10 Ways to Get More Plant-Based Protein in Your Diet

As one of three macronutrients, protein literally forms the building blocks of our bodies. Some of its roles include creating and repairing tissues, boosting energy, regulating hormones, and safeguarding a strong immune system by warding off illness and disease.

Protein is so talked-up in the media and in marketing, many people worry that they aren't eating enough of it. In actuality, most of us get enough or sometimes even too much protein in our diets! There is at least a little protein in many things we eat and we really don't need a ton for our bodies to function properly. About 15% of daily calories from protein (50 grams for the average adult) will meet basic needs, but I believe eating as much as a third of your daily calories from protein is both safe and beneficial.

Protein is used in many bodily functions including cell maintenance and repair, blood clotting and the production of antibodies. It is the primary component of many body tissues such as skin, hair, and muscle. We need the most protein when we are growing (childhood and pregnancy) and repairing (injury or recovery from intense strength training). Protein is digested more slowly than carbohydrates and helps increase feelings of satisfaction – aka my favorite word, satiety.

Research from the Nurse's Health Study shows the average American adult, aged 19 – 30, eats about 91 grams/day. So we're eating enough of it; the struggle for most people is eating the best kinds of protein, and eating a little protein at every meal and snack rather than loading up at dinner.

But protein can be easily found also in plant-based sources which are associated with long-term health and longevity, for

some of you, it can be tough to get plant-based protein in your diet. Here are 10 easy and stress-free ways to get more plant-based protein in your diet:

1. **Mix hemp hearts**, which are a complete plant-based protein, into smoothies or toss them on top of salads, soups are wraps.

2. **Love lentils**! They come in several colors and can be used in salads, soups, or on top of roasted veggies.

3. **Replace your rice with quinoa**, another complete plant-based protein.

4. **Enjoy edamame** in salads, soups, and snacks. Like hemp and quinoa, it's a complete protein and it provides 18-22 grams of protein per cup.

5. **Enjoy chia seeds** in puddings or oatmeal. These protein-rich seeds take any flavors you throw at them.

6. **Toss your home-popped organic popcorn with nutritional yeast**, a cheesy substitute for dairy that offers 8-10 grams of protein per 2 tablespoons.

7. **Sneak spirulina into your smoothies**. It is an excellent source of protein plus an impressive range of vitamins and minerals. When added to a smoothie, it won't change the taste and it will brighten your greens.

8. **Replace store-bought chips or crackers with roasted chickpeas**. They are amazing over salads, soups, and stews.

9. **Use unsweetened organic nut butter** as a spread on gluten-free breads, wraps, crudité veggies, or fresh dates.

10.**Use unsweetened organic soy milk** for your smoothies or morning high-fiber cereal bowl.

1 CUP EDAMAME



=17g

1/2 CUP TOFU



=22g

1 CUP BLACK BEANS



=16g

1 CUP COOKED QUINOA



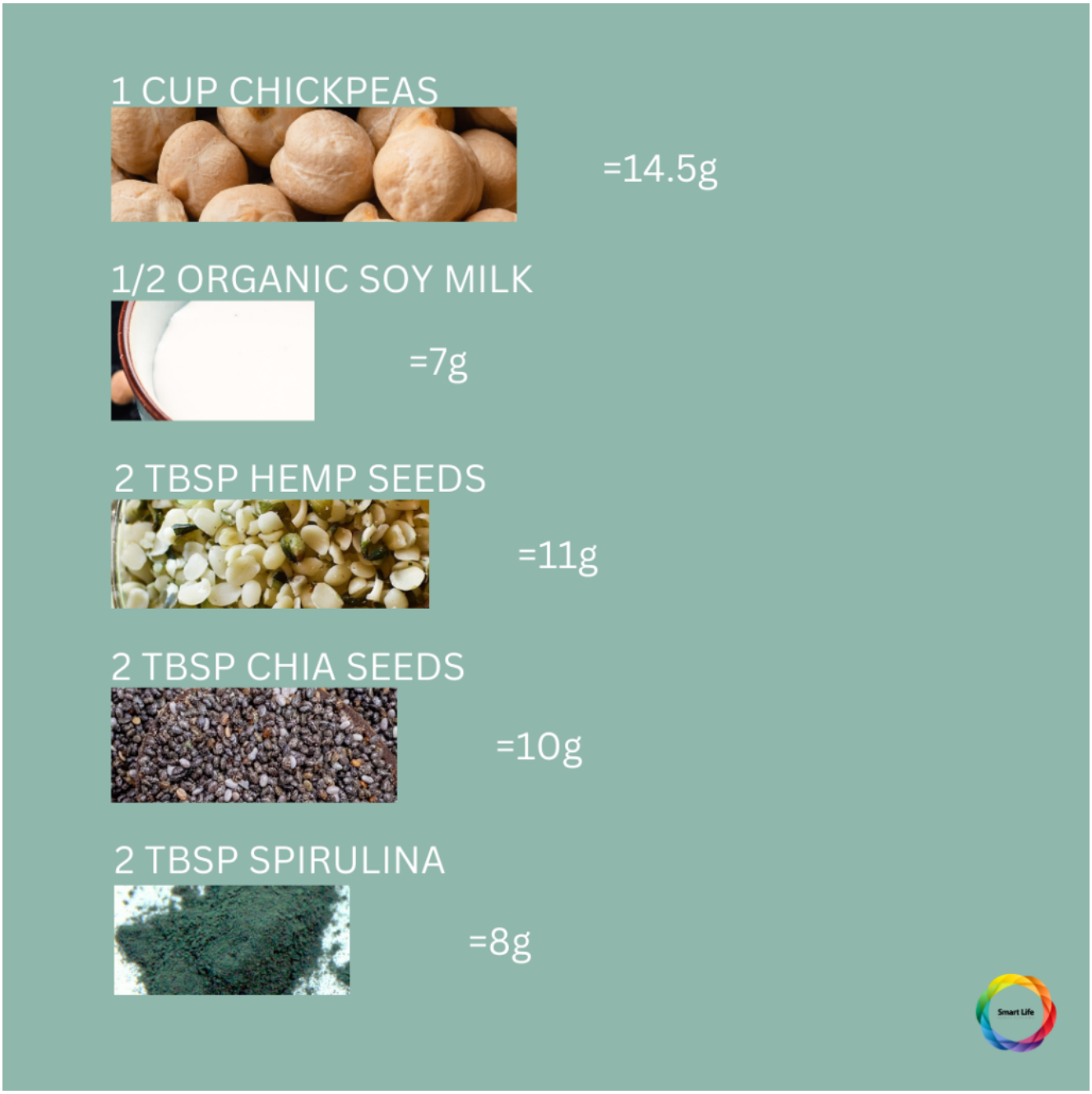
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1 CUP LENTILS



