

OC|FIT

Vegan Weight Loss Diet

Why Vegan?

I know I know- NO CHEESE!? NO STEAK!? NO CHEESEBURGERS!? Are you kidding me!? It may seem impossible but, I assure you, it's not. Making the change to a fully vegan diet can be rough at first. Not knowing what to eat can be a huge turn off in making the change permanent. This is why it's recommended to do your research- look into your options for meals, snacks, and different types of protein. The health benefits of changing to a vegan diet are numerous and plenty, and it can be an absolute game changer in the weight loss game. Here are a few reasons why you may want to look into a vegan diet for weight loss:

- 1) **Higher intake of fiber, lower intake of saturated fats = thinner body mass, lower percent body fat.** Increasing your raw vegetable and fruit intake is a large increase in dietary fiber which helps to not only regulate your digestive system but also better aid your digestion in the first place.
- 2) **Lower Environmental impact.** It takes so much more money, water, and time to feed herds for meat than the veggies and fruit we consume each day. Just by not eating meat or animal bi-products, you are helping to cut down on the environmental impact of using too much water since it is becoming a precious resource due to severe drought and land degradation.
- 3) **Disease Prevention.** When you eliminate dairy and meat products from your diet, your cholesterol goes down and so does high blood pressure. Vegan diets can help in preventing heart disease and type 2 diabetes as well as other health issues like osteoporosis, cataracts, and certain types of cancer including prostate and breast cancer.

What Do I Eat?

There are so many options out there for vegan meals and snacks. It's not as boring as most people think it is and you can eat out with any of your friends at (almost) any restaurant as well.

Proteins:

Beans and legumes: (fat free refried beans, black beans, kidney beans garbonzo beans, peanuts, string beans, snow peas, sugar snap peas, lentils etc), **tofu** (try extra firm tofu, it's not as mushy), **tempeh** (fermented soybeans; it's an acquired taste but give it a shot if you want to see what all the fuss is about; extremely high source of protein), **nuts and nut butters** (peanut, almond, cashew, sunflower, pumpkin seeds), **seeds** (chia seeds, flax seeds, hemp seeds), **whole grains** (brown rice, quinoa, sprouted grain breads and wraps).

Another great source of protein is a protein shake (especially after an intense boot camp workout). It helps to repair and build your muscles while burning fat. You can find vegan protein powders at any nutritional grocery store like Sprouts or Mothers and they also have a great selection at Wholesale Nutrition Center (Beach and Warner, Huntington Beach). Or our favorite ARBONNE!!!

VEGAN PROTEIN

PER 100G (3.5 OZ) IN WEIGHT

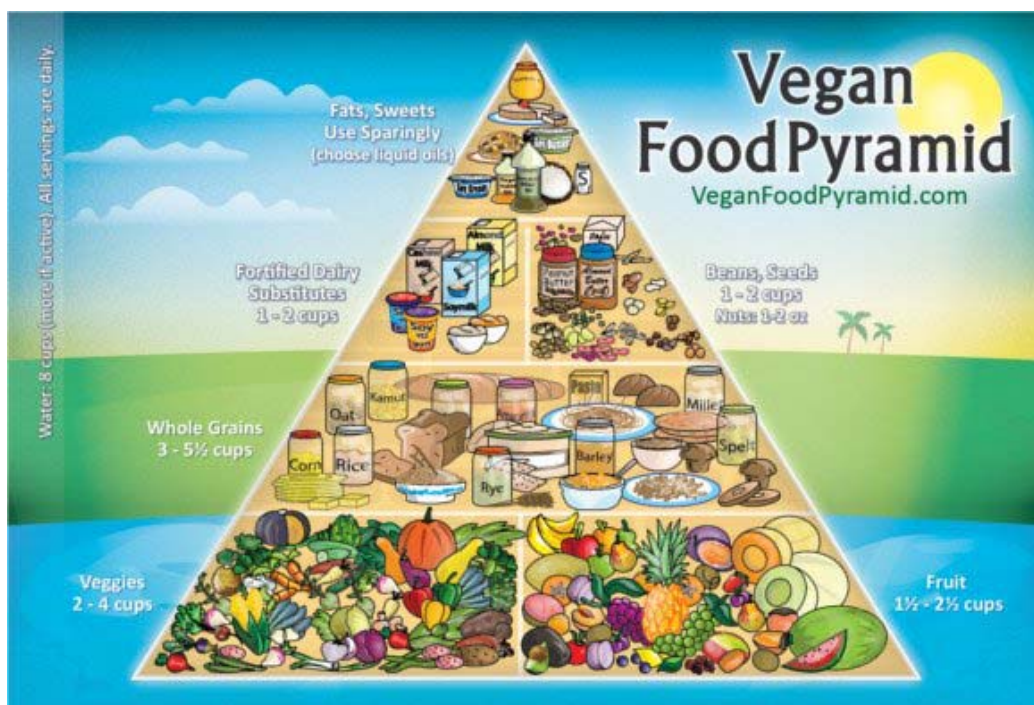


So...should I eat anything that says “Vegan” on it?

