
Guide to transitioning to whole food plant-based diet

+ a full day's
balanced meal plan
with recipes included

A FULL DAY'S BALANCED MEAL PLAN
with recipes included

by: nele liivlaid

HEALTHIER
INSIDE AND OUT

BE HAPPIER

FOOD WITHOUT
REGRET

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introduction

My whole foods plant-based journey has led me to the practical tips and recipes I'm sharing with you in this booklet and in my book ***Plant-Based Made Easy: The Complete Practical Guide to Transitioning to Healthy Whole Food Diet***. It's the perfect way to gather all that I've learned and help others like you create a healthy lifestyle.

Eating a whole food plant-based diet is truly a way of life for me and my family now and I wanted to pass along the lessons I've learned. That's why while this booklet is a practical handbook; I've also included a short theory part. I did this because I realize you will all be at different stages of making changes. Some of you already know all the benefits but some of you are looking for advice on adjusting to a whole food plant-based diet. To all of you, I hope you bite into this booklet ***and find a healthier you.***

This booklet is divided into 3 parts.

In **PART 1** you will learn about the whole food plant-based diet.

You will read:

- an overview of macronutrients and micronutrients and their part in our bodies, and
- why you should test your blood before starting the whole food plant-based diet.

In addition, in my book *Plant-Based Made Easy* you'll be able to learn:

- about the importance of supporting blood sugar control and how it affects our cravings and needs, and
- about the role of exercise in your new lifestyle.

PART 2 is the practical part of the booklet. I'll give you real-life tips on how to make your transition to a whole food plant-based diet easy and permanent. You'll learn:

- how to prepare your kitchen and pantry,
 - how to compile a balanced meal plan so you don't miss out on any necessary nutrients your body needs for fuel,
 - how to dine out as well as how to host and visit friends,
 - how to handle challenges with family and friends who disagree with your eating change, and
 - how to manage routines in your house.
- In addition, in my book *Plant-Based Made Easy* you'll be able to learn:
- how to shop and read labels and not be fooled by marketing message,
 - how to substitute animal-based ingredients in recipes as well as cooking without oil and sugar,



- how to eat a whole food plant-based diet while travelling,
- how to get your family and kids on board with you, and
- how to budget for a whole food plant-based meal. (Psst, it's actually not as expensive as you think. You'll see.)

In **PART 3**, you'll find a full day's balanced meal plan: breakfast, snacks, dinner and dessert.

In the book you can take advantage of a **full 2-week balanced meal plan**. It'll make your life easier. There are breakfasts, snacks, lunches, dinners and desserts all organized in a healthy and balanced manner with clear instructions and photos.

The book also has a **PART 4!** You'll find success stories from people around the world who have made the switch to a whole food plant-based diet. Authors are from Kansas, U.S.; Texas, U.S.; Tallinn, Estonia; London, UK; Phoenix, U.S.; Vancouver, Canada; and from North Carolina, U.S.

These stories are from different people with different lifestyles and experiences who have one thing in common – the whole food plant-based diet changed their lives for the better. They are sharing their stories with you to inspire and motivate you!



Eat well and feel better!

nele



WANT TO GET STARTED NOW?

Save weeks and months of research and experimenting.

Get your copy of [**PLANT-BASED MADE EASY: The Complete Practical Guide to Transitioning to Healthy Whole Food Diet**](#)

Rebalance your body and improve quality of your life!

my story



As the founder of the [Nutriplanet Health Hub](#), I'm passionate about promoting a whole food plant-based lifestyle. I advocate for proper nutrition plus being active, something I know a lot about now, but I wasn't always this way.

My journey began in my early twenties when I developed an eating disorder. The only thing I could see in food was calories... and calories make you fat, right? So, I had periods of eating and periods of fasting as well as bulimic episodes. I was always skinny, but often constipated and felt miserable desperately seeking peace between food and myself.

As years went by, I found some kind of equilibrium, but it still meant I needed to eat and then fast and exercise to get rid of all the calories I'd been consuming.

In 2012 I discovered [The China Study](#) and my world turned upside down. I was finally at home when it came to eating and food. I started to eat whole food plant-based diet with no need to watch those calories again.

Seeing others battle with well-being and weight makes me sad. I often hear people blame their "bad" genes for being overweight. But that's just an excuse. As the mother of a young boy, I know it's tough trying to read up on healthy foods and take the time to prepare good meals. However, ***it's worth the time and effort when it means better health for you and your family.***

My husband and I had been eating Mediterranean style (with lots of oil) since 2001 but we didn't feel good. We ditched dairy in autumn 2011, which brought some improvements. Both of us felt dairy wasn't a natural human food and our digestive systems could not have agreed more.

I made the total change to whole food plant-based eating in the spring of 2012 when I read T. Colin Campbell's *The China Study*, which was a total paradigm shift for me. That's when I decided to switch my family to whole food plant-based eating and have never looked back. I created new meal plans using nutrition data programs to make sure we got all the necessary energy and nutrients.

My husband has been the beneficiary of making the switch to healthier eating after being hospitalized with gallstones for a third time. The surgeon told him it was absolutely necessary to cut him open in order to treat the problem. He refused and instead started eating my plant-based meal plans. He got rid of his symptoms and lost 15 kilos (33 pounds) in six months.

However, my story doesn't end there. I too screwed up, even with WFPB diet! I started eating too much of high glycemic foods, such as dried fruit as well as baked grains in combination with nuts and seeds. Having a history with antibiotics, it didn't take long before I developed Candida overgrowth. However, I chose to ignore my symptoms not to give up my favourite foods. Do you relate?

I finally pulled myself together and left the comfort zone once again to start Candida diet in August 2016 after 2 years of postponing. So, the research began again – I found a lot of information on Candida diet online and purchased a few thorough books as well, but what I didn't find was a diet suitable for vegans. Consequently, I took all the information I'd gathered from my research and started to compile a balanced meal plan that'd cover all the macros as well as micros.

At first it was only for myself, but as time went by and I saw that the meal plan is working and also sharing my journey through blog and social media, people started to inquire about it. So, as the demand grew, I developed the plan further and asked a few people to try it out. I was so glad to see that they were happy with the results! By now, vegan Candida meal plans and balanced blood sugar on WFPB diet has become my niche.



INTERESTED TO LEARN MORE ON VEGAN CANDIDA DIET?

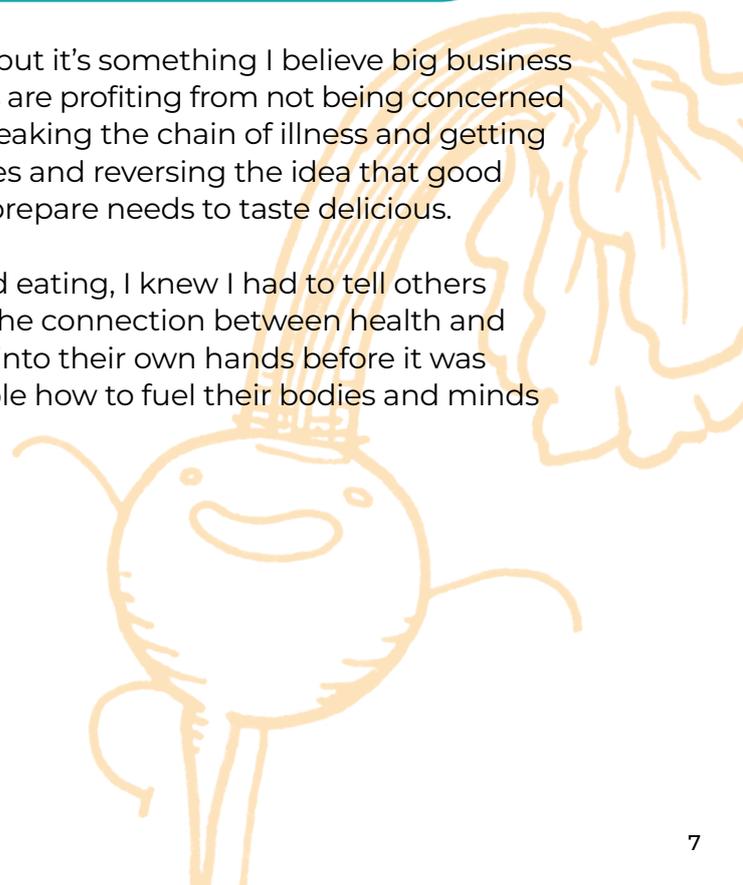
Save weeks and months of research and experimenting.
Get your FREE copy of my [Guide to Candida Overgrowth](#) and learn what my [Candida Meal Plans](#) are all about!
Rebalance your body and improve quality of your life!

Whole food plant-based eating isn't top secret but it's something I believe big business would prefer you didn't know. I think companies are profiting from not being concerned about people's health and the environment. Breaking the chain of illness and getting people moving means making informed choices and reversing the idea that good food can't be tasty. I love to eat and anything I prepare needs to taste delicious.

When I started looking into healthy lifestyle and eating, I knew I had to tell others about what I discovered. I knew I had to share the connection between health and nutrition so people could take their well-being into their own hands before it was too late. That's why I'm on a journey to tell people how to fuel their bodies and minds through a healthy whole food plant-based diet.

Yours truly,

nele



what is a whole food plant-based diet?

In this booklet, I focus on a healthy and balanced diet: the best way for a long and great life. Living healthfully doesn't just mean eating well. It means increasing physical activity, getting enough sleep at night and making the most of what makes you happy. It also means avoiding things that are bad for you, like smoking and over-indulging in alcohol.

A whole food plant-based diet simply means you eat plant-based food in its natural form like favouring tomatoes instead of ketchup, whole grains instead of white bread, olives, nuts and seeds instead of oils, etc.

I believe this is the healthiest way of eating. I'm not going to debate whether humans are omnivores or opt for vegetarian diets. That argument has been debated for a long time and continues. **My goal is to introduce how to eat the most natural, healthiest and diverse way.** It doesn't matter whether you are omnivore or vegetarian, it's important to plan your menu with plenty of plant-based whole foods and reduce or completely cut out animal products such as dairy, meat, eggs, fish etc. It has been widely proven that high consumption of processed foods (which have low beneficial nutrient content but high in added sugar, fat and salt) and meat is associated with adverse health effects and chronic diseases.

If you don't want to be a full-time vegetarian and you want to leave some animal foods on your menu, you should still be guided by the whole food rule. That means, eating in a way that your conscience and body will be satisfied.



Foods to Eat on Whole Food Plant-Based Diet

By following a whole food plant-based diet, i.e. eating plant-based meals, it's important to eat lots of fresh plant foods, but there's no need to eat everything raw. You can still heat, freeze and dry food.

Health experts worldwide recommend eating fresh fruits and vegetables on daily basis to get the vitamins and plant enzymes that can't withstand heat. The common recommendation is that at least 50% of your fruits and veggies should be raw.

Eat from the following food groups:

Eat as much as you want:

- **Fruits and berries** – apples, bananas, mangoes, pears, strawberries, blueberries, cranberries, blackberries, grapes, citrus fruits etc.
- **Non-starchy vegetables and leafy greens** – lettuce, kale, collard greens, chard, spinach, bell peppers, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, eggplant, summer squash, green beans etc.
- **Starchy vegetables and tubers** – potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squashes, beetroot, parsnip, yams etc.
- **Legumes** – lentils, beans, chickpeas, mung beans, peas.
- **Whole grains** – buckwheat, millet, quinoa, barley, rye, spelt, amaranth, brown rice

Eat in moderation:

- **Nuts, seeds and nut/seed butters** – chia seeds, flaxseeds, walnuts, Brazil nuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, hemp seeds, peanuts, cashews etc.
- **Soy products** – tofu, tempeh, natto, soymilk.
- **Plant-based milks**
- **Whole grain flour products** – pasta, bread, baked goods.



More and more people are making their food choices based on vegetarian principles. They exclude all animal products and often avoid cosmetics and other products, which may be made with animal materials. However, not all plant-based products are healthy. Here's a list of some plant-based whole foods to avoid:

AVOID	HEALTHY REPLACEMENT
White flour	Whole-grain flour
Refined grains (cereal flakes, white rice, white semolina)	Whole-grain flakes, whole-grain rice, whole-grain semolina
White bread	Whole-grain bread
White sugar (watch out for added sugars on labels)	Dried fruits (raisins, dates, figs), sweet fruits, and in small quantities agave syrup, maple syrup, stevia, xylitol, jaggery, palm sugar, raw cane sugar (see more in chapter Altering Recipes in my book Plant-Based Made Easy)
White salt	Rose salt, sea salt, celery salt
Vegan margarines, vegan cooking creams, vegan ice creams, vegan bakes such as cookies, muffins; faux meat (avoid trans fatty acids on labels)	Check chapter Altering Recipes in my book Plant-Based Made Easy for replacements
Olive oil	Olives
Seed/nut oils	Seeds, nuts, seed/nut butters
Store jams	Applesauce, freshly homemade berry and fruit smoothies
Ketchup	Tomatoes, homemade tomato sauce
Animal products (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy)	Grains, legumes, nuts, seeds. Check more in chapter Altering Recipes in my book Plant-Based Made Easy for replacements



What About Soy?

Soy is often a controversial topic. There are mainly three kinds of accusations that are being made:

- Soy grows men boobs and contributes to breast cancer.
- Soy farming causes rainforest destruction.
- Soy is genetically engineered.

Let's look at those claims one-by-one.

Debunking the Health Concerns Associated with Soy

A [2020 study](#) shows that regular consumption of fermented soy foods — specifically miso and natto — may **reduce all-cause mortality risk**.

Another [2019 study](#) discussed how the soy isoflavone genistein could **have therapeutic effects on menopause symptoms** like hot flashes, as well as several menopause-related diseases, with few to no adverse side effects.

A [2019 study](#) published in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that regularly eating soy foods was **protective against metabolic syndrome**. And the most protective effects were seen among those who ate soy foods often.

A [2020 meta-analysis](#) examined 52 research trials and found that soy isoflavones could help prevent osteoporosis in people of all weights.

A huge 2003 study published in [the Journal of the National Cancer Institute](#) found that women with a high intake of soy (in the form of miso soup) reduced their risk of breast cancer by 54% compared to women with a low intake of soy, and a [2010 study](#) published in JAMA concluded that **soy products reduce rates of breast cancer recurrence** and cancer mortality.

Numerous studies have shown that there's no rise in estrogen levels among men who consume soy foods, nor is there an effect on testosterone levels. A [2010 meta-analysis](#) of 15 placebo-controlled studies concluded that “neither soy foods nor isoflavone supplements alter the measures of bioavailable testosterone concentrations in men.”

What About Deforestation?

Approximately [three-quarters](#) of the world's soy harvest is used as livestock feed. This isn't just inefficient. It's a protein factory in reverse. Why? Because it takes about 12 pounds of feed (such as corn or soy) to create one pound of feedlot beef.

For pork, it takes about seven pounds of feed to produce one pound of edible meat, and for chicken, about four. So, as counterintuitive as it may sound, if you want to save farmland and rain forests from being turned into soy plantations, you might be most effective if you eat more soy and less meat. **There's more soy in a pound of feedlot beef than there is in a pound of tofu.**

What About GMO Soy?

In 2018, [94%](#) of the soybeans in the US were genetically engineered. Most genetically engineered soy has been directly sprayed with glyphosate and other herbicides, some of which are carcinogenic. Glyphosate has made recent news for being the subject of more than 10,000 cancer lawsuits. Choose organic or non-GMO certified soy to steer clear.

Also, most GMO soy is used for food for animals, predominantly poultry and livestock, and making soybean oil. It is also used as ingredients (lecithin, emulsifiers, and proteins) in processed foods.

Which Soy Products to Eat?

Whenever you can, choose organic non-GMO whole soy products such as edamame beans, soy curls, cooked or [roasted whole soybeans](#), tempeh, miso, and natto. You can even make a [hummus](#) with cooked soybeans.

Second best are minimally processed soy products i.e., tofu (silken and firm), additive-free soymilk, tamari.

Steer clear of non-organic GMO soy as well as overly processed soy products e.g., isolated soy protein, soy oil, and products containing these processed isolates.