=18g

Smart Life



How to Navigate Holiday Parties: Tips from Smart Life

Holidays are on the horizon, and the requisite parties and annual celebrations are about to commence. But this doesn't have to mean ditching healthy eating and revoking wellness routines until resolution time comes in the New Year. There

are easy-to-implement ways to successfully navigate holiday parties while having fun, making memories, enjoying the company, all while staying healthy! Here are my Smart Life tips:

Begin with a "pre-party": Holiday pre-partying includes ensuring you are well hydrated and not showing up to parties overly hungry. Having a small, healthy snack before you leave home can offset the dive into the salty snacks like nuts, chips, and pretzels. When you do arrive, opt for healthier choices like raw vegetables with hummus and sparkling water with lemon. Should you choose to partake in drinking alcohol, make sure you're keeping hydrated throughout the day. This can also help offset increased sodium consumption that's common in holiday fare.

Be helpful and bring a dish: Offer to bring along a dish and make that a healthy option. This will give you a solid selection to choose from, but others will also thank you for it! Healthier dishes tend to offer lots of fresh colors, and you can be mindful of sugar, salt, and bad additives when choosing and making a dish. I love to offer to bring a healthy salad, a vegetable platter, or a simply cooked clean protein like baked salmon.

Once and done: Fill up one plate and be done. But know this up front—make your smart choices wisely knowing that this is the plan. Then make the best food choices from what is available, being aware that you are filling up your plate once. Remember to include lots of color and variety. It's okay to enjoy some goodies —try small bites of one or two goodies and see if that fulfills you. Balance is key!

Liquid calories count: Whatever choices of beverages you choose to include, know that they count towards the "big picture" as well. If you are choosing to drink alcohol, know that lots of holiday cocktails are often full of sugar from fruit juices, soda, and liqueurs. Try to go for a simple glass

or wine, or even a wine spritzer (half wine, half sparkling water). If you prefer hard liquor, mix it with sparkling water and a slice of lime or lemon.

Give yourself grace: Beating yourself up overindulging is never a helpful tactic. Fasting, over-exercising or other restrictive tactics to make up for what you may consider to have been poor choices lead to feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem. Instead, practice self-compassion and remember all the positive wellness habits you have incorporated into your lifestyle thus far. Attempt to get back into your routines as soon as possible after the holiday party season and remember that it's the long-term practices you put into place that best benefit your well-being.

The Bottom Line

Health is a journey, not a destination. There will be bumps in the road, and yes, many of them can potentially come during holiday season. Remember that you are in it for the long haul, and this is just a different time to navigate. With the above suggestions, I'm confident that you can successfully navigate holiday parties this year and every year – you got this! And if you need some support in getting back on your Smart Life, reach out. I am here to give you the support you need.

Smart Life Guide to Alcohol this Holiday Season

Let me be clear and upfront: I am not encouraging you to drink alcohol if you haven't been doing so already. But, if you plan to have a drink here and there over the holiday period, I thought I would let you know what the best and worst options

are or how do alcohol the Smart Life way.

