

Plant Based EATING

A green apple is the central focus, with a yellow measuring tape wrapped around its middle. The tape shows measurements in inches, with 146, 147, and 148 visible. In the background, there is a white bowl filled with a colorful salad of tomatoes, corn, and leafy greens. To the right, a clear glass is partially filled with water. The entire scene is set on a rustic wooden surface.

A Beginners Guide To Optimal
Health, Sustainable Weight Loss
and Increased Energy

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Introduction



As our society evolves, we are constantly facing the need to change our behaviors and habits to increase our health and quality of life. We are now facing climate change, food insecurity and over 40% of our population is suffering from chronic disease.

One of the recent ideas put forward to improve our world and health is the plant-based nutrition.

Even though food regiments are not something our doctor prescribes (yet), research is showing that food has a lot to contribute to our health. It is also a less costly option to our society than prescribing medication.

Whether you want to save the animals, become healthier or simply feel better, the plant-based nutrition is a great option for those of us who want to be a better and healthier person.

Choosing a plant-based nutrition doesn't have to be a complex commitment. With the help of this guide, you will be ready to step into the world of plant-based eating in no time and set yourself up for success.

In this book, you will learn about plant-based nutrition, the research about it and how you can successfully transition into a plant-based nutrition. You will also find some recipes to kick-start your journey and find answers to questions that might be limiting you in your transition to a plant-based nutrition.

First, let's define what plant-based eating is all about.

Chapter 1: What is plant-based eating?



We are hearing the word plant-based nutrition more and more in our society. With the launch of documentaries like *Game Changers*, books like *Forks over knives* and the emergence of athletes changing their nutrition to be plant-based, one has to wonder what this is all about.

Our understanding of plant-based eating may differ from one individual to another. In the world of nutrition, plant-based eating is having a large portion of one's nutrition coming from vegetables, fruits, herbs, nuts, whole grains and also include legumes or other plants.

PLANT BASED EATING

A spectrum of plant-based nutrition options is available to you. Some are very strict (vegan diet), others are still adding animal products like dairy (vegetarian) and at the other end of the spectrum are those that still eat meat, poultry and fish on an occasional basis.

We once believed that early humans consumed a large proportion of animal protein in their diet. It is from that belief that, in the 2000s, the Paleo diet (mainly comprised of animal protein) became really popular in the world of nutrition and diet.

Although, we now know that the nutrition of bipedal primates and Homo sapiens was primarily composed of nuts, fruits, leaves, roots, seeds and water. In that case, the “original” Paleo Diet was in reality plant-based eating. It is also linked to the fact that some of the strongest animals on Earth are not carnivores. The strongest mammal is the gorilla (most are herbivores). It has the ability to lift around 4409 lbs., that is 10 times its body weight.

It would be like a 200 lb. individual lifting 2000 lb. If other mammals can live a healthy and strong life on a plant-based nutrition, we probably can too.

Why choose a plant-based nutrition?

Many reasons exist for choosing a plant-based nutrition, we will discuss in more details some of those reasons but here's our top 5:

- 1) **Improve your health:** Most Americans consume double the recommended daily intake of protein which can also cause issues with digestion. By reducing your intake of animal food, you will most likely reach the recommended daily intake of protein without surpassing it.

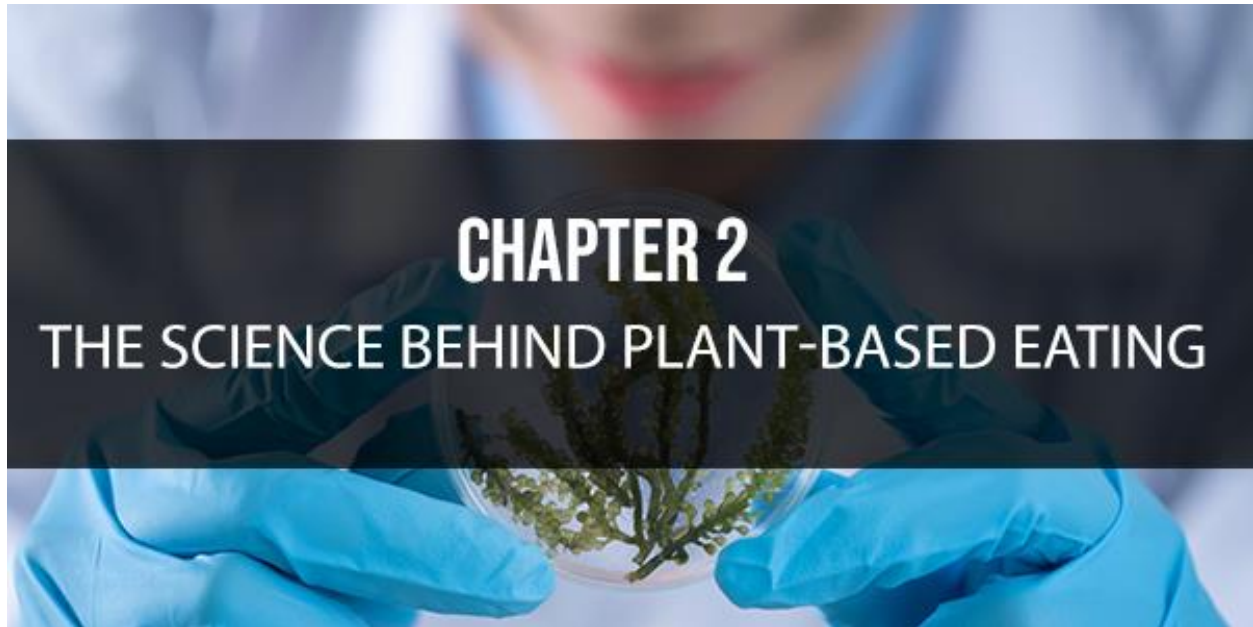
In addition, an increased consumption of vegetables, grains and beans will bring more fiber into your nutrition. Most Americans don't consume enough fiber and that can lead to inflammation of the digestive tract, constipation and hemorrhoids.

