PLANT-BASED EATING
RESOURCE GUIDE
Cracking the Basics of Plant-Based Eating

**What It Is**
Fruits and vegetables, whole grains and a variety of protein-rich foods like beans and peas, nuts, seeds and soy (like edamame) are the mainstays of plant-based eating. Low-fat milk and dairy products, seafood, lean meat, poultry and eggs can also be included if desired, but are not the focus of plant-based menus. It is not exclusionary, but rather about being more mindful of plant sources of protein. The use of sugars, salt and saturated fats should all be minimal.

**Why Plant-Based?**
Compared to a typical American diet, a plant-based philosophy is higher in unsaturated fats and fiber, both of which support better health. It can be more nutrient-dense, and contain more vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, all which help to reduce your risk for chronic disease. Plant-based diets offer a great variety of flavors and textures.
Less Meat, Not Meatless
Plant-based eating doesn’t have to be vegetarian or vegan. There are a number of plant-based eating plans like the Mediterranean Diet and Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) that include small amounts of poultry, lean red meat and seafood. If you prefer an entirely vegetarian regimen, however, there are plenty to choose from. Part of the beauty is that plant-based eating is customizable to your unique preferences. For some, the transition to a diet with more plant-based foods is best accomplished through gradual steps. In general, the recommended serving size for animal protein in a meal is three ounces. Try making that three ounce threshold your first goal, then reduce the meat content from there as desired.

Plants & Protein
Plant sources of protein include nuts, beans and other legumes, peas, seeds, tofu, tempeh (a fermented soy product), and whole grains like brown rice, farro, sorghum, and quinoa. When combined with walnuts, plant-based dishes can be just as satisfying as comparable portions of meat-based dishes, due to plant-based meals being higher in fiber. They don’t call it “walnut meat” for nothing.

Good Fats
Good fats are good for you. Research has uncovered benefits to eating good, unsaturated dietary fats found in foods like nuts (walnuts), flaxseed, plant oils (canola, soybean, safflower, and extra virgin olive oil), salmon, mackerel, and avocado. Walnuts are the only nut that has a significant source of the plant-based omega-3 alpha-linolenic acid, or ALA (2.5 grams/ounce).

Where to Start
Focus on adding. Instead of dining on just chicken and rice, add a cup of sautéed broccoli, roasted carrots or mix in cauliflower rice. Fruits like peaches and berries make for delicious plant-based additions to desserts. For snacks, try setting out a bowl of toasted or seasoned walnuts to nibble on throughout the day. Plant-based eating is not an all-or-nothing proposition. If it helps you get started, choose just one day each week to focus on plant-based meals.

Too Busy to Cook?
A slow cooker or pressure cooker is the most important ally a busy plant-based eater can have. One-pot meals can simmer to flavorful perfection while you’re working or sleeping. They also happen to be a great way to cook dried beans. When dining out, Mediterranean, Asian and Mexican cuisines typically offer more options for people wanting to include vegetables and beans.

Your Next Meal
Now that you know, it’s time to take action. Check out the plant-based recipe collection page for a variety of tasty ideas, and make your next meal the first in a shift toward healthier eating.
Think plant-based eating is difficult? Think again! With a few tips and tricks, you’ll be eating more tasty plant-based meals in no time. There’s no need to overhaul your diet overnight, just start with a single meal or recipe, and then begin to incorporate more plant foods. For recipe ideas, visit the plant-based recipe collection page at walnuts.org.
• Plant-based is not “all or nothing.” You don’t have to go meat-free to be more plant-based. Try adding veggies to your favorite recipes and comfort foods. You’ll boost the nutrition while reducing some of the saturated fat and calories.

• Start your meal with a soup or salad. It ensures veggies will be featured and provides a good way of slowing down the meal pace, too.

• Swap in plant proteins for animal proteins. Kidney or garbanzo beans, lentils, nuts, like walnuts, and seeds, and high-quality soy protein, like edamame or tofu, are all great options.

• Substitute or add chopped mushrooms and/or walnuts for meat in numerous dishes. Their textures and savory taste are perfect as meat substitutes.

• Take meat off the menu just once a week. Maybe you’ve heard of Meatless Monday? You can also choose other days of the week to think about a more plant-based diet. Tofu Tuesday? Walnutty Wednesday? Fruit-forward Friday? Salad Saturday? Soup-er Sunday? Think about identifying one day each week where plant foods and plant proteins are front and center at every meal.

