

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

Certain plant foods contain significantly more protein than others so if you're concerned about how eating more a vegetarian diet might lack sufficient protein, here's my recommendations for plant-based sources of protein.

1. **Mix hemp hearts**, which are a complete plant-based protein, into smoothies or toss them on top of salads, soups or 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 pea milk** (try Ripple Unsweetened) for your smoothies or morning high-fiber cereal bowl.

BREAKFAST: Yay or Nay? What is the Smart Life Choice?

You've probably heard before that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Indeed, Smart Life clients will hear me tell them to eat something within an hour of waking. There are tons of breakfast skippers out there. People report that they either don't *feel* hungry in the morning or they don't have enough time to fit in a meal. Whichever category you fit into, it's time for a change. Here's why:

1) Revs Up Metabolism: When you finally shut your eyes after a long day, your body finds sleep and happily settles into a resting metabolic mode. Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) or Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR) is the amount of calories your body requires at rest – usually about 1400 – 1900 calories – to perform the minimal requirements of your resting body. Your BMR/RMR requires fewer calories with age, but increased lean body mass actually increases your BMR/RMR, which means you burn more calories at rest if you have more lean muscle. In your resting state, your body is just metabolic enough to keep your heart rate slowly chugging along, your lungs gently inhaling and exhaling and your brain quietly functioning. By

the time you wake in the morning, your metabolism is much slower than its normal daytime rhythm. Until you take your first bite of food for the day, you remain in a sort of “powered down” mode, with slower metabolic functioning in an effort to conserve energy (remember, you have been “fasting” since the night before.) This is where breakfast comes into play. Starting your day with a morning meal initiates thermogenesis, the metabolic process that gets your body going. There is also a process called the thermic effect of food, whereby your body burns calories to digest your food. You want to eat your breakfast so you will burn calories through digestion and boost your metabolism. Breakfast wakes up your metabolism, even if the rest of you isn’t ready to be up yet!

2) Promotes Weight Loss/Maintenance: The National Weight Control Registry is a log of men and women who have lost anywhere from 30 to 300 lbs and have kept it off for at least 5.5 years. One of the most striking characteristics of this group is their breakfast habits: 78% eat breakfast every day. Another study from The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reported as of 2011, the percent of obese adults (BMI > 30) in America is 26.1% while the percent of obese adults in Germany is 13.7%. One reason for this difference? Over 75% of Germans eat breakfast every day, while only 44% of Americans do.

Besides the stats, it makes sense why breakfast supports a healthy weight. A good way to illustrate this is to look at what happens when you *don't* have breakfast. People think skipping breakfast is an easy way to save calories. This brings us back to thermogenesis. First and foremost, skipping breakfast means you don't initiate the process of thermogenesis – the car is idling, but not going anywhere. This programs your body to run on less calories because your body is not burning calories in the process of thermogenesis. Having a slow metabolism while you are awake and going about

your day is inefficient. To build on this, your body interprets the lack of morning food-fuel as “starvation” mode and won’t really get out of that BMR/RMR state and into a more thermogenic or metabolic state until you put some fuel in the tank. In other words, when you don’t eat breakfast you’re saying to your body “Don’t burn so much energy! I don’t know when my next meal is.”

Hunger, or readiness to eat, is actually a good thing. It tells you that your body has used and burned the fuel you’ve eaten and it’s time to put gas in the tank. Feeling famished, on the other hand – especially because it’s lunchtime and you haven’t had a thing to eat yet – is not a good feeling and not good for your body. This results in overeating most of the time. You may help yourself to an extra large lunch (it’s okay because ‘you saved calories by skipping breakfast’, right?), amounting to more calories overall than you would have eaten if you’d had a sensible breakfast. Keep in mind that you do not become more metabolically active or have increased thermogenic effects of food from a large meal. This is one reason why smaller, more frequent meals are better than a couple of large ones: you keep burning energy digesting your food. In other words, if you skip meals, your metabolism is not at it’s max and you eat more. Double whammy!