- 2) **Succeed in weight loss and weight management:** In general, individuals who are on a plant-based nutrition tend to consume fewer calories than individuals who consume animal protein. That is because most of their calories are coming from healthier options and fewer calories per weight. Plant-based eaters tend to eat less process food and avoid meat focused restaurants like fast-food chain that provide unhealthy meal options.

- 3) **Prevent or manage a chronic disease:** As you will see in the next section, research demonstrates that individuals on a plant-based nutrition can prevent chronic disease, reduce obesity and mostly encourage a healthy lifestyle and increase their quality of life.
- 4) **Stop spending on supplements:** Did you know that our nation's population spends more than \$30 billion a year on supplements? What if you didn't need to waste that money? With a plant-based nutrition, you are more likely to receive all the nutrients you need from natural sources like legumes, vegetables, and fruits. Not only does this save you money, it also saves you from trying to remember to purchase and consume supplements.
- 5) **Save our planet:** Agriculture uses approximately 70% of our fresh water (globally on average). That said, the production of meat requires around 1000% more water (1 kg requires from 5000 to 20,000 liters of water) than some grains like wheat (1 kg of wheat requires between 500 and 4000 liters of water).

In addition, a lot of the grain is cultivated to feed the animals we eat and if we started eating that grain and reduce our consumption of meat, less water and fewer resources would be used to produce animal food.

Chapter 2: The Science Behind Plant-Based Eating



Research shows that we need more fruits and vegetables in our plates to prevent chronic disease and help with our weight management. In the next section, you will learn about what we need more in our nutrition intake (vegetables, fruits, fiber) and what we need less (sodium, sugar, protein) in order to live a healthier life.

Fruits and Vegetables

Plant-based eating means that you have a large proportion of your meal that comes from plant-based food. That said, fruits and

vegetables are often the number one thing that comes to mind when we think of a plant-based nutrition.

According to some studies, only 15% of our population is able to meet the minimum requirement of daily recommendation for fruits and even less (10%) for vegetables. Experts in nutrition all across the world agree that the insufficient consumption of fruits and vegetables contribute to the obesity epidemic and chronic disease related to poor nutrition, especially in our country.

A report published by the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended that a daily intake of 400 g of fruits and vegetable would contribute to preventing chronic diseases which include diabetes, heart disease, cancer and obesity. To put this in perspective, 1 tomato is approximately 75 g while a medium size potato is about 150 grams. For fruits, a medium apple is about 150 g and a small kiwi is around 75 g.

Fiber

As mentioned earlier, fiber is lacking in the nutrition of Americans. It is recommended to consume from 25 g (women) to 38 g (men) of fiber on a daily basis. Unfortunately, we consume an average of 15 g daily. That is not enough for most of us and can have a negative impact on the bowels and cause constipation or hemorrhoids.

PLANT BASED EATING

According to research, an increase intake in fiber can help prevent and reduce heart diseases, diabetes, and colon cancer.

You can find two types of fiber, water-soluble and water-insoluble. Water-soluble fiber can be found in fruits, vegetables, legumes, oat and bran. Since water-soluble fiber absorbs water during digestion, it can help decrease or prevent constipation. Fiber is also known to decrease the blood cholesterol levels.

As for water-insoluble fibers, they can be found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and many cereals, including brown rice. The insoluble fiber wears that name because they remain. Unchanged during the digestion and help with digestion, encouraging a regular movement in the intestine.

Here's the approximate amount of fiber found in various plant-based foods:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| - ½ cup of black beans,
7 g | - ½ cup Bran cereal (no
sugar), 14 g |
| - ½ cup of cooked
broccoli, 5 g | - 1 cup cooked brown rice,
3.5 g |
| - 1 Apple, 4 g | - 1 cup of oatmeal, 4 g |

Sodium

Sodium might be considered a plant-based food but there is a strong warning to decrease our consumption so that we don't exceed the requirements of 2300 mg of sodium consumption daily. The salt shaker in your kitchen is rarely the culprit. The sodium usually comes from highly processed foods (frozen aisle in the grocery store) and restaurant meals.

