

# 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 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 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



=8g

1 CUP LENTILS



=18g



1 CUP CHICKPEAS



=14.5g

1/2 ORGANIC SOY MILK



=7g

2 TBSP HEMP SEEDS



=11g

2 TBSP CHIA SEEDS



=10g

2 TBSP SPIRULINA



=8g



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# Protein-Packed Plant Diets That Work

Most people think steak, chicken or fish when they think of protein-packed meals. That's not the entire truth. And unfortunately, this myth is fueled by a healthy meat industry that profits when you buy their propaganda. Turns out, a

plant-based diet can pack the same punch as other sources. A complete protein is one that contains all nine essential amino acids that you need to consume through food: histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan and valine.

### **Try these 3 tricks for the ultimate protein-packed plant diet:**

1. **Eat a variety of whole foods.** Loading your diet with different vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, peas, beans, legumes and fruits optimizes the amount of the nine essential amino acids you're giving your body. The World Health Organization recommends that 5 percent of our daily calories (a little more if we training or working out) come from protein. On average, fruits have about 5 percent of their calories from protein. Vegetables, 20 to 50 percent. Sprouted seeds, beans and grains, 10 to 25 percent.
2. **Eat more raw foods.** Studies have shown that baking or grilling makes about half of the protein in the food unusable to the human body. Raw or living proteins are an even better source than cooked plant foods. We need 25 to 35 grams of protein a day. That means that if you eat 2,000 calories per day of raw plant foods containing average of 10 percent of their calories from protein, you would get 200 calories worth of protein, or 50 grams. This is more than adequate to support great health. Optimize your intake of raw foods by adding a fresh raw vegetable salad to every meal.
3. **Eat more superfoods: Plant-based sources of complete protein** are referred to as 'superfoods' and they're easily obtainable from supermarkets, health food stores and online. They include:
  - Hemp seeds
  - Quinoa
  - Amaranth
  - Buckwheat

- Bee pollen
  - Goji berries
  - Chia seeds
  - Flax seeds
  - Spirulina and chlorella
  - Dulse (a sea vegetable)
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## 5 Reasons to Love Quinoa

Quinoa may be a super food, but most people don't find it super interesting. I disagree! It packs the same amount of protein per serving as milk, while giving you loads of nutrients, vitamins and minerals. It can easily stand alone in meals or be incorporated into a variety of healthy and flavorful recipes.

Not convinced to put this powerful grain into your meal rotation yet? Maybe these five reasons will change your mind:

1. **It super fuels your body with energy.** Cooked quinoa contains approximately 8 grams of protein per cup, according to the USDA. It's also one of the few vegetarian complete proteins, meaning it contains all 9 essential amino acids your body needs. Try it for breakfast or lunch to help you power through tough afternoon workouts or long days at work.
2. **It stimulates healthy digestion.** One cup of quinoa contains a healthy serving of 5 grams of fiber, which improves digestion, lowers cholesterol levels, controls blood sugar and helps you maintain a healthy weight.
3. **It's a nutrient-dense food.** Quinoa is an amazing source of iron, magnesium, calcium, potassium, folate (a B vitamin) and more. In fact, a recent study showed that

the grain contains the same concentrated amounts of two flavonoids, quercetin and kaempferol, as found in antioxidant-rich berries like cranberries and lionberries.

4. **It's naturally low in calories.** One cup of quinoa boasts just 222 calories. Because of its high levels of protein and fiber, this healthy carbohydrate doesn't convert quickly to sugar in your body. This means it doesn't spike your blood sugar levels and keeps you feeling fuller longer.
5. **It's a versatile grain.** Breakfast, lunch and dinner? Check, check and check! Quinoa can be prepared in delicious ways at all mealtimes. And research has shown that this superfood's nutrient profile isn't compromised by boiling, steaming or simmering. Toss it in salads, stir-fries, soup and porridge, or shape it into a veggie burger or a sushi roll.

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## Ronit's Berry Energy Smoothie

I love to drink a cup of this smoothie in the morning before my workout. I save another 1/2 cup for refueling afterward. Store the extra in your refrigerator for a snack later that day.

- 2 cups unsweetened almond milk or water
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$  packet of frozen Sambazon Acai Berry + Guarana Smoothie Pack
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Vegan Protein Factors powder in Vanilla Bean flavor

- Fresh strawberries
- Fresh blueberries

**Blend all ingredients and enjoy a boost of energy!**