3) Keeps Hunger Hormones in Check: Ghrelin, the hunger hormone, runs rampant through your body during fasting and energy restriction. It’s your body’s natural way of communicating when it needs energy. Ghrelin levels only decrease with food intake. Studies show that even a “light” breakfast of carbohydrates, protein, and fat significantly reduces ghrelin levels in your body. This is why you stop feeling hungry after a (nutritious!) meal. Of course, ghrelin levels will decrease after any energy intake, but they will stay lower *longer* with a nutrient dense meal (think eggs with spinach or a nutritious green smoothie).

4) Sets You Up For Smarter Choices all Day: Breakfast is the

foundation for your day, and you want your breakfast to contain high quality, nutrient-dense foods. Laying a good foundation with a lean protein, healthful fat and fiber combination will give you a good start to build on for the rest of your day of eating. Protein and fat provide satiety and fiber keeps you full. If you start the day with a spinach omelet and sliced veggies, you'll feel good going into your day, the protein will keep you satisfied, and the fiber will keep you full. Starting with a muffin or donut will make you feel lousy, and more inclined to say "yes" to the fast food, instead of the salad.

Despite some contradictory research, I am a strong breakfast believer. Thinking critically, it makes sense to me based on thermogenesis research and my experience that breakfast sets a good foundation for a healthful diet. My most successful clients eat some version of breakfast regularly. Keep in mind, you do not need a feast to call it breakfast. For those who are reluctant to eat breakfast, a morning "snack" may be a good choice – an apple with a smear of almond butter or a small smoothie will suffice to kick start your metabolism.

So go ahead and set your alarm clock a little earlier and enjoy a filling, nutritious breakfast *every single morning*. You'll see its benefits throughout your day and soon enough, you'll be a breakfast believer too.

Your Smart Life Breakfast can look like this:

Option 1: Two organic eggs (scrambled, soft, fried, or hard-boiled) with spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers and celery (or other raw veggies of your choice as long as you include some dark greens).

Option 2: 1 cup nut-milk yogurt (almond, cashew, coconut), with 3 tablespoons of seeds (chia, ground flax, hemp) with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced almonds, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup organic berries. (* you can replace the seeds with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup high fiber cereal, such as *Nature's Path*

Smart Bran).*

Option 3: Green Smoothie: 1 cup unsweetened almond milk, 2 cups spinach, 1 cup frozen organic blueberries, 2 teaspoons almond butter, 1 teaspoon ground flaxseed, water or ice to taste.

**In general, I am not a huge fan of most cereals, however, many people enjoy eating cereal and there are better-for-you options out there, such as the Nature's Path product mentioned above. When choosing a nutritious cereal, it all comes down to the ingredient list. Choose products with a short list of wholesome ingredients, such as ancient grains, chia and flax. Avoid products that pack soy protein isolates and several different types of sweeteners. As a general rule, cereals with at least 5 grams of fiber and less than 8 grams of sugar per serving are better choices.*

Is there a Smart Life way to cleanse and what are my top cleansing foods?

Cleanses are promoted by many health professionals these days, but not all cleanses are created equal. There is no real definition of a “cleanse” – the term is interpreted in many different ways by different people. While I’m definitely a fan of a good “cleanse” or “reset” days, as I think it’s important to free your body of harmful toxins and chemicals, three days of drinking lemon juice with cayenne pepper is not my idea of the Smart Life way to do it.

My idea of a “cleanse” might be a little different than what

most people would think of: I am a true believer in cleansing with real food. Not only is it safer and more delicious, but real, clean foods will offer a whole mix of nutrients that will work together in the body to keep you nourished. True cleansing foods are full of fiber, antioxidants, and other nutrients that will help to free your body of impurities and maintain liver health (your liver is the main detoxifying organ, so it pays to keep it healthy). They also tend to be lower in calories and free of added sugar, added sodium, alcohol, processed foods, gluten and animal dairy.

A real food cleanse is a great way to jumpstart weight loss, establish healthy eating habits, and curb unhealthy lifestyle behaviors. On my Smart Life Soup Cleanse program, you will achieve these goals by eating clean and easily digestible foods consistently throughout the day, and by learning to apply that foundation to your post-cleanser diet.