Soy Allergy

Finally, there are people allergic to soy. In such an [allergy](#), the proteins in soybeans bind to IgE antibodies made by the person's immune system, causing the immune system to regard soy as a foreign invader requiring destruction. This triggers an excessive immune response that results in an allergic reaction. Obviously, if you have a genuine soy allergy, you need to avoid soy.

macronutrients: carbs, proteins and fatty acids

Macronutrients

When talking about nutrients we use the terms macronutrients and micronutrients. Nutrients that the body needs in smaller amounts (milligrams or micrograms) are called micronutrients. These include vitamins and minerals. Nutrients that the body needs in large amounts are called macronutrients. Macronutrients are carbohydrates, proteins, fats and water. A healthy and balanced diet needs to contain all these nutrient types.

Carbs – the misconception

Carbohydrates are necessary on a daily basis and play an important role in a balanced and healthy diet. Carbs provide us with energy and contain fibre that help with the digestion of our food. The best-known sources of carbohydrates are grains, such as rice, wheat, buckwheat, quinoa and products based on these grains like pasta, various breads, etc. Other good sources of carbohydrates are fruits and vegetables, especially legumes. The sweetness of fruit comes from natural sugars that are also carbohydrates. The veggies containing the most quantities of carbohydrates are those grown beneath the ground such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, beetroot and carrots.

Every now and then, we hear that we shouldn't be eating carbohydrates because they make us gain weight. This is only partially true. If you eat a lot of carbs, you'll put on pounds. You'll also find the numbers on the scale rising if you eat a lot of refined foods like white wheat pasta and white rice. When planning your daily dosage of carbohydrates, pay close attention to the quality as well as the quantity. **If you're eating mostly whole foods, following the rules of healthy eating (the plate rule) and keep regular mealtimes, carbs won't be a threat to your waistline.**

The daily need for energy is determined by multiple variables such as gender, age and your level of physical activity. When you're active, your food has to give you more energy, so your body doesn't get tired. If you're not getting enough energy from your meals, you may feel fatigued even after a good sleep as well as be constantly exhausted throughout the day. Your mood may be affected too, and you'll be irritable. This comes from the fact that a lack of carbohydrates inhibits the release of the "happy hormone" serotonin. Serotonin's role in our bodies is to regulate our moods and tell us when we're full.



Fibre

Fibre plays a vital role in keeping our digestive system healthy and removing waste from the body. Fibre is divided into soluble and insoluble categories. Soluble fibre binds waste like excess cholesterol and toxins and removes them from the body. Insoluble fibre takes care of cleaning the digestive system by “brushing” it from the inside.

The best way to consume fibre is to be eating foods that are rich in fibre content such as berries, fruits, vegetables and wholegrain foods. Healthy fibre is also found in legumes. **When you're eating plant-based whole foods, there's no danger of lacking in fibre.** Problems may arise when your diet contains a lot of refined foods and animal products because these food types contain only a small amount of fibre. A lack of fibre often leads to constipation or various chronic illnesses when the body's waste isn't being disposed.

Protein – amino acids, quality of protein

Protein plays a vital role in rejuvenating our bodies so eating high quality protein is important. **We need protein in order to generate new tissue.** Protein is linked to many significant functions in the body. For example, enzymes are proteins that trigger the body's metabolism. Also, our immune system needs protein in order to function properly.

The quality of protein is measured by the amount of amino acids the body needs for producing the proteins necessary for normal functioning. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. Essential amino acids are amino acids the body is unable to produce independently and can only acquire through food intake. The standard for the most complete protein is an egg and the quality of protein content for any other food is measured in relation to it. When your diet includes foods from animal origins, the required proteins are usually easily acquired. If you're eating a plant-based diet only, getting all your amino acids requires close attention. Here are some essential guidelines:

- Combine your legumes and grains at the same mealtime. This ensures all essential amino acids are included in your food. The science world is split when it comes to doing this though. One side considers it important and the other doesn't. Until scientists have fully agreed upon whether a plant-based diet provides all the essential amino acids by having oatmeal in the morning and lentil soup for lunch, I suggest eating these two food groups during one mealtime.

- In order to get sufficient amounts of protein, use flours made of both legumes and grains. Flour contains less fibre and the proteins are more easily digestible. For example, add some legume-based flour to your smoothie.
- Amino acids are also represented in many other food groups so include leafy green vegetables, algae, nuts and seeds regularly in your diet.
- Trust your body but also listen to advice. If you're a strictly plant-based eater but your diet consists of unconscious choices, talk to a competent nutritionist. He or she will be able to help you create a balanced daily diet. Even if you're already consciously making an effort to balance your diet, it's still a good idea to double-check your protein consumption levels every now and then. There are many national food related programs on the internet that enable you to evaluate the quantity and quality of the amino acids in your diet. Again, you can also turn to a competent nutritionist for advice on making sure you don't have a protein deficiency.

Fatty acids

The main role of fat is to provide and store energy. Our fat layer protects the body from heat loss as well as guards against potential injuries to our inner organs. Fats are also necessary in digesting fat-soluble vitamins such as K, E, D, A and Q10. Similarly, to the proteins and carbohydrates, the quality is an important factor when it comes to fatty acid intake. **Pay attention to your diet and make sure it contains all necessary fatty acids.** There are many references claiming that various fatty acids must be balanced for optimal health. This claim has found supporting evidence in many scientific works and in a few studies about the eating habits of our ancestors. Many cardiovascular diseases and several types of cancer are particularly linked to the incorrect consumption of fatty acids.

Most official national dietary guidelines say don't eat too much fat. This could lead to widespread problems such as excess weight, which in turn, ignites many health risks. To keep heart healthy, watch the fat content of your diet.

Being whole food promoter, I prefer to provide my body with the necessary fatty acids by eating seeds, nuts, almonds, olives, avocados and algae. While eating these foods rich in fatty acids in their most natural form, I also get plenty of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and other phytonutrients. For example, besides omega 9 fatty acids, olives also contain vitamin E, which helps to maintain youthful looks, and are a rich source for polyphenols, which supports cardiac health. This makes mealtimes more nutritious and healthier than just preparing meals with plant-based oils. **Adding plant-based oils to food, however, makes it easy to slip into the overconsumption of fats.**

While fats are a necessary part of our daily diet, keep a close eye on their quality and quantities. There's plenty of literature explaining how plant-based oils are essential to our bodies and good health. For example, olive oil is praised for aiding in cardiovascular health. Flax and hemp oils, rich in omega 3 fatty acids, are described as brain enhancers and anti-inflammatories. One common mistake though, is when these healthy oils are added to our already unhealthy diet rich in other fats, leading to health disorders.

To make things easier when planning your diet, **here's a list on how to manage your daily fat intake:**

Monounsaturated omega 9 fatty acids: essential for cell membranes. For healthy functioning cells, we need to provide the cell membranes with omega 9 fatty acids. Your diet should contain one of the following: olives, avocado or almonds.

Polyunsaturated omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids: some of these fatty acids are essential, which means they must be included in our daily food intake. These fatty acids are omega 3 fatty acids (alpha linolenic acid or ALA) and omega 6 fatty acids (linoleic acid or LA). Omega 3 fatty acids are known for their anti-inflammatory properties, which makes them necessary for the prevention of several diseases. They provide for the building and functioning of cell membranes and without these components, the cells are unable to exist. Even though omega 6 fatty acids aren't as well known, they are also necessary for bodily functions, mostly heart health.

It's important to pay attention to the correct **balance between omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids**. This is necessary because with the right dosage and combinations, these fatty acids help prevent several diseases such as cancer, diabetes, arthritis, dermatitis and, most notably, a majority of cardiovascular illnesses. Studies about the dieting habits of earlier generations show that our ancestors had a perfect omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acid balance – 1:1.

In modern days, this ratio can sometimes even skew towards 1:20 or be even more unbalanced. This is mainly due to the fact that omega 6 fatty acids are represented in a wide variety of foods that we're prone to overconsuming. In order to restore the balance, eat seeds and nuts rich in omega 3 fatty acids such as ground flaxseeds, hemp or chia seeds or walnuts. The seeds should be ground in order to make them easily digestible and your body can reach the fatty acids hidden under the shell. It's good to add seeds and nuts to your smoothies, morning porridge or salads.

Check nut/seed cocktails with good omega 3 and omega 6 ratio from chapter Compiling Menu in my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#).

Algae powders make good additions to smoothies. For plant-based dieters, various types of algae are good sources for omega 3 fatty acids. Algae contain higher types of omega 3 fatty acids than seeds and nuts. If you're doubtful about whether your intake of omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids is sufficient, you can add [algae based omega 3 supplements to your diet](#).

Saturated fatty acid: this is another type of necessary fatty acids, but the quantities must be carefully monitored. Cell membranes are usually comprised of several chemical compounds, among which there are phospholipids. The molecule of this compound is usually made up of two types of fatty acid: a saturated and an unsaturated one.

The unhealthy impact of fats is usually the result of excessive consumption of saturated fatty acids. This common problem can be from eating lots of food from animal origins. **The highest content of saturated fatty acids is found in red meat, milk and its derivatives**, as well as other animal-based foods containing these products. Plant-based sources for saturated fatty acids are coconut and palm oils as well as cacao butter. The fatty acids in coconut meat enhances our metabolism and helps keep weight in check, fight harmful bacteria and is healthy for your skin, etc. Unfortunately, animal-based saturated fatty acids don't share these beneficial properties. For those of you on a plant-based diet, add coconut meat to your diet or add coconut milk or cream to your smoothies.

Trans fats: not necessary for our bodies in any way and can be safely called the unhealthiest fats. These are fatty acids present in hydrogenated plant fats that are widely used in the modern food industry. Trans fats are unsaturated but behave in our body as saturated fats. These fats make our cell membranes more rigid and inhibit normal performance of cells. Many studies have discovered and proven the direct link between trans fats and cardiovascular diseases. Also, trans fats prevent the transformation of essential fatty acids into higher forms of fatty acids, which are necessary for a healthy functioning brain.



vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals

In this chapter you'll discover:

- The role vitamins and minerals play in our bodies
- The best plant-based food sources
- What it means to eat a rainbow every day
- Which supplements we need

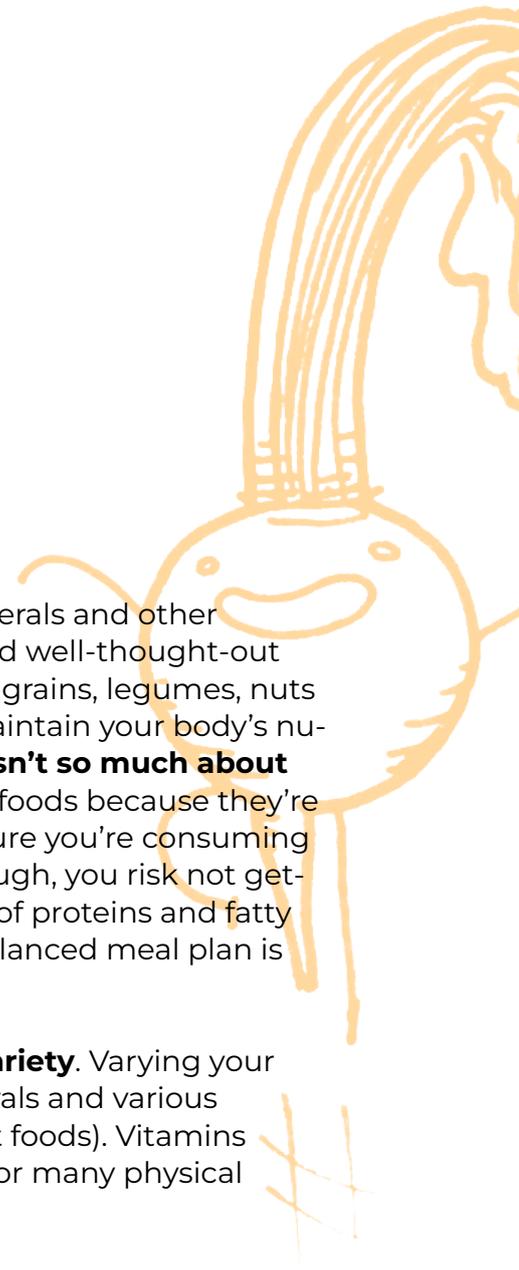
I truly believe that food is the best way to get the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients we all need to be healthy. This requires a balanced and well-thought-out menu: rich in fruits, berries and vegetables, leafy greens, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. You should be eating all these foods every day to maintain your body's nutritional needs. In practice though, **planning a healthy menu isn't so much about food quantity but food quality**. For this reason, we love whole foods because they're the best sources of nutrients. However, it's advisable to make sure you're consuming a sufficient amount of food during the day. If you don't eat enough, you risk not getting enough macro and micronutrients. This can lead to a lack of proteins and fatty acids and deplete your energy levels. An example menu of a balanced meal plan is included on the final pages of this booklet.

When planning your diet, **it's important to pay attention to variety**. Varying your food enables your body to get all the necessary vitamins, minerals and various plant-based phytonutrients (natural compounds found in plant foods). Vitamins and minerals don't give you extra energy but they're essential for many physical processes and efficient functioning of the immune system.

VITAMIN A

Vitamin A is essential for: healthy skin, soft tissue and eyesight, among other things.

Vitamin A plant-based food sources: fruits and vegetables containing beta-carotene, carrots, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, leafy greens, tomatoes, apricots, winter squash, red bell pepper, broccoli, grapefruit, rose hips and mangoes.



VITAMIN B1

Essential for: your heart, strong muscles, carbohydrate, fat and amino acid metabolism, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: whole and fortified grain products, dried beans, wheat germ, nuts (hazelnuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds), sprouted kidney beans and brewer's yeast.

VITAMIN B2

Essential for: carbohydrate and fat metabolism, your vision, maintaining healthy skin, nails and hair, among other things. Symptoms of deficiency are painful cracks in the corners of the mouth and on the lips.

Plant-based food sources: leafy greens, beans and nuts, almonds, portabella mushrooms, and spices like thyme, tarragon, caraway seeds.

VITAMIN B3

Essential for: carbohydrate and fat metabolism, the nervous system and healthy skin, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: nuts and grains.

VITAMIN B5

Essential for: your metabolism, adrenal glands, digestive system, fighting stress and aging, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: whole grains, dried beans and broccoli.

VITAMIN B6

Vitamin B6 is essential for: your brain functions, nerves and skin, B12 vitamin absorption, fats metabolism and red blood cells, among other things.

Vitamin B6 plant-based food sources: whole and fortified grain products, bananas, beans, nuts and wheat germ.

VITAMIN B7 (Biotin)

Essential for: cell growth and development, fats and carbohydrate metabolism, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: peanuts, mushrooms, bananas and whole grains.

VITAMIN B9 (Folate)

Essential for: your nervous system and production of DNA, fetus development, formation of normal red blood cells and prevention of anemia, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: leafy greens, wheat germ, beans, whole and fortified grains, broccoli and citrus fruits.

VITAMIN B12

Essential for: your nervous system, amino acids metabolism, formation of normal red blood cells and slowing aging, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: nutritional yeast, fortified cereals and other fortified products.

VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is essential for: formation, growth and repair of bone and teeth, skin and capillaries, blocking free radicals, collagen and elastin formation and the immune system, among other things.

Vitamin C plant-based food sources: citrus fruits and juices, strawberries, peppers, broccoli, potatoes, kale, cauliflower and cantaloupe.

VITAMIN D

Essential for: calcium and phosphorus absorption, healthy bones and skin and boosting your immune system, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: fortified foods. Vitamin D is also produced by your body in response to sunlight...the best source!

VITAMIN E

Essential for: slowing cell aging and acting as an antioxidant, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: tofu, sunflower seeds, almonds and other nuts, wheat germ, leafy greens, seeds, olives and whole grains.

VITAMIN K

Essential for: bone growth and prevention of blood clotting, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: cauliflower, broccoli, leafy greens, cabbage and soybeans. Bacteria in our intestines produce most of the vitamin K our bodies need.

CALCIUM

Essential for: healthy bones and teeth, heart regulation, nerves and muscles and prevents blood clotting, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: sesame seeds, cinnamon, poppy seeds, oranges, caraway seeds, dark green leafy vegetables and fortified foods (preferably seaweed derived calcium supplements, which are better absorbed).