For example, a fast-food burger can have twice the sodium a homemade one has. According to some research, individuals who regularly consume a meal at fast-food restaurants were approximately 296 mg above the recommended daily intake.

Other studies indicate that individuals who had a plant-based nutrition with reduce sodium consumption (2300-1500 mg a day) showed a reduction in blood pressure and increased weight loss. That said, it is important to understand that plant-based food doesn't always mean healthy food. Sugar is the other plant-based food to beware of.

Sugar

Did you know that we are among the largest sugar producers in the world? And we are also high consumers of sugar (3rd country in the world after India and China). The average American will

consume 152 pounds (six 25 lb. bags of sugar cane) of sugar a year.

Some people will try to convince you that some sugars are better than others. It is true that different types of sugars will have a different impact on your metabolism. But sugar remains something that you should not consume in a large quantity no matter if it is coming from fruit juices, honey, or a muffin.

It is recommended to stick to less than 50 g of sugar a day. A packet of sugar is about 4 g, one glass of cow milk is around 14 g of sugar, a popular brand of store-bought muffin is approximately 32 g of sugar added.

We challenge you to start looking at the labels of the food you eat on a daily basis and identify the amount of sugar intake you get from those foods. You will be quickly surprised to see that sugar is added to so many products we purchase. Even canned vegetables can have added sugar.

By reducing your sugar intake, you increase your chance of losing weights and staying healthy while preventing chronic disease. Reading labels can be difficult, look for the word sugar on the nutrition label, you will see how many grams of sugar there is in the product. Many companies hide the ingredient by using multiple names to describe the sugar added, they use at least 60 names for sugar on labels.

Companies do it that way because they can “divide and conquer” if they only used the name sugar, it would often be one of the first ingredients on the list (which is in order of quantity) and that would tell us that it’s not a healthy option. In order to confuse you (even more) into submission, they categorize the type of sugar by its scientific name so that they can have 10 small amounts of sugar instead of one large amount of sugar.

Here’s an example, the order of ingredients on a popular can of pumpkin pie filling reads like this: pumpkin, water, sugar, salt, spices, dextrose, natural flavors.

Dextrose is a type of sugar, and some companies chose to use that term instead of sugar because it would’ve placed sugar before pumpkin in the ingredient list. Same with a popular bottle of our ketchup that has the following ingredient label: tomato concentrate from ripe red tomatoes, distilled vinegar, high-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, salt, spice, onion powder, natural flavoring.

This one uses the term high-fructose corn syrup and corn syrup to describe sugar. One packet of ketchup weighs 9 g and 2 g is sugar.

I know, choosing healthy seems like a lot of work, but once you know which products are good for you, it makes your grocery

shopping quicker. Some labels now say low sodium or no sugar added, this can help you pick the right item faster.

Protein

It is a myth that animal protein is a better protein than plant protein. Since 2007, the World Health Organization has indicated that the difference between animal or plant-based protein is not significant.

Here's examples of approximate amount of protein found in plant-based protein versus animal protein:

Plant-based Protein	Animal Protein
1 cup of dry roasted soy, 37 g	1 Ribeye steak (291 g), 69 g
1 cup of tofu, 20 g	1 fillet of cooked salmon, 35 g
1 cup of boiled chickpeas, 15 g	1 cup of cottage cheese, 23 g
1 cup of quinoa, 8 g	1 cup of whole milk, 8 g
1 avocado, 4 g	1 egg, 6 g

For most Americans, the average daily intake of protein is recommended at 46 g (women) and 56 g (men). One cup of shredded cheese is about 26 g of protein and a 1 cup of diced chicken is 38 g of protein.

That means that if you eat cottage cheese for breakfast with a glass of milk, an egg sandwich for lunch, and a ribeye steak for dinner, you are probably looking at double the amount of protein recommend for daily intake.

You can now understand why the average American eat around 100 g of protein per day. Our society seems to be eating too much protein, which can cause issues with the bowels or digestion. It is true that some individuals need more protein than others but in general, our protein rich nutrition is overindulgence.

It was once believed that you needed to add animal protein in your meals to increase muscle mass. Some studies and athletes have demonstrated that it is possible to increase muscles and be fit with a plant-based nutrition. For example, one of the best runners of all time and American ultramarathoner, Scott Jurek is known to be a plant-based eater!