Here are some of my favorite cleansing foods. Incorporating these into your diet will leave your body feeling fresh, healthy, and pure. The “side effects” of eating of these foods include increased energy, diminished bloating and a few pounds of weight loss. They all feature prominently in my Smart Life Soup Cleanse and 14-Day Reset Meal Plan.

Smart Life Best Cleansing Foods:

Artichokes are my go-to cleansing food. They contain plant compounds known as caffeoylquinic acids, which increase flow of bile, a fluid that helps digest fats. In addition, they're full of fiber and take a long time to eat, so they help to reinforce the practice of slow, mindful eating.



Avocados are a great source of glutathione, a compound that blocks the absorption of certain fats in the intestines that can cause oxidative damage. Glutathione is also essential for liver cleansing. Plus, avocados are packed with fiber to help keep you regular.

Broccoli supports detoxification enzymes in the liver (cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and kale do as well). This unique group of vegetables (called crucifers) have glucosinolates, which are plant compounds that contain sulfur. Sulforaphane is one type of glucosinolate in broccoli that plays a role in cancer prevention – it helps specific detoxification enzymes that rid the body of chemical carcinogens and free radicals.



Celery is a vegetable that is mostly comprised of water and therefore will help keep your body hydrated and your hunger levels at bay. Additionally, celery contains antioxidants that will help eliminate free radicals roaming around the inside of your body and causing damage.

Ceylon Cinnamon is chock-full of antioxidant properties. It is believed to control blood sugar in people with diabetes, prevent ulcers, destroy fungal infections, soothe indigestion, ward off urinary tract infections, and fight tooth decay and gum disease. Furthermore, the scent of cinnamon is linked to curbing fatigue, easing frustration and increasing alertness. Try to sprinkle cinnamon on your matcha latte, sliced apples or pears, and morning oats or chia pudding.



Green tea is richer in antioxidants than any other tea. That's because green tea leaves are prepared differently: they aren't fermented before they're dried which keeps them containing rich antioxidants called catechins. Catechins may trigger weight loss by stimulating the body to burn more calories and by decreasing body fat.

Lemon helps the liver detoxify. Lemon juice can also aid in digestion. Both the smell and flavor can increase saliva production, which is essential to the digestion process. Lemon juice also directly affects the GI tract. Just 100 microliters of lemon juice (that's REALLY tiny) has been shown to be a very potent stimulant of pancreatic juices, also essential for proper digestion.

Oregano is the most antioxidant-dense spice on the market. In fact, on a per-gram basis, it has four times more antioxidant activity than blueberries do. One of the antioxidants in oregano includes beta-caryophyllene, a substance that reduces inflammation.

Although you should aim to include these cleansing foods in your diet on a regular basis, the Smart Life Soup Cleanse is beneficial as a kickstart. Keep in mind that cleanses – even

whole food cleanses, like the Smart Life Soup Cleanse – are meant to be a short-term bridge to a healthful diet, and are not recommended for the long term. Give it a try to put you back on your Smart Life track, and follow-up with my 14-Day Reset Meal Plan or private coaching.

Fall is the Perfect Time to Fall in Love with your Veggies

My family, friends, and clients will tell you that for almost a decade I've been preaching a love of vegetables. Veggies, and the amazing array of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals they contain, are crucial for creating and maintaining lasting health. Veggies contribute to healthy gut flora, a strong immune system, brain health, longevity, and cancer prevention, among many other benefits. In particular, cruciferous vegetables (including broccoli, kale, cabbage, and cauliflower) contain B vitamins that are critical for methylation, a process by which our cells repair themselves. We all need cell repair!

Learning to embrace vegetables comes down to flavor and creativity. The odds are that you grew up on flavorless, drab vegetables that had been boiled to the point of losing all their flavor (and nutrients!), or soaked in a bath of ranch dressing. But it doesn't have to be that way! Vegetables can have fantastic flavor, especially when they're lightly dressed, sautéed or roasted.



Many veggies are naturally sweet, like sweet potatoes and carrots, or savory, like celery and broccoli. Those that tend to have more of a bite can have their bitterness balanced out by creative pairing with other vegetables or fruits. You'll also notice that nearly all my vegetable dishes have a variety of either herbs or spices (or both), as science is showing more and more that these power-packed flavor carriers also carry great health boosting properties.