CHLORIDE

Essential for: regulating your body's acid balance and osmoregulation, among other things.

Food sources: table salt.

CHROMIUM

Essential for: enhancing insulin and controlling your appetite, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: whole grains, nuts, brewer's yeast, mushrooms, fruits and vegetables.

COPPER

Essential for: formation of red blood cells, strong bones and as an antioxidant, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: dried beans, nuts and seeds, cocoa, avocados, tomatoes, whole grains and mushrooms.

FLOURIDE

Essential for: building strong bones and teeth and cavity prevention, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: fluoridated water, foods grown or cooked in it, seaweeds and teas.

IODINE

Essential for: a healthy thyroid and hormone production, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: seaweeds such as agar-agar and kombu as well as iodized salt.

IRON

Essential for: hemoglobin production, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: beans, nuts, dried fruits, green leafy vegetables, strawberries, enriched grain products and fortified cereals. Cooking in iron pots adds iron, especially to acidic foods.

MAGNESIUM

Essential for: your heart and blood vessels, normal nerve function and bones and teeth, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: wheat bran, whole grains, leafy green vegetables, nuts and seeds, beans, cocoa, almonds and bananas.

MANGANESE

Essential for: preventing bone loss, collagen production and weight stability, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: nuts, whole grains, teas, cocoa powder, beans, sweet potatoes and green leafy vegetables, pineapples, bananas and carrots.

PHOSPHORUS

Essential for: building bones and teeth, energy production and the functioning of the nervous system, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds and almonds.

POTASSIUM

Essential for: your heart functions, blood pressure and nerve functions, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: most foods, especially oranges and orange juice, bananas, tomatoes, potatoes, nuts and seeds, green vegetables, dried beans, Brussels sprouts and dried fruits.

SELENIUM

Essential for: a strong immune system, fighting aging (as it's known as an antioxidant), among other things.

Plant-based food sources: Brazil nuts, sunflower and flax seeds, oat bran, grains and goji berries. (The amount in plant foods depends on the soil.)

SODIUM

Essential for: nerve and muscle functions and balancing fluids, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: soy sauce. Other sources include baking soda and table salt.

ZINC

Essential for: your taste buds, fighting bacteria and viruses, making DNA and healing wounds, among other things.

Plant-based food sources: brewer's yeast, wheat germ, dried beans and lentils, nuts and seeds.

Supplements

Almost all of the vitamins and minerals noted above can be obtained from plant-based foods. You don't need to eat dairy products to get calcium for your bones or eat red meat to get iron to maintain healthy levels of hemoglobin. Instead, eat lots of dark green leafy vegetables, berries, nuts and seeds and other vegetables for strong bones and healthy iron levels. If your blood test shows that your iron levels are off-balance, consult your physician right away for additional testing.

Low iron levels can be genetic. As well, some people have trouble digesting iron and despite the iron-rich food on their plates, may not be getting enough iron. Also, iron levels may be low in pregnant and breast-feeding women, athletes and those still actively growing.

Besides iron, vitamin B12 is vital for optimal levels of hemoglobin. When you consume a varied plant-based diet, you should be able to eat the majority of your necessary micronutrients, except vitamins D and B12. Vitamins D and B12 can be taken as dietary supplements.

WANT TO KNOW WHICH SUPPLEMENTS I RECOMMEND?

Make sure your supplements are actually working! I've handpicked and double-checked the ones listed [on my shop](#). Bioavailable forms. No gluten, dairy, GMO, corn, cheap fillers or other unwanted additives. Get the results you need!



Vitamin D

Vitamin D is an essential nutrient for strong bones because it helps the body absorb calcium. This vitamin also plays an important role in the prevention of many chronic diseases and has been linked to heart health, immunity and fighting stress and enhancing the development of teeth, etc. Vitamin D is more like a prohormone (a hormone amplifier) than a vitamin as it's produced by the body during exposure to the sun's UV rays. However, seasonal changes, latitude, cloud cover and sunscreen can all affect UV exposure. The natural ability of the skin to produce vitamin D decreases with aging. Vitamin D deficiency is more common in northern regions of the world and it's important for people in these areas take vitamin D supplements. Plant-based eaters and those of you with darker skin might also need extra time in the sun. People with dark skin tones might not know that the pigment in their skin filters out the UV rays necessary for the body to produce vitamin D.

To make the most of the vitamin D giving sunshine, be outside between 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. (This is when the UV index is more than three.) Have 50 to 75 per cent of your skin exposed. **Warning: don't get sunburned.** If you have sensitive skin, then 10 to 15 minutes is enough exposure. If you have darker skin and you never burn, you can sunbath for around 30 to 40 minutes. You have the option to take a blood test in order to know your optimal dose of vitamin D. This way you'll know the exact level of vitamin D in your blood. (Ref. 1, 2)

There are two forms of vitamin D supplements, D2 and D3. Vegans have previously preferred the D2 form, which is derived from fungal sources. D2 binds less tightly to vitamin D receptors and doesn't circulate as long in the body. That's why many made the switch to the D3 supplement. D3 is usually derived from lanolin or cod liver oil extract but now there's a product made for vegans too.

Vitamin B12

As you read in the section above, we need vitamin B12 for the normal development of red blood cells and to maintain the health of our nerves and heart. If you have a vitamin B12 deficiency, you won't have enough energy and you'll forget things and be irritable, among other symptoms. A prolonged vitamin B12 deficiency can even lead to death.

B12 is found mostly in animal-based foods as well as in yeast and some algae. If you're on a plant-based diet, you'll need to take [B12 supplements](#) or eat fortified products (nutritional yeast and plant-based milks) to fully cover your body's needs. Always take B12 supplements according to your local health care provider or regional health branch. It's easy to check your levels with a blood analysis.

Eating a Rainbow of Fruits and Vegetables

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables keeps the doctor away. Many scientific studies have shown a plant-rich diet prevents and reduces the symptoms of a number of diseases and inhibits some chronic diseases. Take cancer and obesity for example. Chronic subclinical inflammatory processes are associated with those two diseases and by increasing your consumption of fruits and veggies, you'll counteract the inflammation. (Ref. 3)

Fruits and vegetables help protect against cancer and other diseases in other ways too. Fruits and veggies contain phytochemicals, chemical compounds that occur naturally in plants. Phytochemicals include pigments such as carotenes, chlorophyll and flavonoids; dietary fibre; enzymes; vitamin-like compounds and other minor dietary constituents. Some phytochemicals are antioxidants and counteract cellular damage from harmful free radicals. Lycopene is another antioxidant found in tomatoes that fights these dangerous free radicals. (Ref. 4) Phytochemicals work in harmony with other types of antioxidants such as vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin A, selenium, zinc, etc.

Phytochemicals also engage phase 2 enzymes. These phase 2 enzymes fight to keep the body free of carcinogens. (Ref. 4)

When planning your daily meals, look to the rainbow assortment of fruits and veggies as a guide. **“Rainbow” means selecting colourful foods: yellow, orange, red, green, purple and blue.** These plant colours provide powerful antioxidants and nutrients for your body to function more efficiently. As we've already found out, antioxidants help neutralize body damage by free radicals. We're going to explore free radicals further now. Free radicals are molecules with unpaired electrons. They cause damage when trying to find another electron. Free radicals are everywhere, especially smoking, being in the sun too long, stress and bad eating habits. In our bodies, free radicals break down healthy cells. To prevent free radical damage, the body uses antioxidants. (Ref. 5)

Carotenoids are food pigments providing mainly yellow, red and orange colours (although carotenoids can be found in other colours of foods too.) Lutein is the most common of the carotenoids and is known as the “eye-vitamin” because it can be found as a colour pigment in the eyes. Studies have yet to prove whether lutein in foods helps protect against cataracts, macular degeneration, heart disease or cancer. (Ref. 6) Lutein rich foods are mostly yellow or green fruits such as lettuce, apples, broccoli, bananas, citrus and others. (Ref. 7)

You've probably heard about flavonoids: famous for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory health benefits. Flavonoids help in the fight against inflammation, heart disease, and cancer as well as supporting detoxification of potentially tissue-damaging molecules. (Ref. 8)

Worried about aging? Flavonoids in fruits and veggies helps combat our brains getting older by increasing the blood flow to our grey matter thus slowing down disorders like dementia. (Ref. 8)

Find flavanols in the peels or seeds of fruits and veggies. This is one reason dietary intake of flavanoids can be low as many of us tend not to eat peels and we spit out seeds. (Ref. 9)

Your Rainbow Assortment

Yellow – bananas, cauliflower, pineapples, bell peppers (yellow), lemons, pears, corn, plums (yellow), apples, melons, pumpkins, peaches, etc.

Orange – oranges, apricots, bell peppers (orange), carrots, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, papaya, cape gooseberries, sea buckthorn, mandarins, persimmons, ect.

Red – apples, tomatoes, watermelon, bell peppers, grapefruit, strawberries, plums (red), raspberries, cherries, cowberries, cranberries, radishes, chillies, blood oranges, ect.

Green – avocados, apples, artichokes, asparagus, bell peppers (green), kale, broccoli, cucumbers, grapes (green), lettuce, peas, spinach, cabbage, parsley, coriander, basil, tomatoes (green), limes, kiwi fruit, onions, zucchini, capers, green peas, spirulina, chlorella, ect.

Purple and blue – beets, cabbage (red), plums, blueberries, blackberries, cherries, eggplant, onions (red), pears (red), black currants, purple carrots, figs, passion fruit, grapes, ect.

glycemic index and load (support blood sugar control) balance

The boost food gives your blood sugar has been gaining more and more attention in health and nutrition circles. The attention has been mainly due to the numerous links discovered between glycemic index and excess weight as well as several serious diseases like type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and even cancer.

Read the whole chapter on Glycemic index and load from my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#).



cravings and needs

Have trouble with cravings? Read the whole chapter in my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#) to find out about:

- How to listen to your body
- How blood sugar affects cravings
- How to balance your blood sugar with the “plate rule” and correct meal choices
- Snacks that balance blood sugar
- The importance of drinking water
- How to deal with emotional eating

There’s a saying that says if your body is craving some kind of food, then you must be missing those nutrients. Is that true? Should we be listening to what our bodies are telling us and act accordingly?

the role of exercise

Get on the move with the whole chapter on the role on exercise in my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#):

- Benefits of physical exercise
- Aerobic exercise vs strength training
- Finding motivation
- How to stay motivated

It’s no secret that physical activity is good for your health: both body and mind. More and more, people are realizing the effects exercise has on mental health too. Here are some benefits of regular exercise:

- balanced blood sugar
- lower heart rate, blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- stronger body
- improved endurance
- positive effect on mood
- helps you cope with stress
- helps you sleep better

Test your blood

The Test Your Blood chapter in my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#) is all about:

- Why it's necessary to take blood tests
- What to measure and how often

Your health and the health of your family is a top priority and that usually means you're someone who eats well and exercises. You probably have a positive outlook on life too and think happy thoughts. These things keep you and your loved ones healthy. I recommend adding one more thing to the list: regular health check-ups... even if you feel fine.

A health check-up is one way to monitor your health and make sure you don't have any hidden issues. **Many chronic diseases develop slowly and reveal themselves when the illnesses have matured and by then it could be too late.** You might ignore the signs of a disease because the symptoms were minimal or easily explained away. This is why it's important to make a habit of visiting your doctor regularly.

I recommend seeing your family physician at least once every two years for regular checks. That way it's possible to detect troublemakers in the early stages. Another reason to head to the doctor's office runs in our genes. Despite being human, each of our bodies is unique. Our genes are different, our daily environments are different, how we cope with stress is different, etc. This all has an effect on our health and so our nutritious needs are going to differ from one another. However, even if you already have a healthy lifestyle, it doesn't guarantee immunity to illnesses. **People who eat plant-based whole foods get sick too.** So once again, it's wise to visit your doctor routinely to detect possible health risks.

You should also check the vitamin and mineral levels in your body. Some levels can be tested through blood tests and should be done once every three years or more often if you don't feel well. If you feel tired, get sick, are irritated easily, overanxious and have concentration problems, check your vitamin and mineral levels. The same goes for when your hair, skin and nails don't look healthy. You might not get all the necessary vitamins and minerals from your diet.

Get all the recommended tests to assess your general state of health (once in one to three years, or according to your doctor) from my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#)!

Transitioning to your plant-based diet

Find examples of switching your diet, based on life lessons, in this chapter:

- Transitioning do's and don'ts
- Week-by-week transitioning plan
- Tips on how to stick to your new lifestyle
- Questions to ask yourself before indulging in not-so-healthy foods

Transition easily to your plant-based diet by following these tips. They'll help you get going and keep you on track.

Transitioning from a diet rich in animal products (meat, poultry, dairy, fish)

Some people prefer swift change with no transition period whatsoever. That's totally fine. If you really feel like eating a plant-based diet right away, go for it. However, if it becomes too overwhelming, slow down and try a gradual transition like the one below.

Don't make a transition overnight, especially if this diet is different from what you've been eating in the past.

After that, try to stick to the plant-based diet with no exceptions for at least 6

Timeframe	Consumption of animal based (dairy, meat, poultry, fish) or refined products (sugar, white flour, oil)
First 2 weeks	Once a day
Weeks 3 and 4	Once every other day
Weeks 5 and 6	Three times a week
Weeks 7 and 8	Once a week

weeks. This will give you a chance to get used to your new lifestyle and learn how to deal with different situations.

For some of you, the above transitioning might be too fast. Take smaller steps instead and extend the weeks. You can even double the number of weeks. It's important to avoid burnout.

Once you're fully adapted to your new lifestyle you can indulge in white sugar, refined grains/flours, oil and animal products every now and then. Just make sure you don't get more than 10% of your daily calories from these foods. For example, if you're eating 2000 kcal a day, then try not to get more than 200 kcal from the abovementioned sources.

There are 200 kcal in:

- 63g (3.2 tbsps) of white sugar
- 1.7 tbsp olive oil
- 0.4 cups (50g) white all-purpose wheat flour
- 50g yeast-leavened and glazed donut. (1 medium 3-inch diameter donut weighs 64 grams.)
- 1 cup cooked long-grain white rice
- 1 cup chopped or diced chicken breast (meat only, cooked, stewed)
- 0.78 cups chopped or diced chicken breast (meat and skin, cooked, stewed)
- 3oz (85g) oven-cooked salmon
- 0.6 cup whole-milk mozzarella
- 0.4 cup sliced brie cheese or shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ cup whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 2 cups low-fat buttermilk
- 1.4 cups whole milk (3.25% milk fat)
- 1.3 cups plain whole milk yogurt

My experiences tell me it takes about 6 months to be fully comfortable and on good terms with your new lifestyle. This includes being able to compile your own meal plans that are nutrient dense and don't lack any macronutrients, vitamins or minerals.

How do I stick to the plant-based diet when I have to give up so much?

You don't need to give up anything. A plant-based diet includes many delicious, hearty and rich foods and flavours so you're enriching your meals: not missing out.

If there's a food, you just can't give up yet: then don't. Work on taking it out of your diet. When I first started eating plant-based meals, I still had my morning latte with cow's milk. It took me about four to five months to make the switch to a plant-based alternative. I didn't force myself to quit, but after a while I just didn't want cow's milk anymore and was happier and felt better without it. Today I enjoy my coffee with some coconut milk or a cappuccino with unsweetened soymilk. Fortunately, nowadays, most decent coffee places offer plant-based milks.

If you really feel deprived of something, you won't stick to your plant-based eating lifestyle. Try finding healthy substitutes for your cravings. You'll hopefully find a solution that works for you. Check out the suggestions in chapter [Altering Recipes in the book Plant-Based Made Easy](#).

Don't try to find a substitute for every item you think you'll miss. Instead, **overcrowd your menu** with meals and foods you've never tried before. Make a list of all the fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, grains and legumes you've never tasted but would like to try. Take a look at this list to see if there's something you'd like to try on it: quinoa, farro, barley, spelt, kamut, whole grain rice, lentils, chickpeas, black beans, artichokes, eggplant, sweet potato, cherimoyas, mulberries, goji berries, hemp seeds, chia seeds, figs, Brazil nuts, kale, and chard.