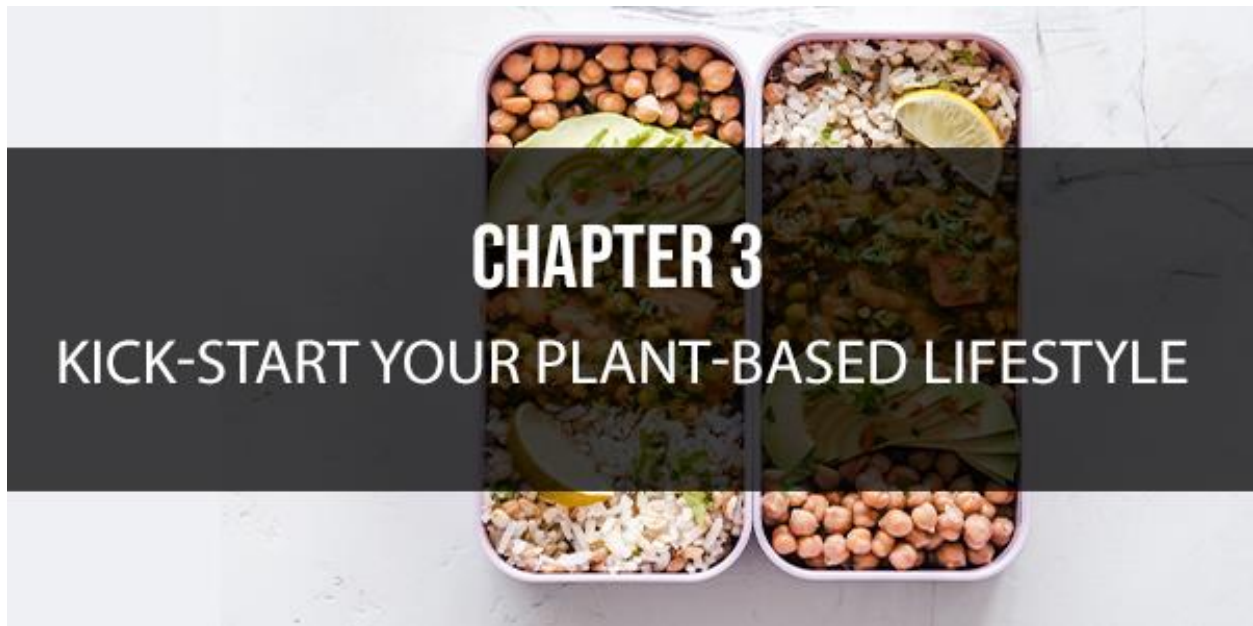
While thousands of research demonstrate the health benefit of consuming vegetables as a way to prevent illness, many still refuse to change their nutrition to increase our quality of life. Too many people believe that exercising, medication and supplements are sufficient to maintain health. Meanwhile, experts in the field of health and wellness say that weight management is 75–80% nutrition and 20–25% exercise.

So why do we still struggle to implement change? What stops you from applying the changes to your life? Well, there is a saying that some people only change when status quo is more uncomfortable than changing.

Are you that kind of person? Are you really waiting for your health to be gone to make your illness your number one priority? I don't think so, because you wouldn't be reading this if you weren't contemplating a change.

Since you are not a quitter, let's move on to the next chapter. We will be making sure that you have all the tools and knowledge to reach your plant-based eating goal with success!

Chapter 3: Kick-start Your Plant-Based Lifestyle



In order to be successful in adopting a plant-based lifestyle, it is recommended to take small steps so that you have the opportunity to adopt and maintain new habits. Slow and steady is a great strategy to form new habits.

Step 1: Choose Your Type of Plant-Based Nutrition

As mentioned earlier, a spectrum of plant-based eating is available to you. Start by identifying what you would like to change in your nutrition. Considering that your nutrition will be mainly coming from plants, your options are:

- 1) Strict plant-based nutrition (vegan):** With a strict plant-based nutrition, you are not going to consume any meat, fish or animal products like dairy foods, honey or eggs.
- 2) Vegetarian plant-based nutrition:** In a vegetarian plant-based nutrition, you will be able to consume eggs, milk, cheese and other products of animals but no meat or fish.
- 3) Pescatarian plant-based nutrition:** The pescatarian plant-based nutrition is similar to the vegetarian one but include fish. That would mean that your nutrition includes plant-base food, eggs, milk, cheese, fish and other products of animals but no meat.
- 4) Flexitarian plant-based nutrition:** This option is great for individuals who would like to slowly move into plant-based eating without fully committing to never eat meat again. In this plant-based nutrition option, your meals will have a large proportion of plant-base food.

In addition to small portions of eggs, or dairy foods and, on occasion, include meat, fish, seafood or poultry. Some individuals in that category have adopted the meatless Mondays to reduce their consumption of animal protein.

Is it hard for you to decide? If so, let me ask you this question. On a scale of 1 (not ready) to 10 (let's do this), how ready are you to

make a change in your nutrition? If you said 1–5, try option 4. But if you said 6–10, try option 2 and see if you can stick to it. Maybe give yourself a month to ease into your new change.

For example, stop purchasing meat products when you go to the grocery, finish eating all the animal food in your fridge and freezer. We wouldn't want to cause food waste, especially if you are choosing plant-based eating because of environmental benefits.

Step 2: Adapt Your Grocery

In order to ease yourself into plant-based eating, try to slowly increase the amount of plant-base food on your grocery list and stop purchasing animal protein and dairy products.

Stock up on cans of legumes such as black beans or chick peas since they are fast and easy ingredients to add to many recipes (just make sure they are not full of sugar or salt).