Even if you learn about a million reasons why you should eat vegetables, there's only one that really matters: they taste great. Veggies that are steamed, roasted, baked, and infused with herbs, spices, and oils can be delicious and satisfying.

This explosion of flavor is more than a luxury; it's a necessity if you're intent on eating for maximum health. The more we study and observe the diets of people around the world, the more evidence we have that there's no way to stay at your peak, brimming with vitality and energy, unless veggies are a huge component of your diet. So many of the antioxidants and phytochemicals critical to both short-term and long-term health come from vegetables, and it's key that you stay constantly connected to earth through vegetables.

Veggies also help ward off some of the known effects of the ageing process. Take, for example, glutathione, a key antioxidant that controls many metabolic functions. Blood levels of glutathione decline as we get older, potentially making us more vulnerable to cancer and other health issues. Fortunately, glutathione is abundant in vegetables such as asparagus, avocados, broccoli, garlic, and spinach—all of which, you'll find in many of my Smart Life recipes. So go ahead and start trying more diverse veggie recipes and I promise that you and your family will never look at veggies the same way again.



Eat the rainbow!

Have you heard this expression? It means look at your plate like a canvas, and include many colors of vegetables and fruits. The deeper color of veggies means nutrient-density, rich antioxidants, and more phytochemicals. Phytochemicals do everything from protect our bodies from daily wear and tear to combat cancer. Am I succeeding in convincing you that vegetables are a big deal?

Sample and incorporate the different groups:

- The Cruciferous: broccoli, cauliflower, bok choy, arugula, kale, mustard greens, collard greens
- The Cabbages: red and green cabbage, brussels sprouts, napa cabbage
- The Oranges: carrots, winter squashes, sweet potatoes, orange sweet bell peppers
- The Reds: beets, tomatoes, red carrots, red peppers
- The Squashes: zucchini, acorn squash, spaghetti squash,

butternut squash

- Mushrooms: shiitake, oyster, portabella
- The Leafy Greens: Every kind of dark leafy greens known to man, and other light greens like fennel and celery
- The Purples: eggplant, purple cauliflower, purple potatoes
- The Alliums: onion, garlic, chives, shallots

In early Fall, many vegetables are at their peak season. Use this guide to learn more about what's in season>>

Two new awesome Fall veggie recipes from my Smart Life kitchen are linked here:

- Mediterranean Zucchini
- Acorn Squash with Quinoa and Black Lentils

And here is also my Fall gift to you: The Smart Life Guide to Roasted Veggies.

Smart Life Guide to Roasted Vegetables

6 Steps to Roasting Success:

1. **Preheat Well:** Give your oven 20 minutes or more to reach 450 degrees F.
2. **Cook Like with Like:** Use vegetables with similar cooking times on the same baking sheet.
3. **Use Just Enough Oil:** Too much oil may cause burning. I like to mix my oil with vegetable broth.
4. **Give Veggies Plenty of Room:** Arrange veggies in a single layer with space between them. Space is key to keeping the hot air circulating around and browning vegetables not just heating them and letting them steam in their juices.
5. **Add Seasoning Last:** Minced garlic, fresh herbs, dried spices and sweeteners can burn at high heat. Stir them into vegetables just before serving – the heat of the vegetables is enough to release their flavors and

aromas.

5-10 Minutes	10-15 Minutes	15-20 Minutes	20-25 Minutes	25-30 Minutes
Asparagus spears, trimmed	Brussels Sprouts, halved	Broccoli florets	Carrot chunks	Potato chunks
	Whole Okra pods	Whole cherry tomatoes	Cauliflower florets	Rutabaga cubes
		Whole green beans	Eggplant cubes	Turnip cubes
		Mushrooms (button, shiitake, Portobello)	Fennel chunks	Winter Squash, halved
		Summer Squash slices or chunks	Mushrooms (wild, oyster, trumpet)	Celery root cubes
		Winter Squash chunks	Parsnip chunks	
		Zucchini chunks	Sweet Potato cubes	

Mediterranean Medley

1. Toss 2 cups zucchini chunks, 1 cup eggplant chunks, 2 cups cherry tomatoes, and 1 cup sliced sweet onions with 2 Tbs. olive oil and 1 Tbs vegetable broth.
2. Spread vegetables on 2 baking sheets and roast 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Transfer to serving dish and toss with 1Tbs. herbs de Provence and 1 tsp. minced garlic. Season with sea salt and pepper to taste.