In the health community, alcohol is categorized from best to worst by gauging the amount of histamine released and the impurities it contains. In regards to impurities, the "smoother" the alcohol tastes, the better it is made. Remember the tequila shots we used to do in college? We had to get it down quickly to get over the awful taste. That was the "college" tequila – cheap and poorly made (but affordable). You can enjoy and sip a top-shelf tequila – it contains fewer impurities which will make it easier on your liver, thus I would call it a "healthier" choice with a lower chance for a hangover.

Histamine release will also contribute to how you feel; headaches, itching, rashes, ringing in the ears, and flushing are signs of histamine release which would also make you feel sick.

I've put this list for you here, to give you an idea of what might be best for you when you go shopping.

BEST vs WORSE ALCOHOL:

BEST

Liquor

- Clear, unflavored vodka
- Clear, unflavored gin
- Silver tequila
- White, unflavored rum

Wines

- Biodynamic, no sugar (best)
- Organic (just OK)

WORST

- Beer (including gluten-free)
- Cider
- Cheap liquors
- Conventional red wine
- Conventional white wine

I don’t have liquor brand recommendations, but I have come across great wine by Dry Farm Wines that the health community has given a seal of approval for a truly biodynamic, low histamine, and no-sugar (yes, this is correct, they ferment it until there is no sugar) wine selections of whites, reds, and rose.

Holiday Gift List

This time of year is considered the season of giving and it got me thinking about how I can give gifts to my loved ones, and ALSO give back to businesses doing good.

After doing a little research, I thought that my findings might be useful for my Smart Life community, so decided to compile a list of gift ideas for this holiday season. The gifts themselves, are truly beautiful items, but the added bonus is that the proceeds from that gift go back to a charitable organization. I love this idea of double gifting – I hope you do too.

‘Give the Smart Life for 2023’ Gift Card $50-$250

The new Give the Smart Life for 2023 Gift Card can be used towards Private Cooking Classes, Food Shopping Tours and Private Coaching. Why not give the gift of Smart Life? We will donate 10% of all holiday purchases to Books for Kids. One thing I’ve loved doing more of in my business these past few

years is giving back. Proceeds from many of my sales already go to Books for Kids, of whom I am a huge supporter and ambassador. Books for Kids is a library and literacy nonprofit organization that works to ensure that every child, from birth to kindergarten, is surrounded by books, has adults who read with them every day, and has access to high-quality early education.