When purchasing vegetables in cans instead of selecting fresh ones, make sure to read the label and avoid added sugar or salt. You can pick a no- or low-sodium option.

In addition, you can also select frozen vegetables like peas or corn, the same warning applies. Make sure to read the label, some frozen food has added sugar, salt and butter.

You can start by taking a look at the labels on the products that you have in your pantry and freezer. This might require a bit more shopping time at first but eventually, you will know which brand is the healthiest.

Here are some examples of items that could be on your plant-based grocery list:

Fruits	Vegetables		
Apples Apricot Bananas Blackberries Blueberries Cantaloupe Cherries Grapefruit Grapes Honeydew Kiwis Lemons/Limes Nectarines Oranges Peaches Pears Plums Raspberries Strawberries Kiwis Watermelon	Asparagus Avocado Beets Bok Choy Broccoli Brussels sprouts Carrots Cauliflower Celery Corn Cucumbers Eggplant Garlic Green beans Lettuce/Greens Mushrooms Okra Onions Squash Spinach Tomatoes	Sweet Peppers Jalapenos Chilis Potatoes Spinach Squash Zucchini Sweet potatoes	
Grains	Legumes and nuts	Herbs and spices	Other

Basmati Rice Jasmine Rice Brown Rice White Rice Wild Rice Arborio Rice (Orzo) Farro Quinoa Tabbouleh Couscous Barley Rolled Oat Steel Cut Oat	Chickpeas Pinto Beans Lentils Split Peas Mung beans Red kidney beans Soy beans Black beans White beans Pecans Cashews Peanuts Walnuts Alfalfa Sprouts Carob	Basil Black pepper Bay leaf Cilantro Cinnamon Cumin Curry Garlic Ginger Mint Oregano Paprika Parsley Red pepper Salt Turmeric Vanilla extract	Vegan sour cream Vegan mayonnaise Vegan bread & wraps Whole grain mustard Bran cereals Honey Maple syrup Peanut butter Almond milk Coconut milk Coconut oil Olive oil Hummus Tahini
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Step 3: Plan your meals

One of the most difficult parts about adapting to plant-based eating is to adopt new habits in the kitchen. Instead of having burgers or roasted chicken for dinner, you have to find new ways to cook and bring more plant-based food at your table. If you are

going to try the vegan approach, breakfast might be the most difficult to adapt, especially if you are used to eat eggs in the morning.

It is strongly recommended to try new recipes as opposed to try to adapt your old recipes to a plant-based nutrition. For example, a plant-based Mac and Cheese is hard to make. In the regular dish, cheese is the main ingredient and plant-based cheese is far from having the same taste and texture.

Here are a few ideas of meals you can plan for each meal. If you are going for the strict plant-based nutrition, make sure to select items that are vegan-friendly for the bread, wraps, mayonnaise and other condiments.

Breakfast

Breakfast can be difficult when you are used to a bacon and egg type of breakfast. Try to keep fruits, bran cereal and oat, and vegan bread in the house, that way, you will have quick options when you don't want to think too much about what to make. Here are some breakfast ideas:

- Bran cereals with bananas and plant-base milk (this will be a winner for your fiber intake).
- Oatmeal in a jar (see recipe in the next chapter)
- Vegan bread with natural peanut butter and no sugar added jam

- Fruit salad
- Hummus and pita bread

Lunch

If your usual lunch is deli meat sandwiches, you will be going through a bit of a transition for meal planning. In general, many plant-based options can be quick and made in advance (i.e. salad in a jar). In the next chapter, you will find recipes of salads, wraps and soups that you can make for your lunch.

Dinner

In general, dinner is the time when individuals spent more time with friends or families. A plant-based dinner can be a combination of vegetables, grains and legumes. Here are a few examples:

- Veggie Burger with sweet potato fries
- Vegetable, black beans and rice stir fry
- Rice and beans with plantains (see recipe next chapter)
- Grain bowls
- Risotto with roasted vegetables

Step 4: Let's do this!

The best way to start plant-based eating is to start with small steps now. Choose a day this week when you want to have a

plant-based nutrition day. That day will be the beginning of your journey in plant-based eating. Once you've chosen a date, pick your recipes! This next chapter will give you a few ideas of recipes you can start with.

Chapter 4: Plant-Based Recipes



Kick-start your plant-based eating journey, the following recipes you can add to your meal plan.

Breakfast Recipes

Overnight Oatmeal

This is a great recipe that can be prepared in advance. If you work Monday-Friday, you can make five jars on Sunday, keep them in the fridge and eat one before going to work. It's a great "Grab and Go" breakfast recipe that will please everyone, even the kids!