6 Strategies to Help you Stay

on Track during the Holidays

The holiday season is in full swing, which means parties and gatherings with an array of food choices. The good news is that there are definitely ways to keep the holiday season healthy while still taking part in the festivities and having fun! I have found these 6 strategies help my clients stay on track during the holidays:

1. **Don't deviate from the norm.** If you know you're going to attend a lavish holiday party, begin your day as you would any other. Don't skip meals to save calories and get to the party famished. Eat a protein and healthy fat-packed snack an hour before your holiday meal like celery sticks with almond butter or a green smoothie with a scoop of vegan protein. Protein and fat help cut cravings for sugar and processed carbs.
2. **Start your holiday meal with smart food choices.** Beginning with soup, fresh veggies or a salad and avoiding appetizers filled with refined flour and other unhealthy choices can prevent cravings. Volunteering to bring something to every gathering you attend guarantees there's a healthy choice.
3. **Limit alcohol, especially on an empty stomach.** Alcohol reduces your inhibitions and can lead you down a slippery slope of making bad choices. Most types of alcohol are also filled with sugar and empty calories. Instead, ask for sparkling water with lemon or lime to drink before the meal and enjoy a glass of alcohol with the food.
4. **Focus on the social interaction rather than dwelling on food.** I like to sit next to someone I find genuinely interesting and engage in conversation with them and help the host with clean-up and serving the food so you stay engaged and less focused on the food.
5. **Practice mindfulness.** Take a couple of deep breaths

before your meal and chew every bite slowly. Really focus on the flavors, colors and smells of your food. Try to put your fork down between bites. Practice ending the meal feeling satisfied yet energized and comfortable.

6. **Remember your goals.** Think about the way you want to feel before you hit those holiday parties and dinners. If you want to feel great, you're less likely to indulge in foods and activities that make you feel less than great. But if you do happen to slip, don't beat yourself up. Guilt is a toxic emotion that creates more damage. When things get off the "plan" (which they do), simply make a gentle U- turn. Sometimes treating yourself to sugary and other pleasure foods is exactly what the moment calls for. If you indulge a little, that's fine. Did you enjoy the process? How did you react to the food that you ate? Pay attention and move on and getting back to the foods and activities that make you feel great.

Special Collaboration with Our Harvest & a Smart Life Offer

I'm excited to announce a very special collaboration with Our Harvest!

Our Harvest is a NY-based online farmers market and grocery delivery service that connects you to fresh, local food, sourced directly from small family farmers and food artisans. They offer a wide selection of farm-fresh seasonal produce; premium grass-fed meats; pasture-raised

poultry and dairy; never-frozen, sustainably-caught fish; and, clean-label pantry staples. Their food is meticulously sourced from over 150 regional farmers, food purveyors and suppliers who uphold the highest quality standards and adhere to the most responsible growing practices.

By working directly with small family farmers and artisanal purveyors, Our Harvest has created a system that is a win for farmers, consumers, and the community alike. With Our Harvest, your groceries are delivered from the farm straight to you, sometimes just hours after harvest, and you can taste the difference.



Why I choose to shop at Our Harvest

- They are an online farmers market and grocery store that connects you to real food, straight from local farmers and producers – the Smart Life way!
- They are a socially-responsible, mission-driven food

startup whose goal is to bring fresh, local and delicious food to communities at a fair price while fighting hunger .

- They source from small, local family farms who use sustainable and responsible growing practices.
- The vast majority of their products come from within 250 miles, with most from much closer (e.g. Long Island farms, Brooklyn-based artisanal producers, etc.)
- Our Harvest's supply chain is 100% transparent. They provide producer information and ingredient labels for every item listed on their site.
- They offer more than 725 choices of fresh, all-natural, high-quality food.
- For every order placed over \$25, Our Harvest donates a meal to a local food bank or pantry in your community to help combat hunger. They have donated well over 10,000 meals to date!