• Feature a fruit bowl. When you have fruits and veggies displayed in a visible location, you’re more likely to choose them.

• Include nuts, like walnuts, each day in a simple way. Eat a few with your morning oatmeal or on your salad at lunch. Try them in a trail mix at snack time, as the coating for salmon or chicken, or mixed into a bean-based burger or stir-fry at dinner.

• Broaden your bean repertoire. Are you stuck in a hummus rut? Try blended white or black beans as a dip instead. Add black beans to salads and pasta dishes. Enjoy lentils and soybeans in soups and stews, too.

• Treat meat and poultry as the side, instead of the main feature. Make vegetables, beans and grains the entrée. A salad, hearty stew or casserole can be the main event. A big plate of roasted vegetables with a bean burger or a veggie stir-fry with edamame and walnuts make for flavorful, colorful, filling, and nutritious options.

• Though seafood is obviously not from the plant kingdom, it does contain good fats and protein. For those who choose to include seafood in their plant-based meals, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming about 8 ounces of seafood per week.

• Use fresh or dried herbs and spices. They are plants and they are flavor! That’s a win-win when it comes to making a plant-based diet enjoyable. Try freshly grated ginger in a stir-fry, a dash of pumpkin pie spice mixed into your oatmeal, or a sprinkle of oregano in your salad dressing or soup.

• Roast, broil, bake or grill your veggies. Steamed veggies are fine, but other healthy cooking methods can bring out different flavors that make your veggies really taste special.
8 Easy Ways to Replace Saturated Fats with Unsaturated Fats

By Wendy Bazilian, DrPH, RD

Fats are good. They are an important part of your daily diet and play an essential role in human health from head (brain!) to toe (joints!), and every cell in between. Fats also help us feel full and ensure healthy communication between nerve impulses and the transfer of nutrients through the bloodstream. It’s a balancing act, and some types of fat work more in favor of our health than others.

Research has also shown that swapping out saturated fats (animal fats like butter, cream and fat on meats) with unsaturated fats, especially polyunsaturated fats, has a positive impact on heart health1,2. In fact, the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend reducing saturated fat intake and in particular, shifting food choices from those high in saturated fats to those high in polyunsaturated fats3.

Unsaturated fats are found in foods such as walnuts, seeds, plant oils, avocados, and fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, herring, and sardines. In just a one-ounce handful, walnuts provide polyunsaturated fat (13g), offering an excellent source of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), the plant-based form of omega-3 fatty acids (2.5g). Science continues to uncover the benefits of ALA.

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Here are a few easy ways to help make some smart swaps for saturated fat!

- Substitute a blend of chopped walnuts and mushrooms, beans or cauliflower for some or all of the meat in your own favorite recipes. Try the veggie and bean-rich Brilliant Chili topped with Walnuts recipe* for a hearty new mealtime staple.

- When baking, replace 1/3 to 1/2 the butter with high-quality vegetable oils or other more nutritious and lower-calorie options like plain fat-free Greek yogurt, applesauce, pumpkin, mashed prunes or fruit compotes. You can use this strategy in homemade recipes and with boxed mixes, too.

- In recipes that call for butter, try using extra virgin olive oil in its place or use a mix of butter and extra virgin olive oil and you’ll cut the saturated fat in half.

- Try spreading avocado instead of cream cheese on whole grain bagels and toast. Puréed avocado also works well for a replacement in creamy sauces. Try the Eggs Benedict with Avocado “Hollandaise” recipe* for a lighter take on this classic breakfast favorite.

- At snack time, choose a homemade trail mix (like walnuts, dried cherries and a few dark chocolate chunks) or veggies and hummus instead of packaged crackers or cookies. You’ll reduce the saturated fats and boost the nutrition (and be more satisfied, too!)

- Watch your portion size with red meat and try swapping one meal each week with fish or beans. For burger night, try blackened salmon fillets instead of ground beef patties.

- Instead of cheese and croutons on your salad, add nuts. You’ll get the same satisfying effect that will help boost your energy without as much saturated fat. The unsaturated fats, protein and fiber will help you stay satisfied and energized all afternoon. Try a mixed greens salad with garbanzo beans, tomatoes, apple slices and chopped walnuts. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar for that added yum-factor!

- Instead of eating the skin of the chicken, try my Easy “Oven-fried” Walnut Crusted Chicken. It removes the saturated fat in the skin but retains the moisture and flavor of the meat. Add a cup of roasted veggies and ½ cup wild rice, and you have a healthful, delicious meal.

