



Plant Protein

Healthful, Satisfying, and Science-Backed

Plant protein delivers everything your body needs — and then some.

Thousands of studies over decades of careful research have debunked the myth that animal protein is more complete or effective. The amino acid profile of plant protein is more than adequate, and variety over the course of the day ensures you get all essential amino acids (1).

For those with steady access to food, protein intake is rarely a concern, even without meat. What matters more is the nutrient profile of the protein-rich foods. Plant-based sources contain fiber, phytonutrients, and antioxidants, which support heart health, blood sugar control, and long-term disease prevention (2). Animal proteins provide none of those.

Protein is also more widespread in the plant world than many people realize. Whole plant foods contain protein in varying amounts — not just beans, tofu, and nuts. Even vegetables and grains contribute. For example, 100 calories of kale provides a bit more protein (about 8 grams) than 100 calories of ground beef (about 7 grams) - but with the kale you get a bonus - a slew of nutrients that fight inflammation, cancer, and cardiovascular disease (3). The takeaway: **when meals include a variety of plant-based ingredients and calorie needs are met, the protein adds up quickly, along with beneficial fiber and micronutrients that animal foods lack.**

Performance isn't compromised either. Studies show that plant-based diets support muscle growth, recovery, and endurance as effectively as omnivorous diets when overall protein intake is matched (4).

Plant Proteins to Prioritize

These options are affordable, versatile, and packed with nutrition:

Lentils: 18g protein per cooked cup. Use in soups, salads, or veggie burgers.

- **Tofu and Tempeh:** 10–20g per serving. Easy to stir-fry, grill, or bake.
- **Edamame:** 17g per cup. Great in grain bowls or as a snack.
- **Hemp Seeds:** 10g in 3 tablespoons. Sprinkle on oatmeal, yogurt, salads, or roasted veggies.
- **Black Beans:** 15g per cup. Add to tacos, grain bowls, or veggie chili. Other beans have similar amounts of protein.
- **Quinoa:** 8g per cooked cup. A protein-rich alternative to rice.
- **Hummus:** 10g per ½ cup. Find (or make!) a flavor you love and scoop some up with a carrot or celery sticks when you feel hungry between meals.
- **Peanut Butter or Almond Butter:** 7g in 2 tablespoons. So good with fruit or whole grain toast.
- **Pasta:** 7g per cooked cup (about 2 oz dry). This one surprises a lot of people!
- **Spinach:** 5g per cooked cup (other leafy greens are similar)

Choosing more plant-based proteins isn't about finding “alternatives” to meat — it's about upgrading your nutrition. Whole plant foods deliver plenty of protein along with fiber, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and protective compounds that support your whole-body health. Whether you're building muscle, managing your blood sugar, or simply trying to feel your best, plant protein can help you get there.

1. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6893534/pdf/nutrients-11-02661.pdf>

2. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5555375/>

3. <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/food-details/323505/nutrients>

<https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/food-details/2514744/nutrients>

4. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40279-021-01434-9>

Lentil & Summer Veggie Salad with Toasted Walnuts



Hearty, fresh, and full of flavor, this power salad makes 2 servings, each with about 20 grams of protein. Feel free to swap out the veggies for others you may prefer or have on hand.

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups cooked green or brown lentils (from ½ cup dry)
- 1 cup chopped cucumber
- 1 cup chopped tomato
- ½ cup chopped bell pepper (any color)
- ¼ cup finely chopped red onion
- ¼ cup chopped parsley or basil
- ¼ cup toasted walnuts, roughly chopped
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, combine lentils, cucumber, tomato, bell pepper, red onion, and herbs.
2. Drizzle with lemon juice and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper, then toss to combine.
3. Top with toasted walnuts just before serving. Serve chilled or at room temperature.