How it works

The Our Harvest model disrupts the current, conventional food retail system, where food travels long distances and sits on a shelf or in a warehouse until it is eventually sold.

Shoppers can choose from a selection of more than 725 products, all of which include the name and description of the small family farm or artisanal producer where it originated. Orders are placed the same way as with any online retailer; however, once an order is placed, their team then travels to the local farms to source the ordered items, which customers receive sometimes only hours after it was harvested! This sourcing model enables them to serve farm fresh fare at a price point that is fair to everyone along the supply chain.

Special Discount for the Smart Life Community

- As a member of the Smart Life community, you can receive 25% off your first order with code SMARTLIFE.
- Plus, every time you shop with Our Harvest, a percentage will be donated to Books for Kids Foundation. The mission of the Books for Kids Foundation is to promote literacy among all children with a special emphasis on low-income and at-risk preschool-aged children. Books for Kids creates libraries, donates books, and implements literacy programs to develop the critical early foundation and skills which young children need to be successful in life.
- Furthermore for every order above \$25, Our Harvest donates a meal to a local food bank or pantry.

Find our more about Our Harvest

Follow the on Instagram @ourharvest and Facebook @shopourharvest

Website: www.ourharvest.com

5 Smart Life Tips that Help you Feel Like a Pro in Your Kitchen

Why do I have a hard time peeling my hard boiled

eggs?

Your mistake: You immerse cold eggs in cold water. When you do that, the egg white hardens slowly and sticks to the egg shell.

Smart Life tip: Boil the water first and only then immerse the eggs. Cook for 7 minutes for totally hard white and almost done yolk. Cook for 9 minutes for totally hard yolks or 4 minutes for soft boiled eggs. Are you cooking more than one egg? Make sure you have enough water – one cup per egg.

How to keep broccoli and green beans green after cooking?

Your mistake: You are cooking your greens in boiling water for too long. Green vegetables contain chloroplasts that give them their green pigment. Hot water enhances that pigment, but not above 170 to 190 degrees Fahrenheit. Higher temperatures produce an anti-enzyme called chlorophyllase.

Smart Life tip: Fill up your pot with water and a pinch of sea salt. When the water is hot, but not boiling (176 degrees Fahrenheit), immerse your greens for only 3 minutes. Pour into a sifter and rinse well in cold water. To complete your prep, heat a pan with olive oil and gently toss your greens with extra virgin olive oil for another 3-4 minutes. Sprinkle with sea salt and serve immediately.

How to keep my green salad crisp?

Your mistake: You dress your salad too early and your salad dressing only contains oil and lemon juice.

Smart Life tip: Make a salad dressing from olive oil, lemon juice PLUS either a little mustard or raw honey. The mustard or honey will keep your oil and lemon juice mix intact, and that's how your salad will stay crisp longer.

How to keep my tomatoes fresh?

Your mistake: You store your tomatoes without their stem and place them stem up.

Smart Life tip: store your tomatoes with the stem side down to prevent their juices from drying up. Otherwise, try to buy tomatoes on their stem. The stems will keep the tomatoes fresh for a longer period.

How to make the perfect sunny side up omelette?

Your mistake: You pour the whole egg into your frying pan at once.

Smart Life tip: Separate the egg white and yolk. Beat the egg white and a pinch of sea salt with a fork. Pour the egg white into a warm/hot frying pan and cook until almost done. Then, toss the egg yolk on top of the white and continue cooking for 2-3 minutes or until yolk is cooked to your liking.

How to Grill like a Smart Life Pro

In summertime, everyone loves easy grilling as a way to enjoy the season with friends and family. Here are a few Smart Life tips and recipes to help you keep up your healthy habits and still enjoy the fun and flavors of a barbecue.

1. Start with Choosing High Quality Protein: Start by making a smart choice at the market. Look for sustainably raised meats, ideally 100% grass-fed or grass-finished beef and organic chicken. By choosing high quality meat you avoid added hormones and antibiotics. Furthermore, animals who are raised

in their natural environment and allowed to roam on pasture are the healthiest, and hence the healthiest to consume. When it comes to fish and seafood choose sustainable wild-caught fish like cod or Alaskan salmon, which are high in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Avoid fish with higher concentrations of mercury, like tuna and swordfish. Shop savvy with fish-buying guides like the **Monterey Bay Aquarium**.