**Easy “Oven-Fried” Walnut Crusted Chicken**

*Serves: 4
Four 6 oz. bone-in chicken breasts, skins removed  
1 cup low-fat buttermilk  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
3-4 cloves minced garlic  
1/2 cup finely chopped California walnuts  
1/4 cup panko breadcrumbs  
1/4 cup yellow cornmeal  
1/8 cup millet  
2 teaspoons paprika (or smoked paprika)  
3/4 teaspoon cayenne (optional)  
1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves  
1 teaspoon dried oregano leaves  
1/2 teaspoon coarse-cracked black pepper  
1/2-3/4 teaspoon sea salt [or less to taste]  
Lemon wedges

* Nutrition Information (1 chicken breast): Calories: 387, Total fat 15g, Saturated fat 2g, Monounsaturated fat 2.6g, Polyunsaturated fat 8g, Trans fat 0g, Sodium 578mg, Cholesterol 125mg, Total carbohydrate 19g, Sugars 2g, Dietary fiber 3g, Protein 44 g  

*Recipe available on walnuts.org
Roasted Walnut and Cauliflower Tacos

Prep Time: 30 min, Cook Time: 40 min, Total Time: 1 hr, 10 min
Serves: 6, Serving Size: 2 tacos

Use a blend of roasted walnuts and cauliflower as a taco filling instead of traditional options. Walnuts provide four grams of plant-based protein per ¼ cup, plus the seasoned cauliflower and walnut mixture acts as a convincing meat substitute, appealing to both vegetarians and meat-lovers.

Ingredients

Filling:
1 head cauliflower, small, chopped
1 cup California walnuts, chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
¼ cup onion, minced
2 teaspoons garlic, minced
1 jalapeño, medium, seeded, minced
½ cup water
¼ cup tomato paste
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon cumin, ground
1 teaspoon oregano, dried
½ teaspoon salt, or to taste

Tacos:
12 tortillas, corn, small, warmed
1 ½ cups green cabbage, shredded
¼ cup Cotija cheese, crumbled
½ cup California walnuts, chopped, toasted
Cilantro leaves, fresh
Lime wedges

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 475ºF. Coat cauliflower with 1 tbsp. olive oil; place on a baking sheet and roast for 25 to 30 minutes or until lightly browned.
2. Reduce oven temperature to 350ºF and toast walnuts for 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add to pan with cauliflower.
3. Heat remaining olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté for 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add garlic and jalapeño cook for 2 minutes more. Stir in water, tomato paste, chili powder, cumin, oregano and salt; cook until mixture is thick and excess water has cooked off. Stir in cauliflower mixture.
4. Spoon mixture into warmed tortillas and top with cabbage, cheese, walnuts and cilantro. Serve with lime wedges.

Optional: Cauliflower mixture may be ground in a food processor so that it resembles the texture of ground meat.

Nutrition information per serving: 437 calories, 30g total fat, 5g saturated fat, 16g polyunsaturated fat, 6g monounsaturated fat, 15mg cholesterol, 515mg sodium, 541mg potassium, 37g total carbohydrate, 4g total sugars, 7g dietary fiber, 12g protein
Plant-Based Shopping List

When you have the right ingredients on hand, making delicious plant-based meals can be a fresh and fun adventure. Remember, plant-based eating is not “all or nothing.” You don’t have to go meat-free to be more plant-based. Feel free to add and subtract from this list, based on preferences and your own personal meal plan.

**PANTRY GOODS**

Key ingredients to have on hand for quick, flavorful meals. Look for low or reduced sodium options when buying canned or jarred goods.

- Dried or canned beans and lentils
- Canned tuna or salmon
- Canned tomatoes (diced or whole), tomato sauce or paste and vegetable juice
- Soy sauce or tamari
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Vinegars (balsamic, apple cider, red wine)
- Spices, herbs and blends (chili powder, curry, garlic & herb, garam masala, etc.)
- Nut and/or seed butters (or make your own walnut butter)
- Vegetable broth (versatile for cooking with or without meat and poultry)
- Low-fat evaporated milk as a replacement for whole milk or cream

**VEGETABLES/FRUITS**

Choose your favorite fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables—all are healthful! Be sure to eat with the seasons, which ensures the produce is at peak flavor.