Ingredients (for one serving)

- Mason Jar

- 2/3 cup Old-fashioned oats rolled oat OR steel-cut oat
- 1 cup plant-based milk
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup frozen blueberries or frozen strawberries

Instructions:

- Mix the vanilla and the milk in a separate bowl
- Place the oat in the mason jar
- Add the milk and vanilla mixed
- Add the frozen fruits
- Place in the jar in the fridge and leave overnight (can be stored in the fridge for up to five days)

Additional tips:

- You can replace the frozen fruits with fresh fruits; if you are using bananas, it is recommended to add to the jar just before eating.
- Other toppings: coconut, peanut butter, and cinnamon.
- Want something sweeter? Adding dry dates is a great way to add some sweetness to this recipe. For healthier options, make sure the date does not include added sugar. Maple syrup or honey is another way to add fewer processed sweeteners.

Potato Breakfast Bowl

The potato breakfast bowl is a very hearty breakfast for days when you want something a little bit more filling.

Ingredients (for two serving)

Bowl

- 3 large red potato
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 teaspoon of garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon of chili powder
- 1 teaspoon of sea salt
- ½ of a red onion
- ½ of a green pepper
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 6 cherry tomatoes, halved

Dressing

- ½ cup of vegan mayonnaise
- Juice from ½ a lemon
- 1 teaspoon of whole grain mustard

Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
- Clean potatoes (do not peel them) and dice them into 1” cubes.
- In a bowl, toss potatoes, olive oil and spices.
- Place on a baking sheet and bake for 30–35 minutes until browned and tender.
- In the meantime, dice the onions and peppers.
- Add the onions and peppers when 10 minutes is left to the potatoes.
- While the ingredients are roasting, you can make the dressing. In a bowl, mix the Mayo, the lemon juice and the mustard until the sauce is creamy.
- When the vegetables are roasted, divide into two portions. Place them in a serving bowl and add the sliced avocado

and cherry tomatoes on top of the vegetables and serve with the dressing on top.

Additional tips:

- For the dressing, you can control the amount of lemon juice you add to make it thicker or more liquid.
- Like it spicy? Add ingredients like chilis, sriracha sauce or jalapenos to the recipe.

The simpleton

This recipe is for days that you feel like eating a quick and easy breakfast.

Ingredients (1 serving)

- 1 slice of vegan bread
- Peanut butter
- 1 banana, sliced
- Maple Syrup or Honey

Instructions

- Toast the slice of bread, spread with peanut butter, add the banana slices on top and drizzle with maple syrup or honey. Eat.

Additional tip:

- You don't like bananas? No problem, switch the bananas for strawberries or raspberries.

Lunch Recipes

Cilantro, corn and black bean salad

It's always a good idea to keep a couple of cans of corn and cans of black beans in the pantry. They are very versatile and quick options to add flavor and protein to a meal.

Ingredients (2 servings):

Salad

- 1 cup of black beans
- ¼ cup of corn (low sodium and no sugar added)
- 2 cups of greens of your choice (ex: spring mix, spinach or iceberg lettuce)
- ¼ green pepper or red peppers (sweet), diced
- ¼ red onion
- 2 tablespoons of chopped cilantro

Dressing:

- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- Juice of one lime
- ¼ teaspoon of ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon of sea salt
- Chopped cilantro (to taste)

Instructions:

- In a serving bowl, place the greens.

- Then, make the dressing. In a small bowl, mix all the ingredients together and set aside.
- In a large bowl, combine the black beans, corn, sweet peppers and red onion. Once combined, add the dressing.
- Add the black beans mix to the serving bowl on top of the greens. Top with cilantro and serve.

Hummus Veggie Wrap

Wraps are easy and a great way to make a quick lunch without spending too much time in the kitchen. If you are opting for vegan, vegan wraps exist! Sometimes, they hide in the frozen section, avoid time and simply ask your store representative where you can find them in your local store.

Ingredients (1 servings):

- 1 Wraps (whole grains are usually a delicious option)
- ½ tomato, sliced
- ½ avocado, sliced
- 1/3 English cucumber, cut like sticks
- 1 tablespoons of hummus (you can try garlic hummus if you feel adventurous)
- Optional: 2 kalamata olives, pitted and halves

Instructions:

- Place the wrap on a plate and spread the hummus in the middle of the wrap.

- Add the tomatoes, cucumbers and avocado in the wrap (and olives if you picked that option).
- Close the wrap and enjoy now or store away for your lunch!

Vegetable and lentil soup

Soup is by far a family favorite during cold days of winter. This soup can be made in advance and stored for lunches.

Ingredients (4 servings):

- 2 Tbsp coconut oil (or water)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 large carrots, sliced
- 2 stalks celery, sliced or diced
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 cups of vegetable broth
- 1 small can of diced tomatoes (low sodium and no sugar added)
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup uncooked green or brown lentils (thoroughly rinsed and drained)

Instructions:

- In a large pot, over medium heat, add the oil or the water to the pot.

- When pot is hot, add the garlic, carrots, onions and celery. Cook for 4 minutes.
- Add the broth, tomatoes and the spices (salt and pepper) and slightly increase the heat. Once the broth is simmering, add the lentils.
- Stir the lentils in the broth and reduce the heat as soon as it starts simmering again.
- Let it cook, uncovered, for approximately 15 minutes (until the lentils are tender).
- You can serve now or store it in the fridge for up to 5 days. This recipe can also go in the freezer.