When my family and I started eating a whole foods plant-based diet we were happy about discovering lentils, in particular red lentils. We couldn't get enough and ate them for lunch for six months in a row. Even now we have red lentils on our table almost daily. Besides being delicious, red lentils are easy and quick to prepare.

I was a bit worried in the beginning about oil-free cooking as I used to put oil in almost everything. However, after the first oil-free try I was amazed at how good the food turned out and tasted. The stews were still hearty and satisfying. The same went for the oven-baked vegetables seasoned with oregano, rosemary, salt, pepper and with only some water drizzled over it all for moisture. Vegetables produce their own liquids and they're so sweet and actually look and feel a bit oily. To add extracted oil would feel like an excess. Besides, you can always top your meal with vegan Parmesan, nutritional yeast, seeds or chopped nuts.

Fun fact: I had a couple visiting my family in Barcelona. When we ate lunch at a vegetarian place the meal was served with round-grain brown rice. The couple both ate it before asking what it was. Turns out they never had brown rice before. They found it delicious and much more satisfying than white rice.

Try new cooking methods – stir-frying and sautéing without oil, muffins without butter, pancakes without eggs and cow's milk, baking with whole grain flours etc.

Make yourself a list of all the new foods and recipes you want to try. Then start preparing and experimenting every day. **You'll soon discover there's no space for animal and dairy products or junk food in your meals.**

Look at it as a fun and interesting journey. You're discovering many new things as well as learning and developing your skills in cooking, shopping, meal planning and nutrition.



Follow a regime of mealtimes and don't snack in between. This allows you to feel real hunger. Many people haven't felt real hunger for a long time as they snack too often. Instead, they might feel dizzy from blood sugar fluctuations.

Drinking water helps you keep your regime:

- Drink 2 glasses of warm water with juice from half a lemon first thing after you wake up and have your breakfast half an hour later. It helps to flush the digestive system and rehydrate your body.
- Drink a glass of water half an hour before each meal.
- Don't drink water with your meal and 15-30 minutes after you've finished the meal. Water dilutes gastric juices making digestion troublesome. During a meal, drink a bit of red wine or warm herbal tea.
- When you're hungry outside of meal and snack times, drink water first – most likely your body is thirsty, but you interpret it as hunger.

How much water is enough?

- The exact amount of water depends on the individual, but if you follow the tips described above and drink whenever you're thirsty, you'd be fine.
- If you exercise or sweat because of heat, then drink enough to compensate for the lost fluids.
- If you've never been one to drink any water, then start gradually. Don't drink the recommended quantity right away. Drink half at first, increasing to full volume as you go.
- Avoid excessive water consumption because it'll carry vitamins out of your body.

When I started drinking water regularly, it helped me adhere to the regime of mealtimes and I felt so much better. I was feeling real hunger, had almost no digestive problems (which were a huge issue before) and felt lighter and energized. I didn't even think of having the occasional "treat" outside of meal/snack times and jeopardizing my new healthier feelings.

Before you eat something, especially if you're indulging in not-so-healthy foods, **stop for a second,** take a long and deep breath and visualize yourself after you've eaten the food.

- Will you feel good about yourself?
- Will you feel energized or guilty?
- Will you feel faintness after a few hours because you ate something that makes your blood sugar fluctuate?
- Will you feel nourished or addicted and want more?

Answer these questions honestly and imagine yourself feeling all those things. Will you still eat food that tastes good for a few minutes but may cause you problems for days?

The important question is: **do you want to feel good all the time or just when you're eating?**

If you follow your own regime and already feel the benefits of your new plant-based diet, you'll find it difficult, if not impossible, to fit that store-bought dairy ice cream into your daily routine. Instead, you'll prefer blending some frozen bananas for your evening dessert.

If you're an emotional eater and can't stop eating even though you're full, **don't eat while you're doing something**. Your brain associates the activity with eating and it's difficult to stop munching while you continue with your activity. Simply put: if it's mealtime, just eat and think about your food and how you feel. Don't eat watching TV, working on your computer, drawing or other activities that can be done while eating.

Personal experience: if I have my morning coffee and bread sitting beside the computer, I'll eat more of it than I would if I was focusing only on eating.

One of the most important tips is to **surround yourself with like-minded people**. This is crucial if you don't have supportive family and friends. Join plant-based and vegan Facebook and other social media groups and communities. Search for plant-based get-togethers in your area. It's a great way to make new friends who'll be supportive and motivate you all the way. Dine in vegan and vegetarian restaurants where you'll find people with same eating habits as yours.

Search the web and find the success stories. You'll see that everyone has his or her own struggles when moving towards a new lifestyle. You'll learn from other's mistakes and pick up useful tips and motivation.

You won't stick to your new lifestyle if you choose to think of it as a restrictive and temporary diet. Think of it as way of living and eating to promote good health and well-being. Your mind and body need good fuel to function. You wouldn't put junk fuel in your car and expect it to run smoothly and your body is much more precious than a car.



READ ALL CHAPTERS NOW!

Save weeks and months of research and experimenting.

Get your copy of [**PLANT-BASED MADE EASY: The Complete Practical Guide to Transitioning to Healthy Whole Food Diet**](#)

Rebalance your body and improve quality of your life!

preparing your kitchen and pantry

In this chapter you'll find practical information on:

- Foods to stock at home
- Storing tips
- Necessary kitchen equipment

I created a list for you to use when it comes time to stock your kitchen and pantry. **It's a long list but don't be intimidated.** It's only a guideline to give you an idea of the variety of foods on the whole food plant-based diet.

Start with what you already have in your kitchen and pantry. If you feel overwhelmed, start with a few different grains, legumes, herbs and spices, dried fruits, nuts and seeds, berries and seasonal fruits and vegetables. Over time, add new items to your menu. Soon you'll have collected most of the items below or will have at least tried them all. Check the chapter **Compiling a Menu** for essential food items.

List of foods to stock at home

Whole grains, pasta and breakfast cereals

Rice (brown, black, red), quinoa, barley, ancient wheat varieties spelt and farro, whole wheat, buckwheat, oats, millet, sorghum (gluten-free), rye and triticale (hybrid of wheat and rye), and products made of those whole grains (pasta, lasagne, noodles, cereals, flours, breads)

Legumes

Lentils (red, brown, green, black), beans (pinto, white, red, black, kidney, black-eyed etc.), chickpeas. Store them dried and then cook them yourself or buy them in cans and jars. There are also pastas made of lentil flour.

Herbs and spices, dried

This list can be very long, especially if you like Indian food, but the following is a basic stock to start: sea salt, pepper (black, red, white, green), chilli flakes, paprika powder, curry powder or paste, turmeric, garlic powder, onion flakes, bay leaves, oregano, rosemary, thyme, basil, sage, organic vegetable broth powder, caraway seeds, mustard seeds, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, ginger powder

Herbs and spices, fresh

Basil, parsley, coriander, rosemary, mint, thyme, ginger

Dried fruits

Prunes, dates, figs, raisins, apricots, goji berries, mulberries

Fresh (according to season) or frozen berries

Blueberries, black currants, red currants, cherries, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries

Nuts and seeds

Flax seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, poppy seeds, Brazil nuts, walnuts, cashews, hazelnuts, almonds, shredded coconut

Note: preferably eat nuts, seeds, legumes and grains that have been soaked and rinsed. Soaking makes them more easily digestible, reduces or removes phytic acid (which reduces mineral absorption [www.phyticacid.org]); releases the enzyme inhibitors that store nutrients while growing and prevents premature germination, and even boost vitamin B content.

If you have time, sprout your grains. (This happens naturally after soaking them.)

The recommended soaking time varies between just a few hours to 12 hours. Find soaking and sprouting table in my book *Plant-Based Made Easy*.

Leafy greens and salads

Romain lettuce, iceberg lettuce, arugula, chard, kale, spinach, bok choy, watercress, radicchio, endive, chicory

Seaweeds

Wakame, kombu, nori, agar-agar

Starchy vegetables

Potatoes, sweet potatoes, parsnips, corn, pumpkin, butternut squash, acorn squash, green peas, plantains

Non-starchy vegetables

Artichokes, beetroot, turnip, carrots, summer squash, bell peppers, tomatoes, leeks, onions, eggplant, cucumber, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage (green, red, Savoy, Chinese), Brussels sprouts, green beans, asparagus, okra, radishes, sugar snap peas, mushrooms

Fruits

Bananas, apples, pears, oranges, mandarins, avocados, lemons, kiwis, olives, persimmons, mangos, grapefruit, watermelon, melon

Other

Nutritional yeast, cacao powder, carob powder, dark chocolate (at least 72% cacao content) or cacao paste, balsamic vinegar

Good for those in transition and for rare treats

Soy sauce (look for one that has a low sodium content), agave syrup, xylitol, stevia

Watch out!

Mould – certainly don't eat anything with mould on it. Mould is bad for you and cutting the fuzzy spot out won't help. Even when you have a package of nuts or dried fruits with just one mouldy piece, throw the whole package away. All the contents will already be contaminated.

Moulds can cause headaches, fatigue, chronic cough and sniffles, irritation of eyes, throat and skin. Aspergillus moulds also produce aflatoxin, which can cause DNA damage that might lead to liver cancer. (Ref. 12)

Aspergillus moulds grow on grains like wheat, tree nuts, beans and rice. Humidity promotes mould growth. (Ref. 13)

Storing tips

Find storing tips for the following in my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#):

- Prepared and canned foods
- In the pantry
- On your countertop
- Fridge
- Freezer
- Foods to avoid storing together

Equipment

See an idealist on my [Amazon storefront](#).

Here's a list of basic equipment you'll need for cooking. Of course, you can go crazy with kitchen gadgets and buy a dehydrator, ice cream maker, instant pot, slow cooker, cooling racks, special knives, a pizza stone, nut milk bags and much more but that's up to you. Below is what I use regularly.

Large skillet with lid – it's convenient to have one that can also be used in the oven for stews, oven omelettes and pies.

A small pot, a medium-sized pot with a thick bottom and, especially for families, a large pot with a lid for soups, stew, and sauces.

A **cast iron or stainless steel pan** with a lid for sautéing, pancakes and omelettes.

Caution!

Beware of Teflon, a synthetic polymer called polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE). When Teflon overheats, which usually happens when you cook, it emits toxic fumes. These fumes can cause flu-like symptoms in humans and can even be fatal to pet birds. (Ref. 21)

Instead of using Teflon, look for cast iron, stainless steel, glass and ceramic options.

High-speed blender (at least 1100W) – for smoothies, puddings, berry/fruit and banana ice creams and wet mixtures of muffin and brownie recipes. In most cases a blender can be substituted with an Immersion blender.

Immersion blender – If you already have a high-speed blender, there's no immediate need for an Immersion one. I do find my Immersion blender to be more convenient for things like pureeing soups.

Food processor – You can do without a food processor, but again, it makes your life easier. Use it for grating, slicing, whipping and mixing. With some cake recipes, it's easier to pre-process the batter in a food processor before placing it into a blender for a smoother texture.

Knives

Long, sharp chopping knife – This is an essential in plant-based cooking. You'll be doing a lot of chopping unless you buy pre-cut veggies.

Vegetable and fruit peeler – whenever you need to peel potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, apples, or pears, you'll find the job a lot easier with a peeler.

Smaller sharp knife – use for slicing avocados, mangos, peeling ginger, oranges, and grapefruits.

Ladle – for serving soups, curries and stews.

Spatula – for sautéing, flipping pancakes and stirring stews.

Large and small sieve – to rinse canned legumes, dry lentils, grains and washing berries.

Pasta sieve – for draining different kinds of pastas.

Whisk – for whisking together batters and whipping dressings.

Kitchen scissors – for cutting green onions, lettuce, celery and other herbs.

Rolling pin – to roll out cookie or pizza dough.

Parchment paper – to line bread tins, baking sheets and cake tins.

Digital kitchen scale and measuring cups – to measure flours, grains, legumes etc. I prefer my kitchen scale over measuring cups because flour can be measured very differently depending how tightly you pack it in a cup.

Containers with lids – for storing food. Prefer BPA-free (always marked accordingly) or glass/ceramic containers.

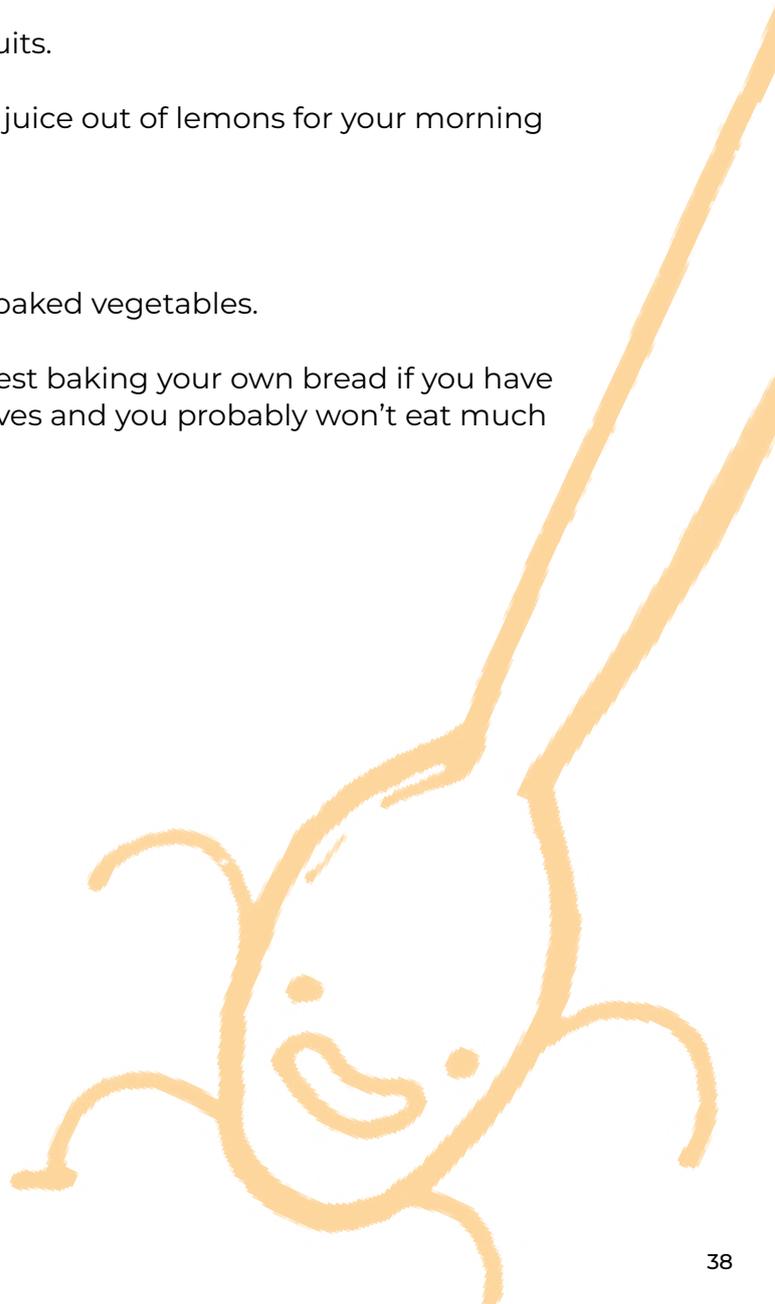
Cutting board – for cutting vegetables and fruits.

Citrus reamer (or other tool) – to squeeze the juice out of lemons for your morning glass of water.

Cake tin – for brownies and cakes.

Baking sheet – for cookies, patties and oven-baked vegetables.

Bread pan – for baking bread. I strongly suggest baking your own bread if you have time. You'll never regret making your own loaves and you probably won't eat much store-bought bread anymore



shopping and reading labels



Shopping is made easy when you know:

- What and where to buy
- Organic versus conventional
- How I do my shopping
- How to map out your shopping
- How to research your neighbourhood
- How to make your way through the stores
- What to look for on labels

You've planned your menu; your shopping list is done and now it's time to get your groceries. Read the whole chapter in my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#).

compiling a menu

Don't skip this chapter if you're going to be doing your own meal planning. It provides you with:

- Step by step help planning your meals
- Showing you the importance of variety, seasonality and the plate rule in your meals
- A "how to eat a rainbow" chart
- Filling your meal plan chart meal by meal
- How to avoid leftovers and what to do with them

4-Step Menu Planning

Menu planning isn't complicated, but it does take time. Here's how I go through the process of making sure my meal planning is not a burden on my time or taste buds.

