salad dressings and marinades you can buy in the store. They can be used for salads, vegetables dips, and marinades. If you plan to make no-oil and low-oil dressings at home, it is useful to first learn the principles of making a vinaigrette.

Basic Vinaigrette

Basic vinaigrette is made by whisking a slow stream of oil into an acidic ingredient (or just add ingredients to a jar and shake), tasting and adjusting for acidity, and seasoning with a small amount of salt and pepper. You can add flavor by using herbs, other seasonings, and condiments.

<u>Ingredients:</u>	<u>Ingredients (1/2 recipe):</u>
¼ cup (60 ml) vinegar or unsweetened fruit juice	2 tbsp (30 ml)
½ to ¾ cup (120 to 180 ml) oil, adjust to taste	4 to 6 tbsp (60 to 90 ml), adjust to taste
Other flavoring ingredients, optional*	Other flavoring ingredients, optional*
A couple pinches of salt and pepper	A couple pinches of salt and pepper

Instructions:

1. Measure vinegar, lowest amount of oil listed, and any other ingredients to be included in the vinaigrette into a jar (make sure you have a fitted lid) or bowl and shake or whisk until combined.
2. Taste the vinaigrette. You want it to be a little sour or it won't taste right when you put it on food. If it is too sour, add another tablespoon or two (15 to 30 ml) of oil, repeating as needed until flavor is balanced. If it's not sour enough, add another tablespoon of vinegar.

Notes:

- Store covered in the refrigerator. If you make this with vinegar and oil only, it will keep for months. If fresh ingredients are used, such as fruit juice, garlic or herbs, the dressing should be used within 7 days.
- The oil may solidify in the refrigerator because of the cool temperature—the dressing is still good. Just remove the dressing from the refrigerator a few minutes before using or run some warm water over the outside of the jar to melt the oil.
- Use the Vinaigrette Variations Chart that follows to get ideas about how to make other types and flavors of vinaigrettes.

Servings (full recipe): 16 servings (1 cup [240 ml] total)

Nutritional Info (per serving): Calories 90, Total Fat 10g, Saturated Fat 1.4g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 38mg, Total Carbohydrate 0g, Dietary Fiber 0g, Sugars 0g, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 0%, Iron 0%

Vinaigrette Variations Chart

Main Oils	Vinegars/Acidic Ingredients	Herbs/Spices/Other
Olive Oil, any style Canola Oil Vegetable Oil Safflower Oil Sunflower Oil Sesame, untoasted Flaxseed Oil Grapeseed Oil	Rice Vinegar Apple Cider Vinegar Balsamic Vinegar, white or dark Red Wine Vinegar White Wine Vinegar Lemon, Lime or other Citrus juice White Vinegar Champagne Vinegar Sherry Vinegar	Garlic, ground dried or minced/grated fresh Ginger, ground dried or grated fresh Fresh herbs, chopped Dried herbs, chopped or ground Nuts, roasted, raw, or nut butters Seeds, whole or ground Citrus zest (lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit) Curry, ground powder, any style Paprika/Other ground peppers Cumin, dried ground or dried whole that is toasted then ground Coriander, dried ground or dried whole that is toasted then ground Clove, ground dried Cinnamon, ground dried or grated stick Nutmeg, ground dried or grated from whole Dijon Mustard, Other Mustard 5-Spice, Herbes de Provence or any other ground seasoning mixture of your choice Honey, brown sugar, dates, other flavored sweeteners
Flavoring Oils* Walnut Oil Hazelnut Oil Other Nut Oil Toasted Sesame Oil	Emulsifying ingredients** Dijon Mustard, Other Mustard Liquid sweetener (e.g., agave, honey, maple syrup, date paste)	

This is not an exhaustive list – your imagination is the limit!

***Flavoring oils** are oils that are strongly flavored and used in small quantities for flavoring. They are never the main oil in a vinaigrette, though may be the only oil used to make very low-oil dressings.

****Emulsifying ingredients** are those that help to temporarily bind together oil and water-based ingredients that would otherwise separate quickly.