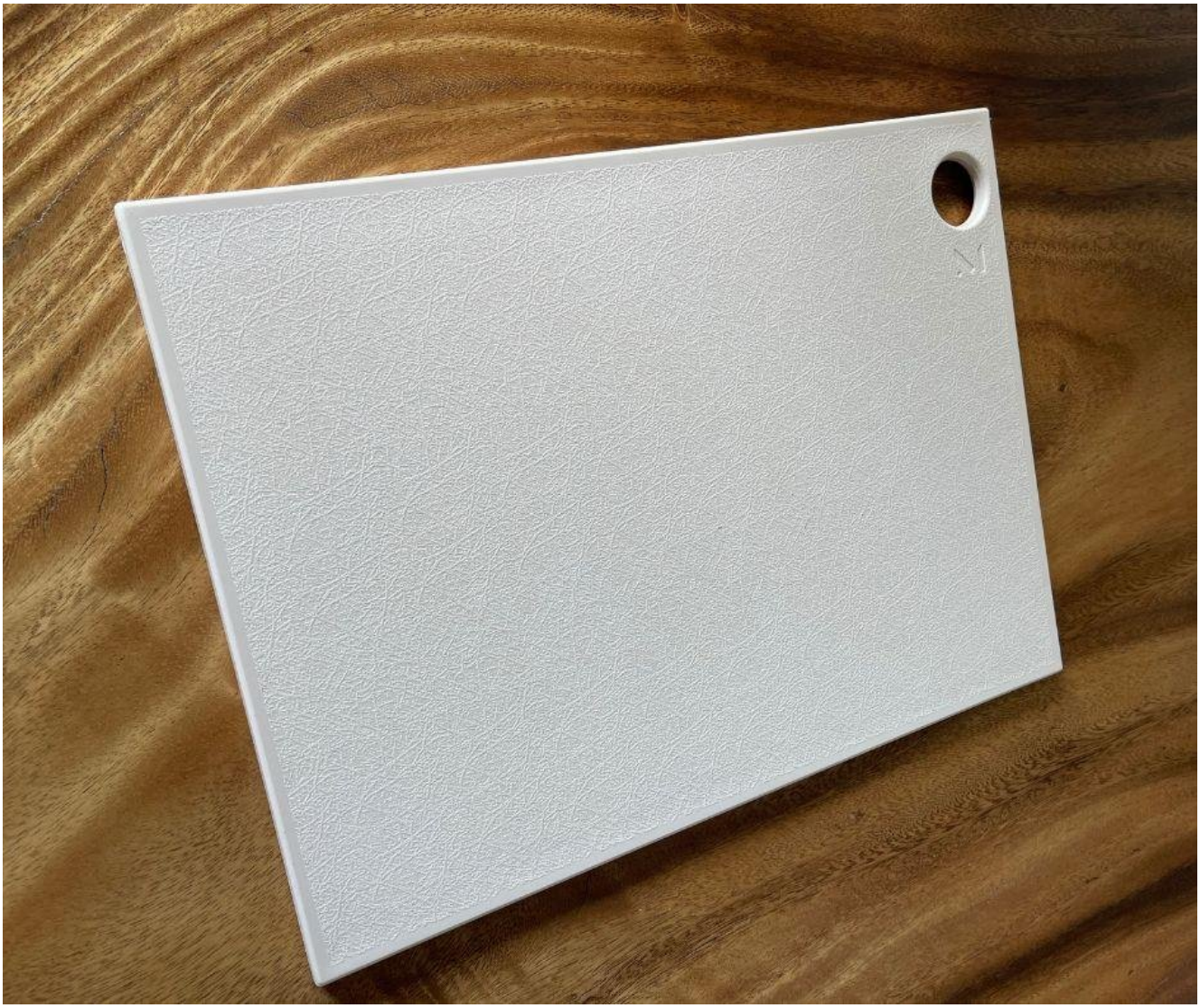
Hand in Hand Assorted Bar Soap Set $19

Made with rapeseed oil to soothe and moisturize skin, these organic soaps come in scents like cactus blossom and island mimosa. For every bar sold, Hand in Hand donates one bar of soap and clean water to a child in need.



Material The ReBoard $35

This cutting board is BPA-free, dishwasher safe, and made of excess plastic discarded by the kitchenware production kitchenware production process. The best part? 50% of the proceeds from the To Po-Po with Love colorway goes to Heart of Dinner.



West Elm Personal Best Ceramics Spoon Rest $32

This beautiful spoon rest ceramic will look good in any kitchen, supports a small local business and No Kid Hungry.



Parks Project National Parks Woodcuts 2023 Calendar $20

Even if your friends or family are not hikers or campers, they can still appreciate the bright, graphic wall calendar that supports the National Parks Conservation Association and its mission to preserve public lands for generations to come.



Parks Project Cropped Tank $46 & Parks Project Hiker Short $56

Parks Project's goal is to protect and preserve parklands for generations to come by educating, advocating, volunteering, and activating park supporters to get involved in conservation. To date, Parks Project has contributed over $2,500,000 to help fund vital projects in national parks around the US and proceeds from sales go into these projects.



Lula’s Garden Jewel Garden $44

3 adorable succulents are planted in a box and ready to display. Each purchase provides 6 months of safe water for one person in the developing world through water.org.



Oleamea Organic Olive Oil Gift Pack $21

The perfect gift box for any foodie in your life, containing their Premium Everyday and Private Select olive oils. A percentage of all sales goes directly to The Conscious Kid, an organization dedicated to promoting positive racial identity development in youth.



Conscious Step Socks that Plant Trees $15

Certified Organic Cotton, Fairtrade and vegan socks, plus they donate a percentage of all sales to environmental solutions for a healthy planet.



Other great gift ideas we recommend include Blissy products and cookbooks! Think of these are ‘gifts of health’ for your friends and family – giving them a better nights sleep and better nutrition inspiration!