Unfortunately, even if it says “vegan”, it may not be inherently healthy. Remember the cardinal rule: anything HEAVILY processed is not healthy for you. Try to keep it simple in your diet- you don’t need to complicate your food (vegan or omnivore) by adding processed sugars and products. I mean, Oreos are vegan; it doesn’t mean they are good for you (although they are delicious).

Instead of buying meat substitutes, try instead adding avocado or tofu to your stir fry’s or sandwiches. It can help make a huge difference. Don’t be afraid of carbohydrates on a vegan diet! They can absolutely help. I do, however, recommend you stay away from simple carbs (white rice, pasta) and switch to whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat pasta and bread).

Below is a copy of the vegan food pyramid. THIS IS TO BE USED AS A RECOMMENDATION ABOUT WHAT YOU SHOULD BE EATING. You don’t need to follow this to the precise measurement but it does give you a better idea on what you should and can consume in a day.



Filling in the Missing Pieces

I would love to say a vegan diet is PERFECT but you will be missing a few key vitamins and minerals that are helpful to helping your body run in peak condition. It's recommended that you take a daily supplement to help fill in the gaps. Here's what you want to look for in a supplement:

- Vitamin B-12: B-12 is EXTREMELY important in helping your body function properly and maintain the energy you need to keep showing up to boot camp.
- Vitamin D: Since milk and dairy are a large source of Vitamin D, once it's cut out, adding it back in is extremely helpful. I recommend a Vitamin D-3.
- Iron: If you are not increasing your leafy green intake, I would also advise an iron supplement. It will help with the oxygenation of your red blood cells and will help to intensify your workouts and build energy.
- Omega 3s- commonly found in Fish Oil and recommended by doctor's everywhere. There are some great vegan alternatives including flax oil and vegan Omega 3s that can be found at any health food store.

www.vegan.com

<http://www.ilovevegan.com/resources/building-a-healthy-vegan-grocery-list/>

<http://static.oprah.com/images/packages/vegan-starter-kit/vegan-shopping-list.pdf>

<http://www.nomeatathlete.com/vegan-grocery-list/>

<http://www.pcrm.org/kickstartHome/mealplan>

<http://www.yummly.com/>

Where to Start...

For many people, making a permanent switch to a vegan diet can be rough especially if you're unprepared. Slowly making the transition is a great way to increasing your fresh fruit and vegetable intake. Begin by having one purely vegan meal a day, no meat or dairy or animal bi-products. In your other meals, try to limit your meat or dairy intake to lean meats and reduced or fat free dairy. This will help your body to make this change. Eventually, try going a few days in a row completely vegan. Remember, if you slip up, it's not the end of the world- we are all human.

Grocery List

Just like other diet plans or lifestyle changes, you must be prepared to be successful. Try to plan ahead so you have healthy snacks or meals with you so you don't go hungry and grab other processed foods. Remember the vegan diet is more rich in fresh produce which goes bad faster than processed foods.

Below is a grocery list- DO NOT FEEL LIKE YOU NEED TO GET ALL OF THESE INGREDIENTS IN ONE TRIP. This is an example of things you can get and try to work with. I also added recipes as well (quick and easy) so you can follow a specific meal plan.

*****There is a complete 30 day vegan meal plan for weight loss at the end of this packet. Each week has a complete grocery list as well. Some of the recipes are for more than one serving for those of who that have families. *****

What to Buy

Fresh Vegetables:

Broccoli, Carrots, Celery, Cauliflower, Cucumbers, Sugar snap peas, Tomatoes, Bell peppers, Avocado, Zucchini, Mushrooms, Spaghetti Squash, Asparagus, Kale, Garlic, Onions (red, white, green), Swiss or Rainbow Chard, Sweet Potatoes, Cabbage, Salad Mix (prewashed is great for quick and easy salads), Eggplant

Fruits:

Apples (green or red), Peaches, Apricots, Berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries), Bananas, Oranges, Mangoes, Papaya, Guava, Figs, Dried fruit (dates, apricots, cranberries, figs, etc), Lemons, Limes,