Latin-style Beans (with Super Quick variation)

Ingredients:

1-2 tbsp (15-30 ml) water (or 1 tbsp [15 ml] oil)

½ large onion, small dice

½ green bell pepper, small dice

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup (240 ml) water, vegetable stock, or bean cooking liquid (if using homecooked beans)

2 14.5-oz (400 g) cans black or pinto beans, rinsed and drained (or ½ pound [225 g] dried black or pinto beans, cooked, making sure to reserve 1 cup [240 ml] of the cooking liquid)

½ tsp (2.5 ml) dried Mexican oregano

½ tsp (2.5 ml) ground cumin

Pepper and salt (optional), to taste

Instructions:

1. Heat water or oil in a skillet over medium heat and sauté diced onion, bell pepper, and garlic, stirring frequently, until soft and translucent, avoiding browning. Reduce heat if needed.

2. Add 1 cup water or stock if using canned beans—or reserved cooking liquid if using homecooked beans—along with oregano and cumin. Bring to a simmer, cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer gently for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.

3. Season with pepper and salt (optional) to taste.

Super Quick Latin-style Beans variation: Open a 14.5-oz (400 g) can of black or pinto beans and pour contents into a small saucepan (if making on the stove) or into a microwave-safe bowl (if microwaving). Sprinkle with a pinch of garlic powder and 1-2 pinches of ground cumin, heat until warm, making sure to stir frequently. Serve.

Notes:

- This freezes well, so you can make a large batch and portion for later use.
- Keeps in the refrigerator for 5 days.

Servings: 6

Nutritional Info (per serving): Calories 159, Total Fat 2.9g, Saturated Fat 0.3g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 197mg, Total Carbohydrate 25.7g, Dietary Fiber 6.3g, Sugars 1.6g, Protein 8.5g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 15%, Calcium 6%, Iron 12%

Cilantro Hemp Pesto

Author: Cookie and Kate Prep Time: 10 minutes Total Time: 10 minutes

Yield: 2/3 cup Category: Sauce Method: Food processor

Cuisine: Mexican Diet: Vegan

★★★★★ 5 from 20 reviews

This cilantro pesto recipe is made with hemp seeds! It's a fresh and healthy sauce that livens up a variety of dishes. It's really great with Mexican flavors. Recipe yields 2/3 cup—it's so good that you might as well double it.

SCALE 1x 2x 3x

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups packed cilantro leaves with tender stems (from 2 small bunches)
- 1/2 cup shelled hemp seeds (hemp hearts)
- Optional, for heat: 1 medium jalapeño, seeds and ribs removed, roughly chopped
- 1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, more if desired



SHOP INGREDIENTS

Save recipes, create shopping lists, meal plans and more.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a food processor, combine everything but the olive oil (the cilantro, hemp seeds, optional jalapeño, garlic and salt). Process until the ingredients are very finely chopped, pausing to scrape down the bowl if necessary.
2. While running the machine, drizzle in the olive oil. Continue processing until the mixture is well combined and almost creamy in texture. I designed this sauce to be quite thick; if you'd prefer a

thinner sauce, drizzle in a bit more olive oil while running the machine.

3. Use immediately or store in an air-tight jar in the refrigerator for up to 5 days (I believe it would freeze well for up to 3 months, but I haven't tried). This sauce will turn a bit darker on top during storage, but it's perfectly edible.

NOTES

Recipe inspired by the cilantro pesto at True Food Kitchen.

▶ NUTRITION INFORMATION

The information shown is an estimate provided by an online nutrition calculator. It should not be considered a substitute for a professional nutritionist's advice. See our [full nutrition disclosure here](#).

Cilantro Lime Dressing

Prep Time: 5 mins

Total Time: 5 mins

Serves 4 (makes 1 cup)

This easy cilantro lime dressing is great to have on hand in the fridge for topping onto salads, tacos, or burrito bowls. To make it creamy, add 1/2 avocado or Greek yogurt to the base recipe!

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh cilantro
- 1 garlic clove
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup or honey
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Make it creamy (optional):

- 1 avocado or ½ cup plain whole milk Greek yogurt

Instructions

1. In a food processor, place the cilantro, garlic, lime juice, maple syrup, coriander, and salt and pulse to combine. With the blade running, pour in the olive oil and process until smooth.
2. **Make it creamy (optional)** - blend with 1 avocado or ½ cup plain whole milk Greek yogurt