Blissy Silk Pillowcases, Sleep Masks and Hair Accessories



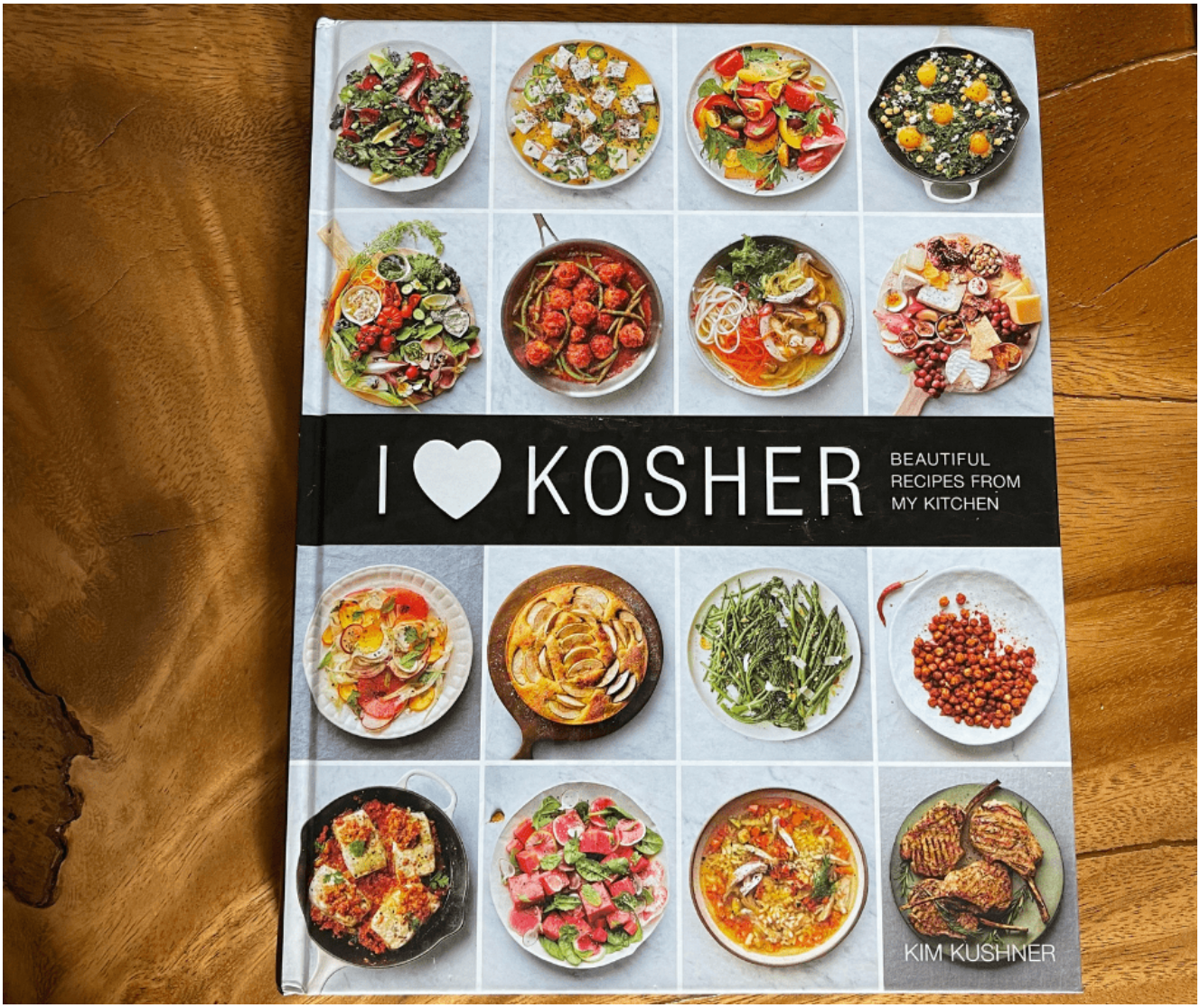
Go-To Dinners by Ina Garten



Vegan at Times by Jessica Seinfeld



I Heart Kosher by Kim Kushner



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5 Smart Life Tips for Surviving Summer BBQ's

Summer is here and so are backyard BBQ's, picnics, and pool parties. However, sometimes we find it harder to stay on track with the summer party menus, cocktails, and wine. Since we all like to join our family and friends in these fun outdoor parties, here are some Smart Life tips to help you stay on top of your intentions to stick to clean eating without packing on extra pounds.

1. **Don’t show up hungry**: Eat something at home before you go to the BBQ or summer party. Getting satisfied on healthy foods before the festivities will make it less tempting to fill up later on things that will leave you feeling bad in the long run. Good choices for pre-party snacking are raw veggies with a little guacamole or hummus or a small wrap with veggies and avocado.
2. **Bring a dish**: Ask your host if it would be helpful and welcomed for you to bring a couple of dishes that will meet your clean eating goals and that you can also share with others. Find out what foods coordinate with what is being served so your dish will go along with the meal. It’s quite likely that another guest will have some specific food needs if the party is large enough, so prepare foods that are as allergen-free as possible – i.e., gluten-free, dairy-free, sugar-free will cover a lot of people’s needs these days. I included some great salad ideas in this newsletter that can be a great choice.
3. **If you do decide to have a drink**, eat something before you start to sip. Try to order a drink that is gluten free (i.e., gluten free vodka), cut with still or sparkling water, and ask that they have no simple sugar added. Vodka with lemon and sparkling water, or gin and tonic are examples. Alternatively, stick to wine, no more than one glass, and sip slowly. Wine spritzers are also an excellent way to make one glass of wine, sipped as two. Finally, it is a drink or dessert, not both.
4. **Eat Naked:** It doesn’t matter how many raw veggies you eat, if you slather them in ranch dressing, you’re not cutting calories. Most salad at BBQs such as potato salad, coleslaw, and pasta salads contain high amounts of fat. Eating ‘naked’ means avoiding as many sauces as possible, that way you get to control how many calories you consume. Instead, look for fresh vegetable salads with dressing on the side, raw crudite veggies, and grilled vegetables.

5. **Stay hydrated with water** and avoid the extra calories that are easy to rack up with sugary soda drinks. Symptoms of dehydration mimic those of hunger. Both sun and alcohol (especially together) can take a toll on your body's water levels, so it's important to drink plenty of water.

But remember, real life happens and food is an important part of pleasure and community – so if you slip out of the 100% clean and healthy eating plan – it's okay! Eating well 80% of the time gives you some latitude the other 20%.

Staying Healthy During These Challenging Pandemic Times

Today I'm sharing some reminders about how we can stay healthy and balanced during these challenging Pandemic times. I hope these tips help you get through these cold months at home and propel you toward the Spring!