Dinner Recipes

Veggie and grain bowl

This recipe is very versatile and allows you to mix and match with your favorite ingredients. Here are examples of ingredients you can use:

Grains	Legumes	Vegetables	Nuts	Dressing
- Wild Rice	- Soy beans	- Brussels sprouts	- Almonds	- Balsamic
- Quinoa	- Chickpeas	- Beets	- Pecans	vinegar
- Basmati Rice	- Lentils	- Cucumbers	- Cashews	with Olive oil
- Farro	- Black Beans	- Tomatoes	- Peanuts	- Lime
- Couscous		- Red onions	- Walnuts	juice

	- Red Kidney Beans			with Olive oil - Lemon juice with olive oil - Dijon mustard with olive oil
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Ingredients (1 serving):

- 1 cup of cooked grains
- ½ cup of legumes
- 1 cup of veggies
- 2 tablespoons of nuts
- 2 tablespoons of dressing
- Optional: spices of your choice

Instructions: In a serving bowl, place the grains, then add the legumes and veggies, top with nuts, dressing and spices of your choice.

Rice and beans with plantains

This Costa Rican inspired dish is very filling and a great option that will please the whole family! If it's your first time trying plantains, make sure that the plantain is ripe. A ripe plantain is, unlike bananas, black and some yellow can be seen (but not green).

Ingredients (4 servings):

Rice:

- 1 cups of white rice
- 1 tablespoon of coconut oil (or other oil of your choice)
- 1/2 yellow onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup celery, diced
- 1/2 sweet pepper, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 cups of vegetable stock

Instructions:

- In a strainer, rinse the rice under cool water and set aside.
- Add the coconut oil to a medium-size pot and set at medium heat. Once the oil is ready, add the onions, celery, pepper, carrot and garlic. Cook for 2 minutes.
- Add the rice to the pot and stir. After stirring once, add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil.
- Once boiling, reduce the heat to low or simmer and cover the pot. Cook for about 15 minutes or until the rice is tender.

Beans:

- 1 tablespoon of coconut oil
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf

- 2 cans of black beans, drain and rinse one can.
- 1 cup of vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon of cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon of chili powder
- Juice of 1 lime
- Optional: cilantro, chopped

Instructions:

- Add the oil to a large skillet over medium heat. Once the oil is hot, add the onions and cook to translucent.
- Add the garlic, tomato paste and bay leaf. Cook for 30 seconds.
- Add the black beans (the whole can and the drained beans) to the skillet. Mash some of the beans (about half of them).
- Add the broth, cumin and chili powder and cook for 10 minutes at low heat.
- When ready, turn off the heat and add the lime juice and cilantro (if using)
- Serve with Rice.

Plantain:

- 1 ripe plantain, peeled and sliced in 1" slices
- 1 tablespoons butter
- Honey

Instructions:

- Melt the butter in a non-stick skillet over medium heat (be careful not to burn the butter)

- Add the plantains to the skillets so that they are in a single layer.
- Cook the plantain for around 3 minutes (you will see brown caramelized color) and flip them to cook for 3 minutes on the other side.
- When a few seconds is left to the cooking time, drizzle with the honey and serve with your rice and bean dish.

Risotto with roasted veggies

Risotto is an Italian dish that takes time and patience. Make sure that you are ready to spend about an hour in the kitchen. It is extremely simple and is absolutely worth the wait because that dish is so delicious!

Ingredients (2 servings):

Roasted vegetables:

- 10 Brussels sprouts, cleaned and halves
- 2 Beets, peeled, cleaned and diced
- 4 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil

Risotto:

- 4 cups chicken broth, divided
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil,

- ½ portobello mushrooms, diced
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 1/3 cup dry white wine
- 1 tablespoons butter
- Ground pepper, to taste
- Salt, to taste

Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
- Meanwhile, in a large bowl, mix together all the ingredients for the roasted vegetables.
- Transfer the vegetables to a prepared baking sheet.
- When the oven is ready, roast the vegetables for 20 minutes.
- Warm the vegetable broth in a sauce pan over low heat.
- Add the coconut oil to a large sauce pan over medium heat.
- Add the mushrooms to the pan and let it cook for 2 minutes and then add the arborio rice.
- Stir the rice for about a minute and then add the dry wine. Stir until the wine is all absorbed.
- When there is no liquid in the skillet, add ½ cup of the vegetable broth, and stir often, until the broth is absorbed.
- Adding ½ cup of broth and wait until it's absorbed until you use all the broth in the sauce pan. This process should take about 20 minutes.
- When the roasted vegetables are ready, pull out of the oven.

- When the rice is ready, divide in two and place in two plates. Add the roasted vegetables on top, salt and pepper to taste and enjoy as soon as it is ready or later in your lunch.

Snacks

Snacks for plant-based eaters can be as simple as a fruit or a vegetable. But sometimes we want a little more. Popcorn is also a great option for a healthy snack. If you are a “snacker” be careful how much calories you consume, especially if it comes from sugar or sodium. Those extra calories can be a detriment to your health.