2. Grill Smart. A little sear on meat can be delicious, but too much char can be dangerous. Using very high-heat cooking can cause the formation of HCAs (heterocyclic amines), chemicals that have been related to higher risk of some cancers. To avoid the formation of these chemicals, either start by cooking the meat in the oven and finish on the grill, or cook it to medium rare over moderate flame. Choosing smaller cuts and making kebabs instead of selecting larger cuts keeps grilling time shorter, too. Another way to keep HCAs away is to use marinates. Brushing on a thin layer of marinate or marinating meats ahead of cooking, and using acidic marinades with lemon juice or apple cider vinegar can be helpful in avoiding charring. It's best to use a low- or no-sugar marinade to avoid charring. Another way to reduce exposure is to use a rack or cedar plank on the grill; wild salmon is especially tasty prepared this way.

3. Choose Easy and Smart Sides: Instead of energy-sapping fries, potato or macaroni salad, opt for lots of greens and other fresh vegetables. Lightly grill some eggplant, asparagus, zucchini or summer squash slices by tossing these veggies in a bowl with a little EVOO, sea salt, fresh pepper and vegetable broth and fresh herbs. Salads and slaws are also easy to prep ahead. Veggies, raw or grilled, make the perfect accompaniments to grilled proteins and they fill you up with nutrients and fiber that help you cut down on your protein portion sizes.

4. Slow down, be social and have fun. It is ok to relax and enjoy a summer barbecue. If you slow down, enjoy the company

of your friends and family and make the gathering not just about the food, you will make the best choices. But if you end up eating or drinking a little too much or tasting an amazing dessert you would normally skip, simply savor it, and move on. No guilt! The next day go back to your healthier Smart Life choices and maybe join us for the 3-Day Smart Life Soup Cleanse to help reboot after the July 4th barbecue parties.

How to keep on track even in the toughest social situations

I've found these 6 strategies help me and my clients stay on track even in the toughest social situations:

1. Don't deviate from the norm. If you know you're going to attend a lavish holiday party, begin your day as you would any other. Don't skip meals to save calories and get to the party famished. Eat a protein- and healthy-fat-packed snack an hour before your holiday meal like celery sticks with almond butter or a green smoothie with a scoop of vegan protein. Protein and fat help cut cravings for sugar and processed carbs.

2. Start your holiday meal with smart food choices. Beginning with soup, fresh veggies or a salad and avoiding appetizers filled with refined flour and other unhealthy choices can prevent cravings. Volunteering to bring something to every gathering you attend guarantees there's a healthy choice.

3. Limit alcohol, especially on an empty stomach. Alcohol reduces your inhibitions and can lead you down a slippery slope of making bad choices. Most types of alcohol are also

filled with sugar and empty calories. Instead, ask for sparkling water with lemon or lime to drink before the meal and enjoy a glass of alcohol with the food.

4. Focus on the social interaction rather than dwelling on food. I like to sit next to someone I find genuinely interesting and engage in conversation with them and help the host with clean-up and serving the food so you stay engaged and less focused on the food.

5. Practice mindfulness. Take a couple of deep breaths before your meal and chew every bite slowly. Really focus on the flavors, colors and smells of your food. Try to put your fork down between bites. Practice ending the meal feeling satisfied yet energized and comfortable.

6. Remember your goals. Think about the way you want to feel before you hit those holiday parties and dinners. If you want to feel great, you're less likely to indulge in foods and activities that make you feel less than great. But if you do happen to slip, don't beat yourself up. Guilt is a toxic emotion that creates more damage. When things get off the "plan" (which they do), simply make a gentle U-turn. Sometimes treating yourself to sugary and other pleasure foods is exactly what the moment calls for. If you indulge a little, that's fine. Did you enjoy the process? How did you react to the food that you ate? Pay attention and move on and getting back to the foods and activities that make you feel great.