Eat Clean

First and foremost, it is important to eat a clean, mostly plant-based diet, that is low in sugar and omits processed foods. My family and I mostly eat foods that are plant-based, along wild fish seafood, combining the best qualities of the Vegan and Mediterranean diets. Here are two easy and delicious fish recipes I've recently made, and you can find more easy fish recipes on my website:
1) Fennel and Orange Fish Fillet in Parchment
2) Whole Grilled Fish

Move Often

To keep up both my physical and mental health, I make sure I move my body every day. I choose whatever my body feels it is up to, whether it is walking on the treadmill, streaming a yoga class, or simply stretching. As long as I get some movement in, whatever it is, I feel balanced and generate positive energy. To avoid turning movement into a stressor, I no longer plan out what I am going to do in advance, only that I AM going to incorporate some movement every day.

Check out some of my favorite online exercise programs:

- Melissa Wood Health
- The Class by Taryn Toomey
- Body by Fleur

Learn Something New

One of the best ways to combat idleness is to learn something new! Luckily for us, technology now allows us to learn something new anytime we would like, even while trapped at home during a Pandemic! Here are some great educational resources that you can take advantage of:

1. MasterClass: This online learning platform has over 100 instructors who teach you new skills using curated videos. You can learn from the experts about cooking, writing, music, science, chess, interior design or a multitude of other topics. Moreover, the caliber of the teachers is incredible, and the videos are easy to watch on your TV, computer, or phone. All in all, this is a great way to get you off of Netflix and enhance your knowledge.
2. The Clock Yourself App: Although I am always trying to spend less time on my phone, using this App doesn't make me feel as guilty because I actually get to keep my mind working while exercising my body. This app combines cognitive and physical challenges into a brain game that makes you think on your feet! It does cost $1.99, but it

is absolutely worth it, and great for kids too.

3. Podcasts. Listening to podcasts has also become a regular part of my routine these days, especially while I am getting in my steps on the treadmill or walk outdoors. Here are some that I think you would find interesting:
    - Modern Love: this podcast by NPR features readings from a New York Times column about everyday love stories.
    - Off the Gram: this podcast at the intersection of wellness and social media dives into trending topics on Instagram. The women who run this show do a great job of bringing on knowledgeable expert guests, making the podcast extremely interesting and informative.
    - Heal Thy Self with Dr. G: this podcast is created by Dr. G, an expert in all things health and fitness. He does a great job of providing accurate and scientific information about things we all wonder about, while exposing health myths.

Try some Mindfulness

Say omm! Everyone should meditate for five minutes every day, not because you have to, but because you deserve it! The Skimm broke down the different ways to meditate and why it matters here.

The Power of Microgreens

The Smart Life Soup Cleanse this month includes an option to add home grown organic microgreens. My friend grows them locally and they are an amazing way to increase nutrients and

help with the detox of the soup cleanse.

Microgreens are also available to buy in the Shop, so give these little nutrient-dense vegetables a try.

What are Microgreens?

Microgreens are essentially baby plants. After a seed is first planted, the seed germinates in the soil. This tiny shoot is the first stage of growth. The second stage of growth is known as the microgreen stage. As soon as the first leaves, or cotyledons, start to unfurl, these fragile shoots and first leaves are known as microgreens. Rather than grow them further, we harvest them at this time and we refer to them as microgreens.

Why Microgreens?

Because the microgreens are harvested in the early stages of growth, they contain all of the nutritional framework of their full-grown counterparts, but in a tiny little package. This means you can eat fewer microgreens than the fully grown vegetable form, but you still get all of the nutritional benefits. It is often difficult to eat the amount of broccoli or kale, for example, that you would need from the full-grown plants in order to gain all the nutritional benefits. But in the microgreen form, the intensity of the nutrients allows you to eat a smaller portion and gain the same benefit.

Microgreens are also packed full of flavor! The flavor of each plant is intensified in its microgreen form.

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What are the nutritional benefits of Microgreens?

Phytochemicals in Microgreens

It’s reported that microgreens are up to 40 times more laden with phytochemicals than their full-grown counterparts. Phytochemicals help humans to protect against physical

problems such as eye issues, bad LDL cholesterol, heart disease and Alzheimer’s disease. They are also powerful in inhibiting cancer, impeding the growth of cancer cells.

Cancer-Fighting Cruciferous Microgreens

The Brassica family of vegetables make wonderful microgreens. Broccoli, cabbage, arugula, and other cruciferous vegetables, have long been famous for their ability to fight cancer and they offer a huge variety of positive health attributes.

Vitamins and Minerals

We all know that vitamins and minerals are essential for our health. The vitamin and mineral profile of each microgreen varies, depending on the type of microgreen, but a few examples include:

Potassium

Potassium is an electrolyte that helps to regulate systems in your body. It is important to keep your heart beating regularly, and it helps your nervous system function properly and your muscles contract. Sunflower microgreens, as well as basil and kale, all have large amounts of potassium.

Zinc

Zinc helps the body produce proteins and DNA, and is especially important in pregnancy and in growing fetuses. Zinc also helps your body ward off foreign bacteria and viruses. Wheatgrass is a good source of zinc.