Frozen Foods:

Green beans, Edamame (soy beans), Recommended Treat: Tofutti Ice Cream Sandwiches (they are small and fun sized and delicious- they come in vanilla and mint chip), Frozen Fruit medley (berries, etc- great for added to smoothies), Veggie Burgers (Dr. Praeger's California Veggie burgers are GREAT and very easy to heat up),

“Dairy” Isle Foods:

Earth Balance Vegan Buttery spread (Whipped is recommended), Tofu (extra firm), Coconut or Soy milk yogurt (preferably plain since there is not as much sugar added), Non-dairy milk (coconut, soy, flax, almond- again, to your preference but try to get the unsweetened versions), Vegan Cheese (I recommend Daiya Cheddar cheese- it's pretty good but if you are really looking to lose weight, I would say do not get the fake cheeses or meats since they are quite processed).

Grains and Legumes-

Sprouted Wheat Bread (Silver Hills bread- in refrigerator section), Manna Bread Cinnamon Date (optional- in the freezer section at Mother's and Ralphs- non yeast bread), Sprouted Wheat wraps or whole wheat tortillas (make sure there are no dairy products or lard in the tortillas), Whole Wheat Vegan Noodles (make sure there are no eggs in the ingredients), Brown Rice or Sprouted Grain rice (Trader Joe's has frozen packets of Sprouted Red Rice that is AMAZING), Brown Lentils, Black Beans, Refried Beans (fat free or vegetarian- make sure there is no lard), Quinoa (cooks just like rice), Raw or Roasted Nuts (Almonds, Cashews,

walnuts, pecans, sunflower seeds), Roasted Peanuts (homemade peanut sauce- unless you're allergic), Nut Butters (almond, sunflower, cashew),

Cooking, Spices, and Condiments:

Coconut Oil (unrefined- both in bulk and in spray form), Olive Oil (spray form is great), Balsamic Vinegar (great for cooking), Coconut butter (coconut flesh and oil combined- great addition to smoothies), Spike Seasoning (the end all, be all of seasonings- the best around), Vegan Dressing (Annie's Goddess dressing, regular or Lite, Light Italian dressings, etc), Vegan Mayonnaise (I recommend Just Mayo- in the refrigerator section- do not use very often since it is purely oil but it's still good to have in the fridge for recipes), Fresh Herbs (basil, cilantro, mint- these are all great additions to salads, wraps, and sandwiches), Curry Powder (Madras Curry is the best), Garam Marsala (good for sweeter tasting curries), Apple Cider Vinegar, Capers, Olives, Pickles, Hummus, Liquid Aminos (the best replacement for soy sauce- so much healthier and tastes better too),

Extras:

Vegan Protein Powder, Vitamin and Mineral supplement with Vitamin B-12 and Iron, Kombucha (fermented Tea with probiotics and antioxidants- it's an acquired taste but great for helping you feel regular), Vegan Protein Bars (great for snacks and when you're a little hungry), Trail Mixes or Nut mixes (try to go for raw nuts and seeds since they have the best proteins and amino acids), Dried Herbs (rosemary, basil, oregano, thyme, etc), Nutritional Yeast (great source of Vitamin B-12), Chia Seeds (great for smoothies, adding to granola or yogurt, or making Chia Pudding), Maple Syrup or Agave Nectar (good sweeteners that have a low glycemic index so they will not spike your blood sugar- and no, honey is not vegan),

Cooking Tools and Utensils (Not required but VERY helpful):

Vegetable spiral slicer (makes noodles out of zucchini and carrots for an alternative to pasta), Blender (must have for fruit smoothies and sauces- Vitamix makes a great blender for a large price but it may be worth looking into),

How Important is Snacking?

Contrary to popular belief, snacking CAN be good for you! But it's more about what you're eating and how often. Instead, try having snacks on hand in order to curb those pesky hunger pains. It's best to always have snacks in my purse or car in case you get hungry. Since vegan diets have a lower caloric intake, you may be hungry- do not be afraid to reach for healthy snacks in between meals. This will also increase your metabolism and also prevent you from reaching for unhealthy large meals. Here are some great snacking options and recipes.

Vegan Snacks

Snacks to have on hand:

- Fresh or Dried fruit
- Raw almonds (max ¼ cup of nuts per day if weight loss is goal)
- Pumpkin seeds
- Veggies and hummus
- Granola
- Vegan Protein bars
- Chia seeds and yogurt

Here are Some Great Snack Recipes:

No Bake Almond Butter Coconut Bites (Makes 15 to 20; Make the day before)

Ingredients:

Dry Ingredients

- ¾ cup unsweetened coconut shreds or flakes
- ¾ cup old fashioned rolled oats
- ¼ cup ground flaxseed (make sure it's ground)
- ¼ cup finely chopped almonds or other gluten-free, vegan add-ins (chocolate chips, raisins, etc.)