How to avoid the dreaded

winter weight gain

When the cold seasons come around, it's natural to crave heavier or more "comforting" foods. During the winter months, we shift to a phase of hibernation when all those light, delicious raw foods—including fruit, fresh veggies and big green salads – may not be enough to satisfy us. This is because for thousands of years this craving for more calorie dense and heavier foods kept humans alive during harsh winters when food became scarce. One of the things that I advocate with Smart Life clients is actually adjusting what you eat according to the seasons. If you crave warm foods during this time, you can get plenty of them, but eating grounding, hot and savory food doesn't have to translate to packing on the pounds!

My Smart Life eating plan can be adapted to every season. Eating well is not about perfection. We are human, so perfection is impossible. A better approach involves honoring your body and knowing what works best for you and just as importantly, what doesn't work.



1. Balance Cooked and Raw Veggies for Maximum Benefit

While you may not crave as much raw foods, it's good to still incorporate some raw/living nutrition into your diet, no matter how cold it is outside. You can get that by enjoying a green smoothie at room temperature rather than icy cold for breakfast or afternoon snack. Also, still have your salad and raw veggies before you dig into your hot meals or add warm veggies on top of cold salads. This can include roasted beets, steamed broccoli or sautéed lentils—in order to get some warmth without sacrificing the goodness of those enzymes and the hydrating effects a salad has on your body.

2. Soups Loaded with Vegetables are Warming and Filling.

Soups, which I love, give you more digestible nutrients, and create more satiety – you feel nourished, and in fact you are. Soups, especially the organic and vegan soups I create for the **Smart Life soup cleanse**, are filled with plant-based protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. Moreover, because soups are easy-to-digest, all the organs like the liver and kidneys are given a little time off and they can work on disposing of toxins. These are some of my favorite winter soups:

Sweet Potato, Kale & Chickpea Soup

Lemon Chicken & Kale Soup

Butternut Squash Soup

3. Healthy Grains Can Be Warming and Satisfying:

Complex grains like brown rice, quinoa or buckwheat can be a comfort food when topped with steamed or roasted vegetables instead of heavy ingredients and filler that typically leave you feeling uncomfortable after eating. Alternatively, you can cook a pilaf of your favorite grain with chopped veggies.

Smart Life clients always enjoy this quick and easy recipe of

Quinoa Pilaf



4. Warm-up with Warm Drinks

There's no other time I hear that people are more susceptible to giving back in to the coffee or sugar-laden drinks from coffee shops than in the winter. The spicy warmth (or just the warmth!), calls to you when it's cold, and it could feel nearly impossible to resist unless you have a few healthy recipe alternatives tucked away in your mind. I'm a BIG fan of hot tea and other hot beverages during the fall and winter months. Here are some great options:

Guilt Free Vegan Hot Chocolate

I have a recipe for a Guilt-Free Hot Chocolate made up of cashews, dates and raw cacao powder. It is simple and incredibly satisfying, especially on a cold night. Find the recipe [here](#).



Hot Water with Lemon:

This is a staple in the Smart Life eating program, but it's a good alternative to coffee first thing in the morning. It helps you detox, it's warm, and the citrus helps perk you up.



Enjoy a warm smoothie:

Have a warm smoothie. Try my recipe here.



Spiced Apple Cider:

While I wouldn't usually cook fruit juice or fruit, this is a nice treat occasionally, if you are really feeling like it. Get an organic, no sugar added apple juice and heat it on the stove at a low-medium temperature and blend in to taste some spices like: cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, clove, vanilla extract. Once warm, pour the spiced cider into a giant mug and add just a little raw honey (about $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp), to sweeten it up.

Just like anything in life, preparation is key to staying lean and healthy especially during the holidays. As we've learned, while your body may crave warmer and more calorie-dense foods, that doesn't mean you have to start holding on to more weight!

Living the Smart Life is all about listening and adapting to your body's needs, including changes in the seasons. All you have to do is "trust and adjust"! Just as you ate lighter and more raw over the summer, you can shift to more cooked and savory items now that we're in the cold seasons. As long as you keep it simple, clean, largely fiber-filled (i.e. plant-based)—you'll be doing great! You may even emerge from the fall and winter months more fit than when they began.