FIRST STEP. Make a list of the foods you already have at home in your fridge and pantry (except dry goods.)

SECOND STEP. Think of what kind of meals you'd like to prepare. Choose among the following:

- Breakfasts – porridges (oatmeal, millet, quinoa, buckwheat, rice), smoothies and pancakes.
- Snacks – bread, muffins, cookies, raw vegetables (carrots, red bell pepper, cauliflower), seasonal fruits, nuts and seeds.
- Lunches and dinners – soups, stews, salads, pastas, risotto, curries, tortillas, simply steamed veggies with boiled grains and legumes.
- Desserts – berries, muffins, cookies, brownies, fruit ice cream, puddings made of avocado/banana, dark chocolate, applesauce with dried fruits and raw buckwheat cream.

When meal planning, remember:

- Have a variety of foods every day – different grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds.
- Eat a rainbow daily – something green, something yellow, something orange, something purple, something red and something white/brown.

Yellow					
Orange					
Red					
Purple					
White					
Brown					

- If you had a grain-based breakfast, have fruits or vegetables with some nuts for your mid-morning snack.
- If you had a smoothie for breakfast, have porridge, a muffin, some cookies or bread for a mid-morning snack.
- **The Plate Rule for lunches and dinners:**
 $\frac{1}{4}$ grains or starchy vegetables,
 $\frac{1}{4}$ legumes, and
 $\frac{1}{2}$ raw and cooked non-starchy vegetables.
- If you want to have a grain-based dessert (muffins, cookies), have fewer grains with your dinner or ditch them altogether.
- Make sure to have a tablespoon of ground flax seeds or chia seeds a day so your body gets enough omega 3s.
- Always have some nuts or seeds with vegetables and fruits rich in carotenoids (carrots, sweet potatoes, dark leafy greens like spinach and kale, romaine lettuce, squash, cantaloupe melon, red bell pepper, apricots, peas, broccoli, tomatoes) as the fats help absorb vitamins.

THIRD STEP. Draw yourself a table for seven days or for the number of days you're designing your meal plan.

Fill in the breakfasts with general choices such as grains and smoothies.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Breakfast	Grains	Smoothie	Grains	Smoothie	Grains

When you have done that, decide on specific grains and fruits/vegetables for your smoothies depending on what you already have and baring seasonality and variety in mind.

After you're good at the first phase, skip it and jump straight to Step 2.

You don't need to have different smoothies every week. For example, when I lived in Barcelona and it was orange season, we ate orange smoothies for a couple of months in a row. I sweetened the smoothies with either bananas, carrots or mangos but always made sure I added a bunch of greens.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Breakfast	Oatmeal with blueberries and seeds	Orange-banana-lettuce smoothie	Millet with raspberries and seeds	Grapefruit-banana-lettuce smoothie	Buckwheat pancakes with mango puree

After breakfasts come your **lunches and dinners**. Use the same steps with these as you did with your morning meals. Fill in general choices such as soup, risotto, pasta, curry etc. If you have your lunch in a café or buffet, then you don't have much meal planning work for those meals. For suppers, cook dinner every other day so you can eat those leftovers every other night. See chapter **Dining Out** for lunch tips.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Dinner	Risotto	Leftover risotto	Soup	Leftover soup	Pasta

If you take your lunch with you or eat it at home, leave the dinner leftovers for the next day's lunch. As you can see by the figure below, this is how I compiled my sample meal plan. I use the same strategy on themealplans.com.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Lunch	Soup	Leftover risotto	Leftover pasta	Leftover soup	Leftover curry
Dinner	Risotto	Pasta	Soup	Curry	Oven dish

Now, start thinking about **which recipes to make**. Use vegetables you already have at home for your first day or two of meal planning (remember seasonality and variety.) For example, if you have cauliflower on hand, make a curry or a pureed soup with it. Broccoli in the fridge? Stir-fry it with other veggies, make puree soup or just steam it and eat it with beetroot and beans. If you have a lot of summer squash, put it in the wok and add carrots, onion and bell pepper.

When you've used up everything you have at home, choose different veggies of different colours for meals during the next few days.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Lunch	Lentil-qui-noa-spinach soup	Leftover: pumpkin-lentil risotto, leafy greens	Leftover: pasta with ratatouille and beans, leafy greens	Leftover: Savoy cabbage chickpea soup	Leftover: cauliflower coconut curry with rice, chard
Dinner	Pumpkin-lentil risotto, leafy greens	Pasta with ratatouille and beans, leafy greens	Savoy cabbage chickpea soup	Cauliflower coconut curry with rice, spinach or chard	Oven-baked veggies with beans, spinach

Snacks: mid-morning and afternoon

Remember: if you had a grain-based breakfast, have fruits or vegetables with some nuts for your mid-morning snack. If you had fruits in the morning, have veggies in the afternoon. Start by filling in your snack rows with general choices:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Mid-morning snack	Raw veggies, nuts	Grains	Fruits, nuts	Grains	Raw veggies, nuts
Afternoon snack	Fruit, dark chocolate or nuts	Raw veggies, nuts	Raw veggies, nuts	Raw veggies, nuts	Fruit, dark chocolate or nuts

It's worth repeating to consider what you have in stock and which veggies and fruits you're going to use in your morning smoothies and main meals. As well, keep seasonality in mind and eat a rainbow every day.

Tip: It's wise to bake a large batch of muffins, cookies or bread and freeze them for the week to have on hand for snacks.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Mid-morning snack	1 red bell pepper, 2 brazil nuts	Tahini-persimmon-chocolate muffin	1 orange, 2 brazil nuts	Tahini-persimmon-chocolate muffin	Raw veggies, nuts
Afternoon snack	1 orange, 3 pieces dark chocolate, 70% (15g, 0.52oz)	1 carrot, 2 brazil nuts	Cauliflower florets	Raw veggies, nuts	Fruit, dark chocolate or nuts

Desserts

There are some people who don't want dessert after supper, but I think they're in the minority.

Deciding what to have for dessert depends on how heavy your menu has been that day. For example, if you had coconut curry for dinner, then don't have too rich of a dessert containing nuts or avocado. Instead, have some berries or make a banana pudding or ice cream.

If you didn't have grains for dinner, go ahead and eat two oil-free, sugar-free muffins for an end of the meal treat.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Dessert	Berries, dark chocolate	Pudding	Banana ice-cream	Applesauce with raisins	Muffins

FOURTH STEP of meal planning is making your shopping list according to what's on your menu. You can shop every day or shop once for the whole week – whatever is easier for you.

Leftovers

If you have any leftovers at the end of the week, use them first the following week.

You can also use leftover veggies as evening snacks as there's no harm in eating more veggies.

Sometimes we end up left with half a banana or avocado, or half a can of beans or crushed tomatoes. If you have these left over at the end of the week, adjust your meal plan accordingly. For example, use the leftovers (onions, celery or tomatoes) in other lunch/dinner recipes.

It's not necessary to use everything up right away. Some items keep well such as celery, unopened cans of beans or lentils and dry goods.

Tip: To avoid any leftovers, compile a shopping list before adding snacks and desserts to the chart. First, use the items left over from breakfasts and main meals for snacks and desserts before adding any new ideas.

Fruits and veggies in season

Choose among the seasonal fruits and vegetables in your region. They cost less and are the freshest.

Since you readers are spread out around the world, I'm not able to give one table to fit all regions. Instead, I'll give you some tips and sources:

- shop at farmers' markets to find seasonal fruits and veggies
- U.S. readers can find a great seasonality chart at: <http://www.cuesa.org/eat-seasonally/charts/vegetables>
- U.K. readers can go to: <http://eatseasonably.co.uk/what-to-eat-now/calendar/>
- there's an excellent chart for those in Northern and Western Europe at: http://na-nu.com/terfloth.org/Kitchen/Season_Cal.pdf
- follow this link to find what's in season in the U.S., Australia and Northern/Western Europe: http://www.damngoodrecipes.com/seasonal/8.html#.VOMC2rCG_KM
- The lucky people living in Southern Europe should check out what's in season here: <http://www.ocu.org/alimentacion/alimentos/calculadora/calendario-de-frutas-y-verduras>



Vitamins and minerals to watch

Read the whole chapter on the following vitamins and minerals in my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#) for recommended daily allowances and what/how much to eat to meet those allowances:

- Vitamin D
- Vitamin B12
- Other group B vitamins
- Folate
- Calcium
- Iodine
- Selenium
- Omega 3 fatty acids
- Saturated Fats
- Monounsaturated fats (omega 9)
- Iron



WANT TO KNOW WHICH SUPPLEMENTS I RECOMMEND?

Make sure your supplements are actually working!
I've handpicked and double-checked the ones listed [on my shop](#).
Bioavailable forms. No gluten, dairy, GMO, corn, cheap fillers or other unwanted additives. Get the results you need!

altering recipes

Read the chapter in my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#) to learn what to substitute for:

- Eggs
- Butter and oil in baking and dressings
- Oil for sautéing
- Dairy products such as cheese, milk, ice cream, sour cream, mayonnaise, ricotta and yogurt
- Meat, poultry and fish
- Sugar in beverages, baking and smoothies

Don't throw away all those cookbooks you've collected over the years: recycle them. It's easy to make substitutions and alter most of your favourite recipes.

Besides the above-mentioned substitutions, the chapter includes some easy and essential recipes:

- White Bean Dressing
- Cheesy Potato Sauce
- Vegan Parmesan
- Homemade Nut Milk
- Homemade Sour Cream
- Homemade Oat Yogurt



dining out



This is a must-read chapter covering:

- How to choose a restaurant
- What type of restaurants are the best choice for plant-based eaters
- What to check before even going to a restaurant
- What to ask when already at a restaurant
- How to create your own dish when there's nothing on the menu
- How to behave with restaurant staff and with your omnivorous friends

Restaurants and cafes are nice options when meeting friends or if you just want to take a break from the kitchen. I know it's not easy to find places that cater to plant-based whole foods eaters, but it can be done.

When dining out, **opt for vegan or vegetarian restaurants or restaurants** that offer some vegetarian items on their menus. Do your research using Happy Cow (happycow.net), the online vegetarian restaurant guide, or look to vegan/vegetarian/plant-based Facebook groups for ideas.

Check the online menus of unfamiliar places. If you don't see any obvious options for you then phone or e-mail the establishment and ask if it will accommodate you.

Already at the restaurant? Ask if they have a vegetarian menu. This sounds strange but some places have a special menu only brought out on request.

Make sure you specify you'd like a meal without any animal products (meat, fish, eggs, butter and dairy) rather than saying you'd like a vegan or vegetarian meal. Often people don't know what vegan means and you might end up with milk or cheese on your plate. Always be clear and assume nothing.

Don't be shy about **creating your own dish** from the ingredients off the menu. Most restaurants should be happy to help you. These days, there are so many dietary restrictions that it would be difficult for any chef to create a permanent menu that fits everyone. We guess chefs are used to accommodating different needs daily.

Eat before you eat. That's not a typo. If the restaurant you're heading to has next to nothing to offer, eat at home before you go out. Once at the restaurant you can order a salad or a vegetable soup. Every restaurant should at least have one of those two items.

When you're invited out for an event and there's hardly anything for you to eat, don't make a fuss. Just eat before and snack once you are there. **Remember, it's not about the food.** It's about celebrating and being with your friends.

Don't sweat the small stuff when you're out. Don't stress over little details like traces of animal products in some foods or bread glazed with egg. If you're not allergic or intolerant to it, it won't harm you by having a small quantity of animal products every now and then. (Emphasis on "every now and then".) Don't make it a habit and don't choose to cook it yourself but when it comes to dining out and celebrations, relax – unless you know it's easier for you to commit to one lifestyle one hundred per cent.

Ethnic restaurants are always good options for finding vegan or vegetarian meals. You can at least get rice and vegetables. Make sure to ask the chefs to leave out all the salt and oil, if they can.

At **Italian restaurants** you can usually combine side dishes (rice, potatoes vegetables), salads or whole grain pasta with vegetables. Sometimes it's possible to order risottos and pizzas (if they have whole grain crust) without cheese.

I find eating at **Indian restaurants** the easiest as they have lots of legumes on their menus and there's always lentil stews called dal. You can ask to have rice and vegetables combined and the oils, butter/cream left out. Be sure to ask for dairy-free options as they use a lot of dairy products at Indian places.

Thai and Chinese restaurants offer oil-free rice paper rolls, vegetable woks and curries with rice or rice noodles. You should easily find something to eat in these places.

Miso soup is delicious in **Japanese restaurants** and so is the vegan sushi, always a good option even if they only have white rice. In larger cities there is a sushi place on almost on every corner.

Mexican restaurants serve tons of vegetable and bean burritos. I like Mexican kitchens because they actually use a lot of legumes, rice and veggies, which makes it easy to arrange a balanced meal.

Salad buffets can be hearty. Follow this simple plate rule:

- ½ non-starchy vegetables (raw and cooked),
- ¼ whole grains and starchy vegetables and
- ¼ protein (nuts, seeds, legumes).

Always start with putting lots of salad on your plate and then stack all the other ingredients on top. Try to limit your oil intake to a minimum. Eat nuts, seeds, avocados and whole olives instead.

If there is no whole food dressing at the salad bar, use vegetable puree soup, a veggie curry or just lemon juice instead. Everything doesn't have to groan under oily dressings. This will help you start to appreciate leaner options too.

One other salad tip, try to avoid vinegars whenever possible. Most places do use them as salad dressings.

Some restaurants offer **macrobiotic options**, i.e. a dish cooked without oils and salt, just simple and lean whole foods like whole grain rice or buckwheat, brown lentils and steamed veggies. I've been able to discover several lunch places like this in Barcelona. I ask for a big plate and pile up green salad, grated carrots, boiled beetroot and tomatoes with olives on the side.

At any dining place always **ask the server about the ingredients**. Explain that you'd like all the oils and sugar excluded from the food if possible.

If you know that the protein part of the meal is going to be disproportionate, e.g. if they're ready to just exclude the meat/fish part of the dish, ask them to **substitute some of the protein** with vegetables, whole grains, nuts/seeds or avocados (if they have any).

If possible, don't order the breadbasket unless there's whole grain bread. When there's a basket of white bread on the table, stop yourself from taking any of it. I know from my own experience that **it's easier not to take it at all rather than keep it to just one slice**.

Desserts look delicious at restaurants but it's usually better to skip the sweets. They **are generally high-fat and high-calorie bombs**. There are exceptions and some places offer raw desserts like chia-pudding or nutty desserts without added oils and sugar.

There's one thing that I love in the morning and that's a good cup of coffee or matcha latte and a bite of bread. But I can't get this at a regular café. My solution, I buy whole grain fermented rye, spelt or rice/corn bread from an organic bakery and a specialty coffee with soy, rice or oat milk from a quality coffee shop. I often bake my own bites: fermented buckwheat bread or oil-free and sugar-free muffins/cookies or quick bread. I might even prepare my coffee and muffins or bread at home, and then go out to a nice spot to enjoy them.

Some of your friends probably don't eat like you and usually consume meat, fish and eggs. **I learned that while eating out with my carnivorous friends**, a few are actually willing to try out vegan restaurants and even enjoy the food. I have cooked for my friends and changed their opinions by helping them to reflect on their lifestyle. This has led them to a healthier path or at least made them think about it.