Wet Ingredients

- ¾ cup natural, unsalted almond butter (it is very liquidy)
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, mix together all of the dry ingredients: coconut, oats, flax and almonds. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the wet ingredients: almond butter and maple syrup.
3. Pour wet mixture over dry mixture. Using a sturdy spatula, fold together until well incorporated.
4. Scoop mixture into your hands. Roll and press into bites. If the mixture is a little dry, add in a little more almond butter or maple syrup. Enjoy!

Notes

- Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks. If you like them firm, you can store them in the fridge. These also keep well in the freezer for up to a month.

Apple Almond Butter Sandwiches

Ingredients:

- One large apple (preferably Honeycrisp or Gala)
- 2 tablespoons almond butter

Instructions:

Slice apple like you would a loaf a bread into thin/medium slices starting on one side until you reach the core. Do the same on the other side. Spread almond butter onto apple slices and create a sandwich. Enjoy!

Crunchy Kale Chips

Ingredients

- 1 cup. kale, any variety, fresh, organic
- 1 tsp. coconut oil, raw, extra-virgin, organic
- 1 ½ tsp. of Spike Seasoning
- ½ tsp. of curry powder (optional)

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Remove the stem, and break kale leaves into bite-sized pieces. (Make sure the kale is dry because you don't want to steam it during baking - salad spinners actually work great for drying kale.) Mix all of the ingredients in a large bowl, making sure each piece is coated equally. Arrange kale on a baking sheet with tin foil in a single layer and bake for 5-8 minutes. Stir the pieces and bake for an additional 5 minutes. The kale should be crisp but not too brown.

Vegan Apple Pie Granola Bars (makes 5 bars)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- ¼ cup whole grain spelt flour
- ¼ cup coconut sugar
- ½ tablespoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon fine grain sea salt
- 1 cup organic dried apples, chopped small
- ¼ cup + 1 tablespoon unsweetened applesauce
- 3 tablespoons unrefined coconut oil, melted, plus additional for greasing the pan
- ¾ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a 9 x 5 inch loaf pan with coconut oil; set aside.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the oats, flour, coconut sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and sea salt. Fold in the dried apple pieces. Add in the applesauce, coconut oil, and vanilla and mix once more until fully incorporated. Transfer to your prepared baking pan and use a spatula to flatten it into a packed, even layer. It's important to pack the mixture down so that the bars will hold their shape after they bake.
3. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until the top is lightly browned.
4. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely. Flip the pan upside down to release the bars onto a cutting board (they should pop out relatively easily), then slice into 5 even pieces.
5. Store leftover granola bars in the fridge in an air-tight container or individually wrapped for easy access. They also freeze well.

Baked Apple Chips

Ingredients:

- 2 apples
- Cinnamon (to taste)

Instructions:

1. Remove apple core. I most likely did this wrong since half of the apple was missing when I removed it but you get the idea.
2. Thinly slice the entire apple.
3. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper and place apple slices on it.
4. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
5. Bake at 275 degrees for two hours. Check every half hour to make sure they are not burning. At the end of the first hour, flip them over so they bake evenly.
6. Remove and let cool. They will keep in a plastic bag for up to 2 days. Enjoy them with coconut milk yogurt!

Zucchini Chips

Ingredients

- 1 large zucchini
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Kosher salt

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 225 degrees Fahrenheit. Line two large baking sheets (I used two 17" baking sheets) with silicon baking mats or parchment paper.
2. Slice your zucchini on a mandolin. Mine had 1, 2, or 3 for thickness and I used 2.
3. After you slice your zucchini, place the slices on a sheet of paper towels and take another paper towel and sandwich the zucchini slices and press on them. This helps draw out the liquid so it'll cook a bit faster.
4. Line up the zucchini slices on the prepared baking sheet tightly next to each other in a straight line, making sure not to overlap them.
5. In a small bowl, pour your olive oil in and take a pastry brush to brush the olive oil on each zucchini slice.
6. Sprinkle salt throughout the baking sheet. **Do NOT over-season, in fact, it's better to use less salt initially because the slices will shrink; so if you over-season, it'll be way too salty! You can always add more later.**
7. Bake for 2+ hours until they start to brown and aren't soggy and are crisp.
8. Let cool before removing and serving.
9. Keep in an airtight container for no more than 3 days.