Magnesium

Magnesium keeps your systems functioning, and has a hand in so many systems of the body, including nerves, bones, immunity, and the creation of red blood cells. Clover microgreens are a good source of magnesium.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A helps your organs work well and is important for vision, immunity, and reproduction. Vitamin A is found prolifically in beta-carotene. Many microgreens contain Vitamin A, like carrots, kale, and spinach.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, maintains the body's body tissues. Vitamin C is essential for wound healing, strengthening cartilage, teeth and bones, and immunity. Pea shoots and cabbage microgreens are great sources of Vitamin C.

Vitamin K

Vitamin K aids the body in blood clotting and is helpful in bone metabolism. The microgreen garnet amaranth is a good source of Vitamin K, and although you may never have heard of amaranth, it is one of the most nutritionally-rich microgreens of all.

Vitamin E

Because it is so prolific, Vitamin E is a vitamin you don't want to skimp on. Vitamin E increases the health of blood, brain, and skin. It has been known to slow down the effects of Alzheimer's disease and is also important for vision, liver function, and prostate health. Daikon radish microgreens are a great source of Vitamin E.

Vitamin B

Vitamin B affects the way your brain works, the energy levels you possess, and how your cells metabolize. It also can prevent infection and promote cell health. Radishes and sunflowers are both great sources of Vitamin B.

Microgreens are available to buy in the Shop, so give these little nutrient-dense vegetables a try.

My Yoga Experience with Heidi Kristoffer

My friend and yoga teacher, Heidi Kristoffer, has just released her very own yoga app. I have been training with Heidi for the past few months and I feel she helped me so much regain flexibility, elongate my muscles, and feel energized. Heidi and I met at a professional health meeting and as soon as she started her yoga class, I felt I want to spend more time training with her. Many of you are not aware, but I have been dealing with a spinal injury for the past two years. My road to recovery included a surgery that did not end up successful, but I have been trying many other therapies since then. One of the things I let go after my spine surgery is yoga because my back and hips were so tight that anytime I tried yoga poses, I was in pain.

When I met Heidi, I immediately felt her amazing positive and gentle energy and her skill and knowledge about using yoga for healing impressed me. For the past few months, working one-on-one with Heidi, I made tremendous progress in my practice, my flexibility and my strength. I am now feeling much more confident to flow, and luckily I can now get even more mat-time with Heidi by using her Cross Flow app. If you are new to yoga or experienced, Heidi's flows are perfect for everyone. Give it try. The first 2 weeks of using her app are free.

The CrossFlow app has Yoga-based routines for every mood, energy level, and need. There are routines suitable for every level of fitness, all time constraints, and every stage of life.

- CrossFlowV: "V" is for Vinyasa! In CrossFlowV routines,

you can expect to FLOW, breathe, create space, and feel amazing! There are yoga flows for every level of practice, time of day, and energy level.

- CrossFlowX™: a fast-paced blending of strength, core, inversion and arm-balance-focused flows, high-intensity cardio intervals, traditional yoga kriyas, and a little bit Xtra. These routines are designed to maximize your time while you laugh and sweat!
- CrossFlowZ: "Z" is for gentle flows that help your RELAX and get your Zzzs!
- CrossFlowP: for all of the mamas! "P" for prenatal and postnatal flows.
- CrossFlowRx: your yoga prescription for all that ails you! These therapeutic flows are doctor and physical therapist approved for each condition addressed.
- Tutorials / workshops
- Breathing exercises
- Guided meditations
- A minimum of two new videos uploaded every week.

Heidi is offering it with a FREE two weeks trial by clicking HERE!

Ronit's Trader Joe's Shopping Cart

One place where it is easy to shop for
healthy and inexpensive foods is Trader Joe's. I love going there and get some
staples for my Smart Life kitchen. I always find new products that I can share
with my clients. Here is my top 15 from Trader Joe's:



- **Green Goddess Salad Dressing**: Delicious and flavorful low calorie, low fat, low carb dressing. When you don't have time to make your own, this is a good choice for a ready-made dressing. It is also nice for dipping your crudité veggies for afternoon snack.



- **Seasonings:** The **Chile-Lime Seasoning Blend** adds flavor and a nice kick to any raw veggie. Also great to sprinkle on chicken or shrimp. Great seasoning for taco ground meat. I also like the **Everything But the Bagel** seasoning blend to sprinkle on raw veggies, eggs, salads, and just about EVERYTHING I eat. I add the **Mushroom Umami** Seasoning blend to cooked or roasted veggies including mushrooms.



- **Jicama Sticks**: Ready to eat crudité veggie that is packed with fiber and is delicious with a sprinkle of the chile-lime seasoning blend or the green goddess salad dressing.



- **Organic Spicy Avocado Hummus**: This is a delicious organic hummus that is low in fat compared to traditional brands. Serving size is 2 Tablespoons but it goes a long way when you eat with your salad or crudité veggies. I also like it as a spread over GG crackers.