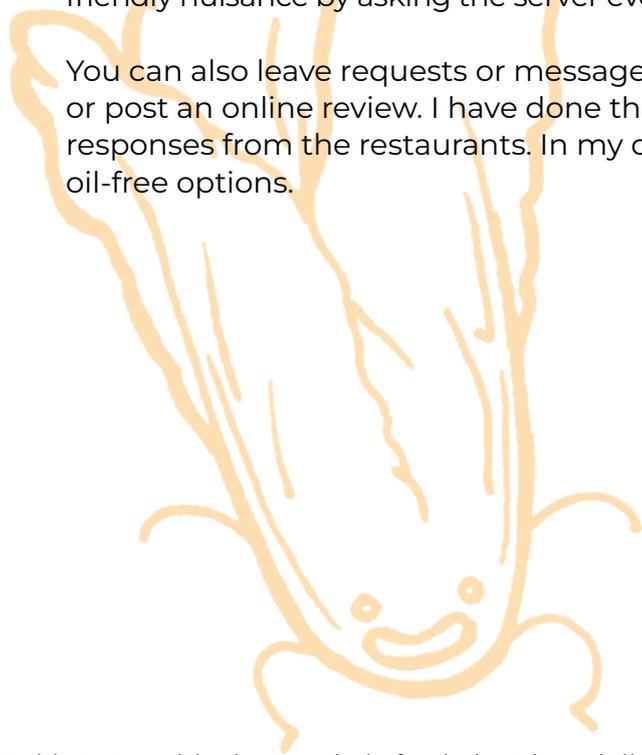
You don't want to brow beat anyone about your healthy lifestyle. Always be polite and friendly towards restaurant staff and your companions. If you're nice to them, it's more likely that they'll be nice to you. Always be grateful after the staff has accommodated your needs.

Don't be patronizing either. If someone doesn't understand your way of eating, remember you were once there yourself. Explain politely what you want and only if people are interested, get deeper and introduce your lifestyle and reasons behind it. Sometimes when you're in a hurry and not in the mood to start explaining the reasons behind your diet, it's easier to refer to food allergies or intolerances. Everyone gets that.

I have noticed some people subconsciously feel guilty about their not-so-healthy lifestyles and it makes them feel bad about themselves and they start attacking my choices. This isn't a good atmosphere to be in so remember, **only talk about your lifestyle if people are genuinely interested.** Don't push people into the conversation acting like a know-it-all.

The above being said, **do make a change.** I always encourage people to ask for oil-free, plant-based and whole grain options even if they know the place doesn't offer them. If people keep asking for these selections, then who knows? One day the restaurant might add them to the menu. If we keep silent, everyone just carries on the way they're used to living. If I frequently visit the same place, then I'll make myself a friendly nuisance by asking the server every time, "Do you have brown rice yet?"

You can also leave requests or messages on the establishment's social media site or post an online review. I have done that several times and have received positive responses from the restaurants. In my case, it was mainly about brown rice and oil-free options.



entertaining and visiting friends

Read this chapter for advice on entertaining and visiting. It covers:

- What to ask your guests/hosts before entertaining/visiting
- How to make food more appealing
- What to cook as a host and what to bring as a guest
- Sample entertaining/visiting menus
- Tips on keeping everyone happy

When you entertain or visit friends you should be enjoying yourself, not worrying about your meal. I've been through this already and will guide you through the steps of being a good host...and a good guest.

Entertaining

As with entertaining anyone anywhere, **ask people whether there's something they don't eat** and make sure not to use the ingredient(s) or at least have a dish or two without it. You also might want to encourage people to bring whatever they want to eat.

If you have kids and want them to avoid sugary sweets and oily-salty foods, ask your guests politely not to bring any conventional sweet treats (cakes, donuts, candies), crisps and sugary drinks into your home. As the host, you can set some rules and after all, you'll be offering healthy delicious treats and no one will miss out.

Make your food visually appealing. Colours attract people and make the table look pretty. In any case, it's difficult to prepare dull-looking plant-based food because there aren't many. **Use different textures** as well like something creamy (hummus or other type of spread), with something crunchy (raw peeled and cut veggies and whole grain crackers or toasted whole grain bread), with something hearty-looking (risotto, lasagne, pasta, pie or a stew), and then something light and leafy (green salad.)

When throwing a party you don't want to make the food the centre of conversation unless the guests want to talk about it and your lifestyle habits.

So far, my carnivorous friends and family members have been happy with the food I've cooked for them at gatherings at my place. They have been introduced to foods they never knew existed like nutritional yeast, raw buckwheat, spelt, xylitol, agave syrup, dates as sweetener, carob, cashews for cheesecakes, sour cream and mayonnaise.

Not everyone has an open mind about novelty so **try not to disclose the ingredients before the guests have tasted the food.** When they have already eaten and commented on how good everything tastes, then you can reveal the contents... if they're interested. Often people are surprised the food actually has no oil or dairy products in it and it still tastes good. I get favourable comments a lot with my vegan parmesan, cashew cheesecake and plant-based quiches. Once I asked a guest if she wanted some extra salt on her vegan quiche.

"Oh no, no salt thanks," said the woman. "It's just an explosion of good tastes in my mouth. What is it made of?"

This guest also didn't believe my cashew cheesecake was homemade.

We all have different taste buds so no matter how you think the food tastes, be sure to have salt, pepper and olive oil on hand. Those who feel they need an extra dash of pepper can add it if they want. I have a friend who rubs salt on any dish before even tasting it. That's her choice. Who are you to disapprove of others tastes?

Sample Menus

Entrées and Snacks:

Raw veggies, hummus, guacamole, rice cakes, whole grain crackers, toasted whole grain bread slices, nut spreads, vegan sour cream dip, light soup

Main Course:

Curry, veggie lentil/bean stew, pasta with sauce, risotto, loaf, lasagne, quiche, oven-roasted veggies, patties, hearty soup

Desserts:

Dark chocolate, muffins, pumpkin pie, bean brownie, cashew cheese cake, raw candies, avocado pudding

Visit my blog www.nutriplanet.org for recipes or get my book Plant-Based Made Easy.

Visiting

Don't make your life difficult by pursuing perfection when it comes to visiting and social gatherings. If you're too picky you might find yourself lonely and miserable very soon. No one wants to invite a grumpy and fussy visitor to their table. Treat social occasions like you would when travelling and not able to eat ideally all the time.

If you have a gathering at a restaurant, check the **Dining Out** chapter for tips and hints.

If there is a set menu for the event (like weddings and funerals), ask the host about the menu and see whether you can combine a meal. I also have tips about this under the chapter Dining Out.

Of course, if you visit someone with similar eating habits to you (or at least an open mind towards it) then there are no challenges. Eat whatever is offered and bring some food of your own should you want to share.

If you visit a carnivore friend or a family member who won't prepare anything special for you, eat before you go or bring your own foods to contribute. People will appreciate this. It's easy to prepare and take the following foods: raw candies, muffins, cookies, raw cut veggies, hummus, guacamole, nut spreads, whole grain crackers and bread.

Go the extra mile and turn your food into a present if you're attending a birthday party. Prepare a treat like a festive cashew cheesecake with chocolate layers or a presentable gourmet basket with different foods/products (nut spreads, quality olives, homemade bread or bread from good organic bakery, fruits, dried fruits, nuts, good wine).

My cheesecakes are a real hit among my family and friends. Wherever I'm invited, people expect me to bring one. It makes a nice present as well so it's win-win: you don't need to buy something extra and you can eat a healthy (and yummy) dessert too.

When your host is considerate and asks about your eating habits, **don't go crazy by ordering a three-course, oil-free plant-based perfectly balanced meal.** Emphasize you're not coming for the food but for the good company. Ask for simple things like a salad and tomatoes without dressing, cut veggies (carrots, bell peppers, cucumber, cauliflower) and canned beans. If the host really wants to cook something you'll enjoy, then a good and easy option is whole grain pasta with tomato sauce and beans. A good rule is to always offer to bring something yourself so the host doesn't have to bother too much.

The big thing about visiting is to **remember not to disapprove or be patronizing towards other people's eating habits and lifestyle:** it's their choice and they'll change only if they want to change. If you find yourself under attack because of your eating habits and lifestyle, see the chapter **Dealing with Friends, Family, Society and the Medical System** for tips.

eating on the road



Explore and read the whole chapter on eating on the road from my book *Plant-Based Made Easy*. Learn how to:

- Research your destination
- Choose your accommodation and making good use of it
- Prepare healthy meals when travelling by vehicle
- Prepare healthy meals when travelling by air
- Stay hydrated and active while on the road

Travelling is exciting. You get to meet new people, experience different cultures and most of all: try interesting foods. Maintaining a whole foods plant-based diet while eating on the road can be challenging but I have had a lot of practice and know ways to make it easier for you.

READ ALL CHAPTERS NOW!

Save weeks and months of research and experimenting.

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Rebalance your body and improve quality of your life!



dealing with friends, family, society and the medical system

**I have already been through the process of changing my lifestyle.
Find about how I did it and:**

- Should you let the whole world know about the change in your life?
- How to prepare yourself and how to tell your family
- How to involve your family
- What to do if you're the only one starting a plant-based diet in your family
- How to cook two separate dinners at the same time
- Tips on helping your family eat more plant foods
- When and how to share your new knowledge with others
- What to do when someone attacks you over your new habits
- How to deal with your doctor
- How to cope in hospital

Yes! You're going to do it. You're making the change towards living a happy, healthy and longer life. **It's a thrilling decision that everyone will want to hear about.** Right?

Not so fast.

I (and probably many others) have felt the urge to let the whole world know about my decision to follow a whole food plant-based diet. It's the best choice of course. I want everybody to benefit from this healthy way of eating as well as understand the real reasons behind chronic diseases such as too much processed sugar in the average person's diet.

There are always going to be people who understand your switch in thinking and they'll be as excited as you are about your change. However, you're also going to come across people with hostile attitudes and who'll attack your lifestyle and ridicule you. **Unless you love to argue, I suggest you don't overwhelm people with the details about your new and healthier habits.** This will help you avoid stress that could eventually make you ill.

Telling your family about your lifestyle change

Since most of us live with others and share meals, it's inevitable you'll have to tell them about your lifestyle change. **It's good to say you've been doing research on healthy habits and reading about the benefits of a whole food plant-based diet.** This is why you've decided to give it a go.

Next, **name your reasons** and whatever they might be: weight loss, other health issues, digestive problems, bad skin or environmental and ethical considerations.

Have a list of books you've been studying available for people. You might also want to add the names of respected medical doctors who recommend the whole foods plant-based diet. These experts include:

Caldwell B. Esselstyn Jr., M.D.,

John A. McDougall, M.D.,

Neal D. Barnard, M.D.,

Dean Ornish, M.D.,

T. Colin Campbell, PhD.,

Michael Greger, M.D.,

Joel Fuhrman, M.D.,

Michael Klaper, M.D., and

Mark Hyman, M.D.

Don't try to push anyone into accepting your change right away. Let them adjust to your new way of eating and, at some point, I'm sure they'll show interest in trying the foods you're having. **You can start by baking or preparing delicious oil-free and sugar-free cakes and desserts** for them. I guarantee your family and guests will be impressed and ask for a second helping.

It's important to avoid any stress related to food and family meals. Don't push anyone into something they're reluctant to change. This is also an important aspect when it comes to you, not just other family members.

Serve the change as a thrilling new challenge and not as a must-do. Don't try to make the switch overnight. Start as simple as adding more greens, vegetables, legumes and fruits to your family's menu.

Don't be offended when your family doesn't like what you've cooked. As we all know, it might be that you need to practice your new way of cooking or that everyone's taste buds (yours included) need to get adjusted to new flavours. It can take up to 20 attempts before you start enjoying a new taste. If you don't like something after 20 times, you probably won't ever like it.

For me it took three to four times before I started appreciating artichoke and fennel, but now I absolutely love the taste of these veggies. Never give up and always try new things!

Zinc-rich foods are excellent palate balancers. (Ref. 43) Try including spinach, sesame seeds, dry yeast (if you can tolerate it), cacao, poppy seeds, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds and nori sheets in your menu. This is especially true when it comes to kids and seniors.

Are you the only one in your family starting healthy eating?

If you're the one doing the cooking, then it's easy to make the change solo. Begin by trying to **get your family to eat a plant-based diet at home**. They can have whatever they want when they dine out. This will make your life easier.

Have one to two meatless days a week and then gradually increase the number of days you cook without meat. You'll know what's the best schedule for your family.

Don't make the plant-based meal a big deal. Just prepare the food and serve it. No one will notice the absence of meat in a dish such as bean-lentil chillies with rice. It's a hearty and filling dinner.

You can also market meatless meals as Mexican or Indian nights (cultures where there are a lot of vegetarian options.) Again, don't say there won't be meat on the menu.

Try not to have any refined foods, especially sweets, in your home. This way your family (note kids) won't be tempted to eat the processed snacks. Instead, prepare healthy sweets and desserts or buy them from a health food store. Just be sure to read the labels carefully.

At the time of writing this book, my son was five years old and already knew a lot about nutrition. He's a keen eater and eats the same foods as my husband and me because he was introduced to different foods from the beginning. While other kids are picky about meals, he's not as he has been exposed to different tastes and flavours. He sometimes even educates people about what he's eating. When he goes to kindergarten with the lunch, I packed him, other kids often want to try whatever he's having.



I make everything at home from whole food ingredients that taste heavenly. For my son: healthy is normal. He's lucky he's been eating right from the start. As he grows up, he won't be tempted by sugary processed sweets and other unhealthy treats.

If you can't persuade your family to eat plant-based at home, **cook two dinners** instead. It's easier than you think.

Knowing a balanced plate consists of $\frac{1}{2}$ vegetables (raw and cooked), $\frac{1}{4}$ starches and $\frac{1}{4}$ protein, it's easy to mix and match. For example, while preparing a stew steam some veggies for you and cook the meat/fish separately. For a curry, prepare your beans/lentils and again, cook the meat/fish on the side. You can also include the starches (potatoes, corn, parsnips or whole grains) in the stew/curry or cook them separately.

Try including some legumes in stews and curries so your family gets used to the taste and texture. Of course, many people get digestive problems when eating animal products, grains and legumes at same meal.

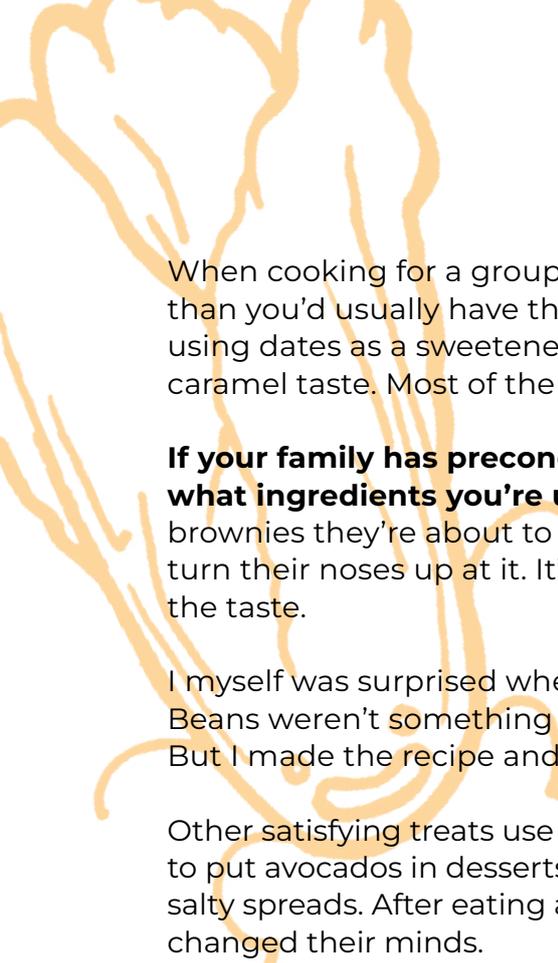
If you want to make pasta with sauce, again prepare the sauce and legumes and then do the meat separately. Serve both types of pasta: the sauce and legumes and the sauce and meat. Perhaps someone will surprise you and go for the veggie meal.

Use plant-based creams and coconut milk when cooking. No one will notice the difference as these healthy substitutes taste great.

Missing cheese? Nutritional yeast in veggie dishes brings out a cheesy flavour. Pair plant-based Parmesan with cashews, nutritional yeast and sea salt for a delicious snack. I have received many compliments on this "cheese" from carnivore friends. They've even asked for the recipe.

Keep some dairy Parmesan on hand if your family's not happy with the plant-based "cheese". Keep the plant-based item for yourself...for now. I guarantee your family will eventually love it.

Almost everyone likes dessert and it's no different when it comes to healthy eating. You'll find recipes for muffins, brownies, candies, puddings and cakes in this book. It's easy to hop on-board a plant-based diet when everything tastes yummy. **For some people it's the matter of sweetness and you'll find your taste buds adapting as you decrease the amount of sugar in your sweet treats.** You'll actually enjoy the flavour and texture of the real food ingredients and not the sweetener like sugar, agave or honey.



