

Enjoy Some Plant-Based Protein Foods on Meatless Monday

Skipping meat once in a while is good for your health.



If you are trying to adopt healthier eating habits, then Meatless Mondays is a bandwagon you should definitely jump on. Don't worry, it is easier than you think. Let me tell you how!

Incorporating Plant-Based Proteins into Your Diet

It is common knowledge that eating healthfully means that plant-based foods make up the bulk of your meals. So, if you are already establishing good eating habits, trading meat for a plant alternative will be easy for you. Most people focus on meat when they think of making dinner. Alter that pattern by changing your protein list to include pea protein-based meat substitutes, soy, and pulses (the umbrella term for lentils, peas, beans, and chickpeas).

Whole soy is a complete source of the nine essential amino acids that our body needs, just like animal sources of protein [1]. Foods that come under the whole soy category include tofu, tempeh,

edamame, soy milk, and soy nuts. Other good sources of plant protein include grains, seeds, nuts, and pulses. One notable protein-rich grain (it is actually a seed, but mostly known as a grain) is quinoa. It contains a good amount of plant protein, and when eaten in combination with other sources, it can give your body enough protein. [2]

Some Expert Tips for Beginners

Let me share an expert tip with you. In the beginning, you can start off with plant-based protein-rich ingredients like hummus or peanut butter that you are already familiar with, and then move forward. For example, if hummus works out for you as a dip, you can use it further as a toast topper or a sandwich spread.

Another easy way to consume plant proteins is to mask them with the flavors of other ingredients in a smoothie-like protein punch. This way, you can consume plant-based protein foods like tofu, edamame, or canned chickpeas without having to experience their strong taste that you get when you eat them separately.

Here's another starter tip. Swap plant protein foods with meat in recipes that you already like. For instance, you can experiment with:

- tofu or tempeh in place of meat in a stir-fry
- hummus instead of cheese in a quesadilla
- lentils or beans in a taco or chili filling

Some Quick Recipes

You can also be creative and stir up new recipes with plant-based protein foods as a substitute for meat. Here are a few examples:

Tofu Scramble

Crumble up some tofu, and cook it with chili powder, nutritional yeast, paprika, chili powder, salt, and other spice that you like. Add in some onions, peppers and hash browns to enjoy a delicious scramble.

Quinoa Mix

Prepare a quinoa grain bowl with beans and your favorite veggies. Sprinkle some nuts or seeds on top, season, and add some lemon juice if you like. Then enjoy!

Vegetarian Pasta

You can swap peas with shelled edamame in pasta and casseroles, and extra-firm tofu with chicken. The taste will be just as good, and the dish as nutritious as your body needs it to be!

So, folks, incorporating plant-based protein into your diet and opting for plant sources of protein instead of animal sources is an easy task if you are adamant about eating healthy and are open to

some experimental cooking. Going for healthier options doesn't mean you can't enjoy delicious food – just try out some new recipes, and you will definitely find something you love!

References

[1] V R Young, A Wayler, C Garza, F H Steinke, E Murray, W M Rand, N S Scrimshaw, A long-term metabolic balance study in young men to assess the nutritional quality of an isolated soy protein and beef proteins, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 39, Issue 1, January 1984, Pages 8–15, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/39.1.8>

[2] Robinson, K., & Kennedy, RD, K. (2019). What Is Quinoa? Nutrition Facts, Types, How to Cook It, and More | Everyday Health. Retrieved 3 June 2020, from <https://www.everydayhealth.com/diet-nutrition/diet/quinoa-nutrition-facts-types-how-cook-it-more/>