- **Organic Cucumbers**: Enjoy these with the skin for more nutrients and fiber. These are my favorite veggie and they add hydration to your day. I enjoy them for snack and in my salads.



- **Toasted Sesame Oil** a tiny drop adds flavor and umami to any marinate/dressing. It makes everything taste like a warm and delicious Asian food.
- **Coconut Aminos** Skip the soy sauce and reach for coconut aminos. Most soy sauces are filled with highly processed ingredients many of them have been genetically modified. It’s also loaded with sodium. Coconut aminos is an

excellent organic alternative that is both gluten and soy free.



- **Dijon Mustard** always stock on great tasting Dijon mustard to mix into home made salad dressings. I use it to brush over fish fillets and add some herbs and bake.



- **Traditional Tunisian Harrisa Paste** you can use this paste to add to cooked tomatoes and greens as a base for Shakshuka (Mediterranean Egg dish, see the recipe on my website). This is also great to any tomato based cooking dish that goes well with some Mediterranean flavors and spices.



- **Frozen Organic Green Vegetable Foursome** excellent combination of green veggies to steam for a fiber rich side dish.



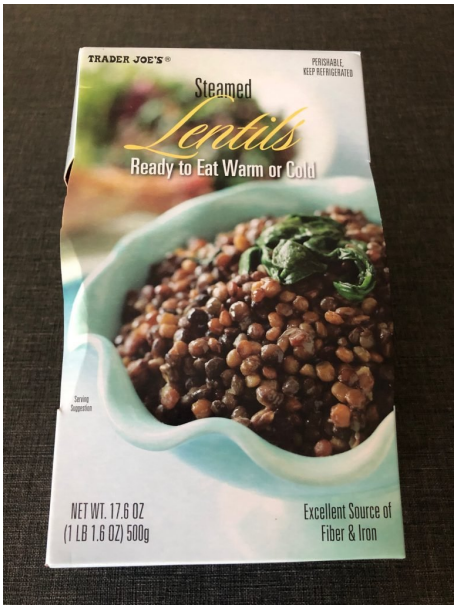
- **Frozen Organic Rainbow Cauliflower** for cauliflower lovers this mix is heavenly for a steamed healthy side dish. It can also be used for cauliflower soup.



- **Fresh Organic Berries** are my favorite fruit and the best choice for fiber rich plus tons of antioxidants. Berries are also on the top of the list of the “Dirty Dozen” so the organic choice at Trader Joe’s is the smart choice.



- **Chosen Foods Organic Avocado Oil** is a healthy cooking oil with a very high smoke point that is good for high-temperature cooking. It can be used for stir-frying, sautéing, or searing. Avocado oil is high in monounsaturated fatty acids and good levels of antioxidants and many other nutritional compounds.
- **Organic Olive Oil Spray** this is best for those who need better control for how much oil they use. Great choice for making eggs.



- **Steamed Ready to Eat Lentils** are the best for those with busy schedules and little time to cook. Lentils can be enjoyed many ways – on a salad, in soup, or even just on their own. These legumes clock in at 18 grams of protein per cup. Plus, they also contain a good amount of fiber and minerals, including iron and magnesium, as well as antioxidants and B vitamins.

Summer is a great time to eat more Veggies

If you have been following recent published research in nutrition, nutrition blogs, and the news, you already know that following a plant-based diet has the best outcomes when it comes to long term health and longevity. Summer is the best time to upgrade your veggie intake and explore new vegetables when the farmers markets and produce sections of the supermarkets are filled with fresh and colorful veggies and fruits.

I recommend making sure you are eating some organic raw veggies every day as they are rich in fiber, antioxidants and flavor. Summer is a great time to eat vitamin-C rich fruits and veggies, like red peppers, berries and oranges, together with your dark green iron-rich salad greens. Combining vitamin C with iron-rich greens, makes for better absorption of iron.

Roasting Veggies

When it comes to oven **roasting veggies**, I recommend using parchment paper rather than foil. Recent research suggests that when we use aluminum foil during cooking, some aluminum leaches into food. Leaching increases with higher heat (roasting and broiling) and acidity (tomatoes, vinegar, vitamin C–rich produce).

Is aluminum leaching into food bad? Maybe. The average person consumes between 7 and 9 milligrams of aluminum each day through diet. The Food and Drug Administration considers such levels generally safe, however, the Center for Disease Control's Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry suggests that consuming higher levels of aluminum than average may be linked to nervous system, brain, and bone diseases.

So, although some aluminum in the diet is inevitable, keep exposure minimal with simple changes such as switching to parchment paper over foil when roasting. You can use my Smart Life guide to Roasting Veggies to learn my tips for time and seasoning your roasted veggies.

Grilling Veggies

When it come to **grilling veggies**, the best is to
combine the veggies in large bowl with cold-pressed organic olive oil, salt, and
pepper. Spray your grill with olive oil or avocado oil and

spread the veggies
on a grill pan. Close
the grill and cook on medium-high for 6-8 minutes, or until vegetables are
browned.

Here is a new Grilled Zucchini recipe that my family and guests have been enjoying this season.