When cooking for a group of friends, I suggest making the desserts a bit sweeter than you'd usually have them. Saying that, try adapting your family's palate. Start using dates as a sweetener as they're not only extremely sweet but also have a nice caramel taste. Most of the dessert recipes in this book use dates as a sweetener.

If your family has preconceptions about what you're making, don't tell them what ingredients you're using until they've tasted the food. By saying the brownies they're about to eat was made with two cans of beans; they're going to turn their noses up at it. It's simple psychology and affects the way they perceive the taste.

I myself was surprised when I first tried a brownie recipe that called for beans. Beans weren't something I would have ever thought about putting in a sweet dish. But I made the recipe and it's now one of my family's favourite desserts.

Other satisfying treats use avocados. I know several people who thought it strange to put avocados in desserts. The soft green fruit is conventionally used in salads and salty spreads. After eating an avocado-banana pudding I prepared, the naysayers changed their minds.

Introducing new foods is fun and educational. Eat dates and bake muffins with applesauce instead of oil. For those looking for a new nutty flavour, try spelt. Of course, you can prepare nut spreads and cashew mayonnaise (all my carnivore friends sigh with satisfaction when they taste it.) Add quinoa, black rice and other whole grains to your daily menu.

Not the cook?

Persuade the cook to consider your new lifestyle and introduce him/her to the concept of cooking two dinners. If the cook is reluctant to do so, ask him/her to at least cook the meat separately and use plant-based creams or coconut milk. This way you can combine your plate with veggies and legumes and leave the meat for the rest of them. Always have a can of beans on hand so you can have something ready to serve with your meal if you don't want to cook. (Remember to wash the beans before using them.)

A big thing to consider is to actually start cooking! Plant-based stew/curry recipes are simple to prepare, even if you're a beginner. Throw all the ingredients into a pot and let it cook. Then eat!

If preparing a curry sounds too scary, start by boiling rice and lentils and then steaming some veggies. Can't do that? Anyone can chop vegetables and make a salad.

Helping those in need.

We all want to help family and friends who are suffering from illnesses and would benefit from a whole foods plant-based diet. **You can share information with them about the treatment of diseases and sicknesses.** Offer to send them links or materials by e-mail. I usually refer to respectable books such as T. Colin Campbell's and Thomas M. Campbell's *The China Study* or Joel Fuhrman's *Eat to Live* as well as professional websites. Try to avoid popular books or articles with no scientific background that are anything but professional and don't refer to trusted sources. For a full list of recommended books and websites, please check the end of this book.

I find people have more respect for your opinions if you've studied in the field of nutrition. I graduated from the Certificate in Plant Based Nutrition by eCornell. However, there's nothing you can do if someone decides not to take your advice. I have encountered several people who are already ill and refuse to read anything on how to get better or take any action. These types of people prefer to stay in their comfort zone (even if it's not very comfortable anymore) and rely on conventional treatments. You can be a bit pushier if it's someone you're close to but in the end, you can't make decisions for him/her.

A friend of mine who is a nutritionist knows this well. She had one friend who got angry with her when she offered advice as a nutritionist. My friend was only making a recommendation for her friend's child that would have certainly improved her condition. The advice went unheeded. Fortunately, she's had plenty of positive experiences too.

My new path changed the eating habits of my best friends and I'm really happy about this. Those who haven't made the switch still respect my choices and are considerate when choosing a restaurant or entertaining us in their homes.

Growing up, I had a mother who had always been more of a veggie person. She educated herself through my journey. Today, she wouldn't cook any meat if it wasn't for my father. I'm just as lucky with my in-laws. They respect my family's choices and have started to cook more plant-based foods themselves.

The trick is not to lecture but to be a good example. By continuing along your healthy path, people will learn it's not some kind of fad. They'll also see the positive effects the new lifestyle has on you (weight-loss, more energy, better skin, overall improvement in health) and they might be impressed and try it out themselves.

My husband has been the beneficiary of making the switch to healthier eating after being hospitalized with gallstones for a third time. The surgeon told him it was absolutely necessary to cut him open in order to treat the problem. He refused and instead started eating my whole food plant-based meals. He got rid of his symptoms and lost 15 kilos (33 pounds) in six months.

My uncle (who's just eight years older than me) called me asking for advice on my whole food plant-based diet. He needed a change after dealing with excess weight and elevated blood sugar. He has since lost about 20 kilos (44 pounds) while not even sticking fully to the diet. His blood sugar levels are back to normal too.

Getting attacked over your eating habits.

Plant-based eaters often hear the following questions/statements:

- Where do you get your protein?
- How do you get enough iron?
- You must not be getting enough calcium.
- This diet is deficient in nutrients.
- Don't you ever eat cheese and drink milk?

You'll find the answers to these questions in the first part of my book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#). Here, I'm going to concentrate on how to deal with unpleasant situations in general.

In order to be able to answer the above questions, prepare some short scripts for each situation. This will make you more confident with confrontation.

When involved in an unpleasant situation remember **it's important to remain polite**. Don't attack the other person's lifestyle or try to persuade them to eat your way. If he/she still feels the need to badger you about your habits, it means they have their own issues. Unless you are a psychologist, don't try to fix them. Emphasize you've chosen your path after doing extensive research. Explain the benefits you've reaped (weight-loss, better health, better skin, better digestion, more energy) from this new diet. Tell them you don't feel the need or want to return to the old you and today you're a much happier and healthier person.

Often people might say to you that by restricting "good foods" (refined foods/meat) you're restricting pleasure. A response I like to give is that I enjoy my life all the time, not only during a meal. I also feel good after every meal, whereas after consuming junk food or heavier fare people tend to feel bad and guilty. Then they try to forget about their conscience by eating more of the same unhealthy stuff.

When I was in my early twenties, I struggled with an eating disorder. I didn't have a clue about what to eat and thought the less I ate, the skinnier I would be. After adopting a whole foods plant-based diet a few years ago as well as walking and cycling, I'm at peace with food and my body today. And it feels so good! I remember well when I used to overeat and how bad I felt afterwards even if I was never overweight.

If you already have grandchildren, it's always a good argument to say that you want to see them grow up and actually be active with them. Also, you don't want to leave your partner alone too soon or let your loved ones take care of you when you're sick with chronic disease.

Dealing with the medical system

Find a practitioner who supports plant-based eating. One way to do this is to find Facebook groups of plant-based eaters. Ask for their experiences and if they have any referrals for you.

If your practitioner isn't supportive, you may not want to tell him/her about your eating habits. In case of any medical problems consult with both a nutritionist and a doctor. There are independent labs where you can have blood tests done (if you can afford it) if you don't want to involve your not-so-supportive physician. Make sure to consult the lab results with a doctor or with an adequately qualified nutritionist as not all nutritionists are trained to read lab results. For more on testing, go to the first part of this book.

It's especially important to have a supportive and knowledgeable practitioner when it comes to children. Research shows that kids who eat a plant-based diet tend to be smaller, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Kids who consume dairy and meat eat excessive amounts of protein and therefore grow faster. (Ref. 44) It's crucial that practitioners make the difference between smaller growth resulting from nutrient deficiency and smaller but normal growth because of a plant-based diet.

If you are hospitalized and you have no one to bring you food, tell the staff you're lactose, casein and even gluten intolerant. This way you'll at least get dairy-free meals without meat. You can also ask them to substitute the meat with extra salad and then stock up with canned beans and whole grain bread for protein.

I have learned from my own and others' experiences that there's no point telling the staff that you eat a plant-based diet. In most cases, you'll get lectured or discriminated against. When you're sick, you don't need the extra stress from confrontation.

When my child was two and a half, he ended up in the hospital for four days. I told the staff my family was lactose intolerant. I was then told my son could have a dairy-free menu, but I would need to provide meals for myself. Fortunately, I could do this as my husband could stay with our son. I became a one-person catering service bringing lunches and dinners to the hospital.

Preparing breakfast in the hospital is always easy. You pour hot water over oats and dried fruit and you're ready to eat. For other meals, stock up on fruits, nuts, seeds, canned beans, boiled grains, whole grain bread, boiled beetroot and raw veggies. There's usually a fridge for everyone's use on the hospital floor.

In an ideal world you would have family or friends bringing you nutritious food while you're stuck in the hospital. Depending on where you live, it's possible to order plant-based take-away straight to the hospital. Also check out the hospital café/buffet and nearby grocery stores (if you're allowed to go outside). By following your plant-based regime, hopefully you'll be feeling better in no time.

getting your kids to eat plant-based whole foods

This chapter is written from experience. Read the whole chapter from my book *Plant-Based Made Easy* to learn about:

- How to start right from the beginning
- Educating kids about the benefits of plant foods
- Being an example to your kids
- Telling stories so your kids will eat more plant foods
- Forming your child's eating habits and table manners
- How to deal with grandparents
- Why you shouldn't bribe, reward or comfort your child with food
- Involving your child in growing plants, meal planning and preparing the food
- Playing with your child and food
- The trick of having healthy snacks available
- How to deal with kindergartens and schools
- How to deal with birthdays and other social gatherings

Since we've decided to be plant strong, our children will only benefit from our change to eating a whole foods diet. The easiest way to introduce kids to eating healthily is to **start right from the beginning.**

Children raised on a whole-food plant diet are much stronger as adults.

They've formed healthy habits growing up and don't have to make a major change to either lose weight or treat an illness when they're grown up.

a day in the life of a plant-based eater



In this short chapter you'll learn:

- How to fit your new plant-based lifestyle into your schedule
- What to eat for every meal
- What you can make ahead of time and store for later
- Ways to make shopping easier

You've made the decision to eat a plant-based diet and mainly unprocessed whole foods. Now you're wondering how to fit all that cooking and shopping into your schedule. Take a look at these quick and easy ways to plan and prepare your healthy choices day.

Breakfast

Breakfast is the simplest meal to make. **Have a vegetable-fruit smoothie in the morning.** Just wash, peel and cut your fruits and veggies, add a tablespoon of ground flax and then water or nut milk, blend and you're ready to eat. Take your smoothie on the go in an airtight cup and drink it within two hours.

To save time in the morning, prepare fruits and veggies that take the most effort to peel and cut in the evening (oranges, pineapple, apples, pears). Store them in the fridge in a sealed container overnight. They're ready to throw in the blender in the morning.

If you're having a smoothie using only berries, bananas and salad, there won't be a lot of chopping and prep work.

Another hearty morning meal is oatmeal or other grains. If you're preparing quinoa, rice, millet, buckwheat or other grains, let it soak in the evening to save time in the morning (this also helps you with digestion). Just add seeds, fruits or berries in the morning. Eat it at home at room temperature or heat it up if you prefer a warm breakfast.

If you don't have time to make anything at home, bring the dry ingredients to the office. Then boil water and pour it over your grains, nuts or seeds. Let the mixture sit for 15 minutes before eating.

Second breakfast or brunch

If you had your smoothie in the morning, grab cookies or muffins that you made beforehand. A couple of slices of whole grain bread are a good option too.

My favourite brunch is speciality coffee with soymilk accompanied with buckwheat bread and a muffin I made myself or bread from an organic bakery. I never buy muffins because they are usually filled with oil and sugar.

Oatmeal or porridge from other grains is also a good choice after your breakfast smoothie. Again, take the dry ingredients to your office and pour hot water over the mixture and your brunch is ready.

Already had your grains this morning? Bring seasonal fruits or ready-to-eat veggies (carrots, cucumbers, cauliflower, red bell pepper) and some nuts.

Lunch

Lunch is usually the trickiest meal of the day as people are often away from home or on the go.

It's easy if you have a decent buffet in the area. If you're forced to dine out, check the chapter Dining Out for tips and suggestions.

Take your lunch with you. Use leftovers from the previous day's dinner or fix yourself a sandwich with whole grain bread or make a salad the evening before.

I find it best to cook a large meal for dinner and use the leftovers for lunch the next day. I structure my meal plans following this method.

You're really lucky if you can cook yourself a fresh lunch every day. We all can do that from time-to-time such as on weekends or days off from work.

I usually prepare something requiring little time, such as red lentils with oven-baked beetroot and steamed broccoli. Another favourite is a veggie-legume soup that's always based on onions, garlic, carrot and celery with the addition of other seasonal veggies plus lentils, beans or chickpeas.

Afternoon snack

Just like your mid-morning snack, have seasonal fruits or ready-to-eat veggies (carrots, cucumbers, cauliflower, red bell pepper) on hand.

Dinner

There's no getting away from it: making supper for yourself, or you and your family, is time-consuming. One idea is to cook a meal every other day or even every other three days. This hinges on if you want to eat the same thing three evenings

in a row. I don't recommend preparing meals a long time ahead and storing them in the fridge. The nutritional value of the food decreases substantially and could also cause people to get sick, especially those with sensitive bellies. (When storing rice, remember to place it in the fridge within an hour after it's done. Never reheat rice twice.)

It's best to eat whatever you cooked within 24 hours, except for muffins and cookies, which you can freeze and heat up whenever needed. (Ref. 47)

If you're not willing to cook any recipes that seem too complicated, follow the plate rule:

- ¼ grains/starches,
- ¼ legumes, and
- ½ raw and cooked vegetables.

Steam some veggies, add salad, canned beans (wash first), cooked grains (vary between rice, quinoa, buckwheat, millet, whole grain pasta of spelt, wheat, rye, kamut, rice etc.) or whole grain bread and you're ready to go.

Desserts

You never really need dessert but it's tasty and we know most people want to have something sweet. The easiest is to have some dark chocolate, berries or a muffin or self-prepared cookies.

If you feel like messing with a blender, prepare a delicious pudding or ice cream with berries, bananas and avocado.

Foods you can prepare in bulk on the weekend for your workweek:

- muffins: store in the freezer
- cookies: store in the freezer
- energy bars: store in the fridge
- cooked grains: store in the fridge for 2 to 3 days
- cooked legumes: store in the fridge for 2 to 3 days. (Or buy beans in cans or jars.)

Shopping

I use meals plans and suggest you do too. Make a shopping list for the week and get all the items and ingredients you need in one big shop. If that's too much for you, then write a shopping list for each day or for two to three days and shop accordingly.

It all depends on how conveniently the store is located and whether you have help at home bringing in large quantities. I find it convenient to order most veggies straight from a farmer and have it delivered directly to her home, which saves a great deal of time.

budgeting – good habits don't have to be expensive

Read this chapter from the book *Plant-Based Made Easy* and learn how to:

- Shop on a budget
- Grow your own plants
- Forge in nature
- Buy in bulk
- Use what's in your pantry
- Plan ahead to save money
- Exercise for free
- Save on detergents, cosmetics and simple cold medicines
- Recycle – old is new

Healthy eating and living IS for everyone. No matter how much you make (or don't make), maintaining good habits doesn't have to be expensive. You can't afford to take risks with your health so why not learn how to budget for life.



what is plantricious?

All the recipes in this booklet and in my book Plant-Based Made Easy are Certified Plantricious or Plantricious Friendly.

It is a new food category for prepared and packaged plant-based foods and recipes – Plantricious aka plant nutritious. The latter is based on nutrition guidelines created and endorsed by the most respected medical experts in US advocating plant nutrition for optimum health. The advisory board has the following experts:

- **Michael Greger, MD**
Physician, International Speaker, Founder of Nutritionfacts.org, New York Times bestselling author of “How Not to Die” and “How Not to Diet”.
- **Scott Stoll, MD**
Physician, International speaker, Author, Co-founder Plantrician Project, Co-founder International Plant-Based Nutrition Healthcare Conference
- **Brenda Davis, MD**
Registered Dietitian, internationally acclaimed speaker, public health nutritionist, clinical nutrition specialist, nutrition consultant and academic nutrition instructor.

Furthermore, the project created two different seals, Certified Plantricious and Plantricious Friendly. Those are tools making it easy for you to identify the nutrient-dense, fibre-filled, health-promoting plant-based foods doctors are prescribing.

With this in mind, I am so proud and happy to be a Plantricious partner and promote recipes that not only taste good, but also make you thrive.

