

POWERING UP WITH PLANT-BASED DIETS

Plant-based or **Plant-forward** refers to an eating pattern that puts more emphasis on foods that come from plants. This includes:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Beans
- Legumes
- Whole Grains
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Oil

It does not mean you are vegan or vegetarian, nor does it imply that you can never have animal proteins including meat, eggs or dairy. Instead, you are choosing to consume more foods from plants and less from animal sources.

MEDITERRANEAN DIET

This eating pattern puts an emphasis on plant-based foods, but also includes fish, poultry, eggs, and dairy a few times a week and meats and sweets only a few times a week. Populations where the Mediterranean Diet is followed have been found to have increased longevity and lower instances of:

- Heart Disease
- Metabolic Syndrome
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Depression
- Cognitive Decline

VEGETARIAN DIETS

Vegetarian diets have been shown to have similar benefits to the Mediterranean Diet. There are many different types of vegetarian diets including:

- **Semi-vegetarian** or **flexitarian** includes eggs, dairy foods, and occasionally meat, poultry, fish and seafood
- **Pescatarian** includes eggs, dairy foods, fish, and seafood, but no meat or poultry
- **Vegetarian** (sometimes referred to as lacto-ovo vegetarian) includes eggs and dairy foods, but no meat, poultry, fish or seafood
- **Vegan** includes no animal foods

8 WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH A PLANT-BASED DIET

- **Eat lots of vegetables.** Fill half your plate with vegetables at lunch and dinner. Make sure you include plenty of colors in choosing your vegetables. Enjoy vegetables as a snack with hummus, salsa, or guacamole. Enjoy a variety of non-starchy veggies including leafy greens, cruciferous veggies (like cauliflower, broccoli, and brussels sprouts), peppers, carrots, squash, mushrooms, and green beans.
- **Change the way you think about meat.** Have smaller amounts. Use it as a garnish instead of a centerpiece.

- **Choose good fats.** Fats in olive oil, olives, nuts and nut butters, seeds, and avocados are particularly healthy choices. Choose raw or dry roasted nut or seed options, such as walnuts or almonds, and skip options that are salted, sugared, or coated in chocolate.
- **Cook a vegetarian meal at least one night a week.** Build these meals around beans, whole grains, and vegetables.
- **Include whole grains for breakfast.** Start with oatmeal, quinoa, buckwheat, or barley. Then add some nuts or seeds along with fresh fruit.
- **Go for greens.** Try a variety of green leafy vegetables such as kale, collards, Swiss chard, spinach, and other greens each day. Steam, grill, braise, or stir-fry to preserve their flavor and nutrients.
- **Build a meal around a salad.** Fill a bowl with salad greens such as romaine, spinach, Bibb, or red leafy greens. Add an assortment of other vegetables along with fresh herbs, beans, peas or tofu.
- **Eat fruit for dessert.** A ripe, juicy peach, a refreshing slice of watermelon or a crisp apple will satisfy your craving for a sweet bite after a meal.

PLANT-BASED MEALS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Breakfast:

- Rolled oats with walnuts, banana, and a sprinkle of cinnamon.
- Breakfast wrap: Fill a whole-wheat tortilla with scrambled egg, black beans, peppers, onions, Monterey jack cheese, and a splash of hot sauce or salsa.
- Whole-wheat English muffin topped with fresh tomato and avocado slices and blueberries.

Lunch:

- Greek salad: Chopped mixed greens with fresh tomato, Kalamata olives, fresh parsley, crumbled feta cheese, extra virgin olive oil, and balsamic vinegar. Whole-wheat pita on the side, fresh melon for dessert.
- Tomato basil soup, whole-grain crackers with tabbouleh, and an apple.
- Vegetarian pizza topped with mozzarella cheese, tomatoes, broccoli, onions, peppers, and mushroom. Fresh strawberries for dessert.

Dinner:

- Grilled vegetable kabobs with grilled tofu and a quinoa and spinach salad.
- Whole-wheat pasta with cannellini beans and peas and a romaine salad with cherry tomatoes, dressed with extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar.
- Vegetarian chili with a spinach-orzo salad.

Source: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/what-is-a-plant-based-diet-and-why-should-you-try-it-201809261s4760>