- Artichokes
- Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, etc.)
- Winter or Summer squash
- Leafy green vegetables
- Peas
- Carrots
- Tomatoes
- Avocados
- Mushrooms
- Peppers
- Onions
- Garlic
- Root vegetables (beets, parsnips, etc.)
- Potatoes
- Bananas
- Apples
- Pears
- Citrus
- Berries
- Grapes
- Melon
- Dates and dried fruit

**REFRIGERATED**

- Walnuts (freeze if storing for longer than one month)
- Fish/seafood
- Poultry
- Tofu
- Tempeh
- Eggs
- Cheeses
- Low-fat and non-fat milk
- Alternative milks such as walnut or soy (look for fortified options)
- Yogurt (Greek or plain non-fat/low-fat)

**GRAINS**

- Steel-cut or old-fashioned oats
- Ancient grains (quinoa, farro, millet, bulgur)
- Whole grain, low-sugar cereals
- 100% whole wheat bread
- Whole grain pasta
- Brown or wild rice
- Whole wheat flour
Start rethinking the center of your plate at breakfast, lunch and dinner with this selection of fresh and deliciously colorful plant-based recipes.

To view our entire collection of plant-based recipes, visit walnuts.org.
BREAKFAST AND BRUNCH
Breakfast remains the most important meal of the day, and sometimes you need a little creative inspiration.

- Breakfast Quinoa with Walnut Cream and Blueberries
- Walnuty Egg and Bell Pepper Gratin
- Tropical Walnut Smoothie
- California Walnut Granola
- Muesli with Apple and Walnut Crumble
- Nutty Breakfast Parfait
- California Walnut Chorizo Frittata
- Walnut and Feta Frittata with Gulf Shrimp

DINNER
Restore the energy spent during the day with one of our distinctive plant-based dinners, sure to be loved by family and friends as well.

- Walnut Mushroom Enchilada Casserole
- Lemony Zucchini Salad with Walnuts
- Curry Pumpkin Walnut Soup
- Buckwheat Noodle Salad with Greens and Walnuts
- Grilled Walnut Pizza with Roasted Pepper and Cauliflower
- Roasted Root Vegetable Soup with Rosemary Walnuts
- Creamy Asparagus, Lemon, and Walnut Pasta
- California Walnut Omega Burgers
- California Walnut Meat Free Bolognese
- Roasted Walnut and Cauliflower Tacos
- Sweet-Sour Stir-Fry with Walnuts
- Lentil Walnut “Meatballs” and Spaghetti

SIDES
Easing your way into plant-based eating? These wholesome sides are a great start.

- Cranberry and Walnut Coleslaw
- Farro with Beets, Olives and Walnuts
- Jicama, Carrot and Apple Slaw with California Walnuts
- Citrus-Papaya Salsa with a Chipotle Glaze
- Walnut, Black Olive and Dried Tomato Spread
- Grain Salad with Toasted Walnuts, Dates and Grapefruit
- Walnut Raspberry Salad and Raspberry Vinaigrette

SMALL BITES
At times, nothing is better than a snack-size meal. Reach for plant-based recipes when hunger strikes or when sharing with others is the thing to do.

- Rosemary and Sea Salt Walnuts
- Chewy Blueberry-Walnut Bars
- Roasted Pepper and Walnut Hummus
- California Walnut Butter
- Goat Cheese Sandwich with Nectarines and Walnuts
- Whole Grain Walnut Trail Mix
- Yogurt, Sun-Dried Tomato and Basil Dip

KID-FRIENDLY RECIPES
A collection of recipes so fun and delicious, the kids won’t just eat them, they’ll want to help prepare them.

- Awesome Banana-Walnut Shake
- Brilliant Chili Topped with Walnuts
- Chicken Walnut Lettuce Wraps
- Chunky Maple Walnut Spread
- Fruity Walnut Butter Wraps
- Cranapple-Walnut Crumble
- Dried Fruit and Walnut Granola
- Fish Tacos with Walnut Slaw

DESSERT
Indulging doesn’t have to mean derailing. Keep your conscience cool with this selection of plant-based desserts.

- Baked Walnut-Stuffed Pears
- Walnut Raspberry Chocolate Tartlets
- Stone Fruit with Whipped Walnut Lemon Honey
- Chocolate Walnut Curried Truffles
- Chocolate Walnut Gelato
- Mini Walnut Apple Pies
- Mexican Dark Chocolate Cinnamon-Coated Walnuts