To sum it up, the Certified Plantricious Certification is given to whole food plant-based recipes that:

- Must be whole food plant-based, contains no animal products
- May be minimally processed
- No added oil
- No added sugars
- No artificial additives or preservatives
- Sodium (mgs) to Calories ratio, $1 \leq 1$
- Total fibre to calories, $2g \geq 100$ calories



The **Plantricious Friendly Certification** was created to identify those foods that may be used as ingredients in or with a Certified Plantricious recipe or food:

- Must be whole food plant-based, contains no animal products
- May be minimally processed
- No added oil
- No added sugars
- No artificial additives or preservatives

Plantricious Friendly foods may include but are not limited to condiments, fermented foods, soups, sauces, beverages, dressings, marinades, etc. They are not intended to be considered a complete meal.

Read more on the guidelines from [The Plantricious website](#).

You will find a Certified Plantricious or Plantricious Friendly note with each recipe.

Enjoy plant nutritious recipes!



1-day balanced meal plan with recipes



A Full Day of Eating WFPB	
Breakfast	Overnight oats with berries (recipe below)
Snack	1 large orange (300g, 10.6oz with peel), 2 Brazil nuts (8g, 0.3oz)
Lunch	Salad: barley, black beans, grated beet (recipe below)
Snack	2 big carrots (200g, 7oz), 1 tbsp sunflower seeds (10g, 0.4oz), 1 slice whole grain bread (35g, 1.2oz)
Dinner	Soup: quinoa-spinach-lentil (recipe below) + 1 slice whole grain bread (35g, 1.2oz)
Dessert	Banana-berry ice cream with poppy seeds (recipe below)
Sprinkle on / mix in	¼ tsp agar-agar, 1 tbsp nutritional yeast

Item	Why important?	How to use?
Agar-agar	Essential iodine source	Add it to your cereal, smoothies, or liquid desserts (puddings, ice creams).
Sunflower seeds	Essential source of selenium and vitamin B1	Sprinkle on your porridge, lunches, or dinners. Add to smoothies or eat as is.
Brazil nuts	Essential source of selenium	Eat as is.
Poppy seeds	Essential source of calcium	Included in recipes.
Cinnamon	Essential source of calcium	Included in recipes.
Nutritional yeast	Has cheesy flavour, important source of B vitamins, especially B12	Sprinkle on lunches and dinners. Try not to heat as this promotes vitamin loss.
Flax seeds	Essential source of Omega 3 amino acids	Included in recipes. Grind before use for max nutrient absorption. Store ground seeds in fridge.
Hemp seeds	Ideal ratio of Omega 3 and 6 amino acids	Grind if unshelled. Store in fridge.

Simple Rolled Oats with Berries

[1 serving]
Breakfast

This is one of the most satisfying and easiest breakfasts one can imagine. You can have it every morning for years, adding seasonal berries and fruits, and never get bored with the taste.

Ingredients:

- 70g (2.57oz) oatmeal or rolled oats (prefer organic)
- 200ml (6.76 fluid oz) water
- 10g (0.35oz) handful of shredded coconut
- 10g (0.35oz) handful of goji berries
- 2 tbsps blueberries (frozen or fresh)
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- 1 tbsp ground flax seeds
- 1 tbsp hemp seeds (hulled or ground)
- (Add 1 tsp of date sugar/paste to sweeten the recipe if necessary.)

Preparation: boil water in a kettle. Put oatmeal, shredded coconut and goji berries together in a bowl. Pour hot water over dry mixture making sure all the ingredients are covered; stir a bit to avoid clumps. Let steep for 15-20 minutes. Add blueberries, cinnamon, ginger, flax seeds, and hemp seeds. (Mix them in or leave on top if you prefer.) Add water if you find it too dry or thick for your taste.

Nutritional value: 480 kcal, 51g carbohydrates, 20g fat, 16g protein, 14g fibre, and 53mg sodium.



Barley-Bean Salad with Grated Beet

[1 serving]
Lunch

Eat a different and tasty salad every day by using a variety of grains, legumes, greens and veggies. Top it off with savoury dressing if necessary. Here's one version.

- 3 cups (about 140g, 5oz) shredded green salad (Romain lettuce, baby spinach etc.)
- 40g (1.4oz) oat groats (dry weight), soaked
- ½ can (120g, 4.2oz) black beans*, rinsed
- ½ cup (about 100g, 3.5oz) packed boiled and grated beet with juice
- 1 cup (160g, 5.6oz) sweet corn*

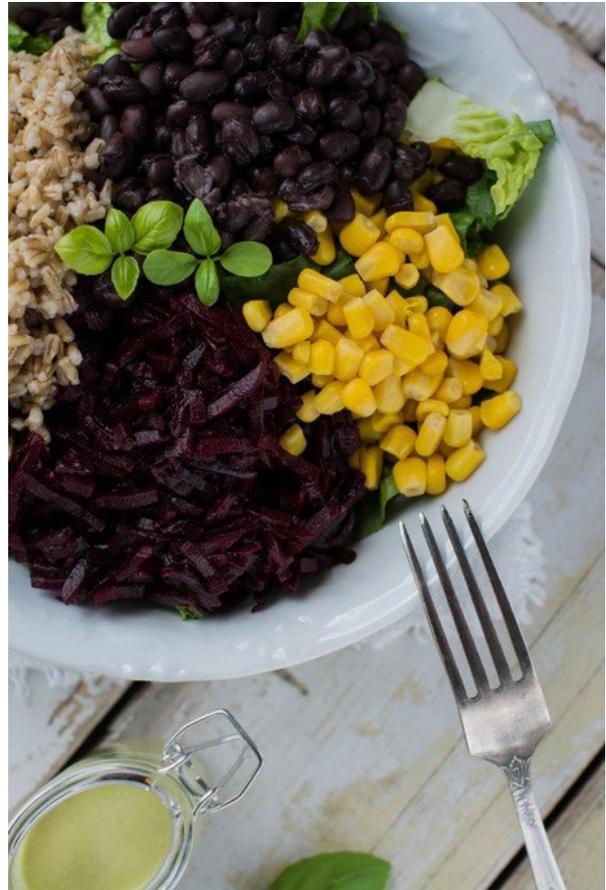
*with no added sugar, salt and oils.

Olive-Tahini Sauce: [1 serving]

- 5 green olives
- ½ tsp (5g, 0.2oz) tahini (with no added sugar, salt and oils)
- 1 tbsp (14g, 0.5oz) lemon juice
- 1 tbsp nutritional yeast
- black pepper to taste
- 3 or more large basil leaves
- 3 tsps (45g, 1.6oz) of water

Preparation:

1. Soak the barley for at least 6 hours before you use it (soak the barley in the evening if you want it for next day's lunch. Want it for supper? Soak the barley that morning.)
2. Rinse and boil the barley for about 10 minutes until soft.
3. Cut the salad into small pieces and



4. place it in a large salad bowl. Add the rinsed beans, barley and grated beet.
4. Combine the dressing ingredients with an immerse blender or in a grinder. Then pour the mixture over the salad and start eating.

Tip:

If you use tahini, you can easily mix the dressing with a spoon in a small bowl or glass and then chop the olives and basil leaves into the salad.

Nutritional value: 588 kcal, 79g carbohydrates, 10g fat, 31g protein, 27g fibre, and 323mg sodium.

Quinoa-Spinach-Lentil Soup

[2 servings]
Dinner

This soup is comforting, hearty and gives you great energy.

- 1 dl leek, chopped (about ½ cup)
- 1 medium carrot (about 50g, 1.8oz), chopped
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 1 small potato (about 35g, 1.2oz), chopped
- ¼ sweet potato (about 35g, 1.2oz), chopped
- 40g (1.4oz) quinoa, washed
- 40g (1.4oz) red lentils, washed
- 1 tsp low sodium Mediterranean herb mix
- 125g (4.4oz) fresh or frozen spinach
- black pepper
- 700 ml (3 cups, 24.7oz) water (or less/more – depending on the desired consistency). Remember, you can always add more water.

Preparation:

Boil a kettleful of water. Then in a pot add the 3 cups of hot water, chopped leek, celery, carrots, quinoa, herb mix and bring it all to a boil. Simmer for 10 minutes. Add lentils, chopped potato, and sweet potato. Simmer for another 7 minutes. Add spinach and simmer for 3 minutes. If you use frozen spinach, count the 3 minutes from when the soup is brought to a boil again.

Nutritional value per serving: 207 kcal, 32g carbohydrates, 2g fat, 11g protein, 7g fibre, and 94mg sodium.



Banana-Berry Ice Cream with Poppy Seeds and Cinnamon

[1 serving]
Dessert

- 1 banana, sliced and frozen
- 150g (5.3oz) frozen berries of choice
- 1 tbsp poppy seeds
- ½ tsp cinnamon

Preparation:

Let the frozen berries and banana sit in the blender for a couple of minutes to soften. Then add the remaining ingredients and blend until smooth.

Tip: Use a potato masher to move the ingredients around in the blender so there are no lumps and the mixture is creamy. If you use a banana at room temperature, expect more of a pudding than ice cream.

Nutritional value per serving: 231 kcal, 39g carbohydrates, 5g fat, 4g protein, 10g fibre, and 5mg sodium.



GET FULL 2-WEEK MEAL PLAN NOW!

Save weeks and months of research and experimenting.

Get your copy of [**PLANT-BASED MADE EASY: The Complete Practical Guide to Transitioning to Healthy Whole Food Diet**](#)

Rebalance your body and improve quality of your life!



the book recipes



The full 2-week meal plan in the book [Plant-Based Made Easy](#) includes the following recipes

Breakfast Recipes

Strawberry-Avocado Smoothie | Blueberry-Baby Spinach Smoothie
Cherry-Cacao Smoothie | Mango-Peach Smoothie



Raw Buckwheat Ricotta with Berries | Yogurt with Muesli and Berries
Millet with Berries and Seeds | Buckwheat-Banana Pancakes



Oven Waffles | Sandwich with Hummus | Chickpea Flour Omelette



Lunches and Dinners

Brown Lentil-Tomato-Corn-Kale Stew with Mushrooms | Eggplant-Bell Pepper-Red Bean Pasta | Chickpea-Savoy Cabbage Soup | Beet-Black Bean Burger



Cheesy Veggie-Chickpea-Tomato Casserole with Capers | Quinoa-Red Beans-Carrot Salad | Spaghetti with Kale-Corn-Prune Stew | Rice-Chickpea-Beet Salad with Sunflower Seed Dressing



Cauliflower Puree Soup with Red Lentils | Oven-Baked Veggies with Tempeh and Chard | Quinoa with Red Bean and Green Bean Stew



Red Lentil Dal with Mushrooms and Rice | Tortillas with Lentil-Rice-Veggie Stew | Buckwheat-Black Bean-Radish-Carrot Salad



Snacks and Desserts

Barley Muffins | Raw Buckwheat Dessert with Poppy Seeds | Chia-Fig Pudding | Avocado-Banana-Chocolate Pudding



Strawberry-Sunflower Seed Smoothie | Chia-Banana Pudding | Spicy Cherry-Poppy Seed Muffins



Banana-Blueberry Ice Cream | Fig-Cacao Pudding | Corn Cakes with Tahini, Applesauce and Cinnamon



Extra Recipes Lunches and Dinners

Red Cabbage Puree Soup with Applesauce | Vinaigrette (Sauerkraut-Beet Salad) |
Pizza | Sushi



Lentil Lasagne | Crustless Oven Quiche | Potato-Chickpea Flour Pan Tortilla



Extra Recipes Snacks and Desserts

3-Ingredient Cookies | Zucchini Muffins | Mango-Banana-Chocolate Muffins |
Bean-Sweet Potato Brownie



Cashew-Chocolate-Hemp Cake | Tiramisú | Carob Candies | Raw Buckwheat
Cheesecake Bowl



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Other Resources on Your Healing Journey

Online

My blog [Nutriplanet](#) is full of great content and recipes – come check it out.

Books

- **How Not to Die:** Discover the Foods Scientifically Proven to Prevent and Reverse Disease by Michael Greger M.D.
- **How Not to Diet:** The Groundbreaking Science of Healthy, Permanent Weight Loss by Michael Greger M.D.
- **The China Study:** Revised and Expanded Edition: The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted and the Startling Implications for Diet, Weight Loss, and Long-Term Health by T. Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell II
- **Eat to Live:** The Amazing Nutrient-Rich Program for Fast and Sustained Weight Loss, Revised Edition by Joel Fuhrman MD

I'm also happy to share an awesome project I take pride in being part of – **Think Outside The Lunchbox Cookbook** by Jyl Steinback and Ashley Arpel Greenwald. It is a 100% plant-based cookbook containing 250 plant nutritious recipes (26 of which are mine) the whole family will love!

You'll find all those books in my [Amazon shop in Books' section](#).

Protocol Meal Plans

I know it can be quite overwhelming to soak all that information in and start navigating in your new way of eating and living. Especially if you have further dietary restrictions. You'd need to calculate your foods and portions extra carefully if you're prone to low blood sugar and blood sugar spikes. I've done all this for you in my [Vegan Candida Plan](#).

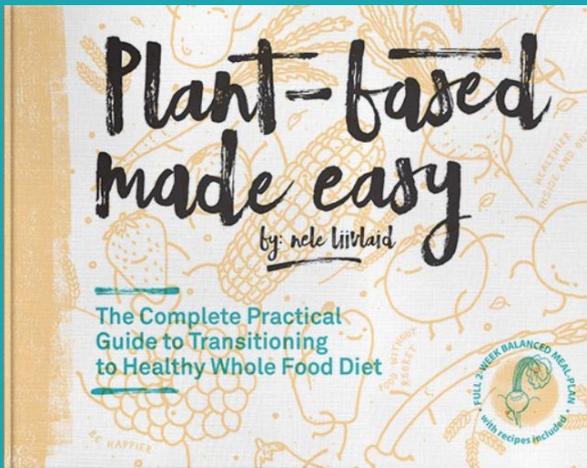
It's important to realize that no healing path is like another and that more than anything it comes down to individuality. However, there are certain guidelines that everyone can follow adjusting them along the way.

I'm so happy that you're on the path to eating better for yourself and for the plant! Let's change the diet paradigm one step at a time!

Yours truly,



IT'S HERE! The Complete Practical Guide To Transitioning To Healthy Whole Food Diet!



Get your copy



FOOD WITHOUT
REGRETS



HEALTHIER INSIDE
AND OUT



BE HAPPIER, LIVE
LONGER

In This Comprehensive And Very Practical Guide, I Will Show You¹
Through The Transition:

- ✔ Step 1: Learn the basics about balanced plant-based diet: macros, micros, blood sugar control, cravings and needs, role of exercise, and necessary blood tests.
- ✔ Step 2: Prepare your kitchen and pantry and learn how to shop and read labels not to be fooled by marketers or harming your budget.
- ✔ Step 3: Compile yourself a balanced plant-based meal plan and master yourself in cooking without animal products, sugars, oils and other refined foods while successfully engaging your kids.
- ✔ Step 4: You are not alone in this world, so handle challenges with your family and friends while hosting or visiting.
- ✔ Step 5: You need to get yourself out of your kitchen once in a while, so learn tricks and hacks on dining out, and keeping on the track while travelling or even being hospitalized.
- ✔ Step 6: Be a champion by learning from other people's success.

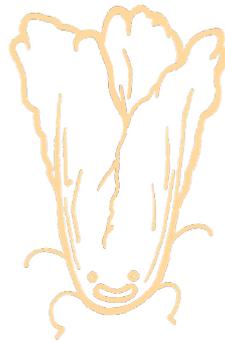
In addition, at the end of **PLANT-BASED MADE EASY**, I give you a **2-WEEK MEAL PLAN** with breakfasts, lunches, dinners, snacks and desserts beautifully laid out for you. The meal plan contains 40 delicious and easy recipes + 15 extra recipes to add to your daily menu.

Whether you're a plant-based newbie looking to shed pounds or a seasoned vegan in search of fresh inspiration and navigational skills, **PLANT-BASED MADE EASY** is your essential, definitive guide—for a happier, healthier, and longer life.

Disclaimer

The information shared is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is intended as a sharing of my personal knowledge and experience as well as information from the research. I encourage you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.

I am a specialty-diet consultant and recipe developer and what I am good at is helping you out with practical struggles about cooking, finding/replacing ingredients and overcoming obstacles you might face while on a restricted diet.



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