Almond stuffed date

Ingredients

- 4 dry dates, pit removed
- 4 whole almonds

Instructions: Place an almond inside the date (replacing the pit) and eat!

Chapter 5: Additional tips for success



Here are answers to questions that might be on your mind after reading the previous chapters.

What if I am invited to someone's place for dinner?

Well, if you are a flexitarian, that shouldn't be an issue since you have allowed some flexibility in your nutrition plan for situations like this. If you are a vegetarian or pescatarian, there are usually an option on the table, unless the person is making a meat lasagna, that would be difficult to opt out.

In all cases, you might be able to prevent some uncomfortable situation and set you up for success by simply asking your host if

you can bring a salad and if that tactic doesn't work, be honest. Compassion and honesty are the best policy!

That could also be an opportunity for you to share why you have chosen this goal. Caution, don't be a preacher; no one likes to hear that what they are doing is wrong and what the other one is doing is better.

What if I am going out for a meal?

Be prepared! Always look at the restaurant menu before choosing where you will eat. While plant-based meal options are more prominent than ever, it isn't always on the menu. If you forget to look at the menu in advance and end up in a place where you have no options, choose a garden salad or ask for a menu item without the meat.

What if I eat meat by mistake?

As a plant-based eater, it might happen that you realize there is chicken in your wrap or beef in your salad. No big deal, you've eaten meat before. On the other hand, if you are going for the vegan option, you will need to do some research on what ingredients are vegan.

Condiments like mayonnaise, Worcestershire or horseradish sauce may contain animal product. Make sure that you are well informed on products that are vegan-friendly.

Is potato chips plant-based eating?

Yes, potato chips are technically a plant-based food but beware of junk food! It's a highly processed food that often contains a large amount of sodium.

If you stick to the recommendations of the daily intake of 2300 mg of sodium and 50 mg of sugar, you will quickly realize that eating junk food is unsustainable since a bag of chips (party size) contains about 2550 mg of sodium and 15 g of sugar. A 4 oz chocolate bar can contain 80 mg of sodium and 56 g of sugar. Add a can of regular soda (or pop) to the mix and you now have an additional 30 mg of sodium and 41 g of sugar.

What about milk?

Studies show that humans stop producing the enzyme that metabolizes the lactose in breast milk after an early age in life. That said, it is fair to say that we become lactose intolerant very early in our childhood. It is estimated that 75% of us are lactose intolerant.

Yet, many people in our nation continue to consume cow milk. Choosing a plant-based nutrition can be an opportunity for you to plant-based milk like almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, etc. Many options are now available at most grocery stores.

What about fat?

Fat is a little bit harder to explain and a bit more complex to understand. As you've heard, there is good fat and bad fat. The number one rule with fat is to stay away from trans-fat, as soon as you see it on a label in the grocery store, put that item back on the shelf.

A general rule is that no more than 20–30% of calories should come from fat. The good news is that eating more vegetables and fruits can reduce the amount of fat intake.

What about physical fitness? And mental health?

As mentioned earlier, physical fitness plays an important part in health and weight loss. With a plant-based nutrition, you will likely find yourself having more energy and will be motivated to be more active. Don't fall into the trap of committing to something you don't enjoy. According to a study, 63% of gym members don't use their membership.

Find something you enjoy doing and do more of it. Also, don't stop yourself from being active because you don't have a full hour a day to dedicate to it. A quick 20 minutes of high-intensity interval training (HIIT) is enough to make you sweat.

If you are already active, pay attention to changes of your body during the gym sessions and after, you might want to increase your plant-based protein intake.

And mental health? According to some research plant-based eaters showed fewer signs of depression and mental illness than omnivores. There is much more research to be done and certainly some aspects to consider (like sugar intake) but these researches are very promising. The best way to know is to try it and see how you feel.

Conclusion



Plant-based eating can be for everyone, the main idea is not to “diet” or remove something from your nutrition but more about adding more vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grains, and legumes. For those of you who love their steak or burgers once in a while, you don’t have to completely eliminate animal-based food but you can certainly reduce it by making more meals that are plant-based.

As you have seen from the research, there is a strong advantage not to surpass the daily intake recommendations for sugar, sodium and protein. This is the optimal way to avoid health issues and prevent chronic diseases. While exercising is important, nutrition is probably the number one reason why we have so

much obesity in our nation. Not knowing what to eat and difficulty reading labels has led us to be confused about what to eat or not to eat. The best approach is a balanced nutrition with a lot of variety and refrain from overindulging.

Now it's time to put your learning into action. First, pick a day when you will start your plant-based eating, then select your meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner recipes), go shopping and get your grocery items and implement the change!

If it seems like a big change for you, try once a week for the first month and gradually move to twice a week, three times a week, etc. Remember, slow and steady is a great approach to change habits but mostly to make them stick. Plant-based eating is not a diet but a way of living so have fun with it!