

Making Everything Easier!™

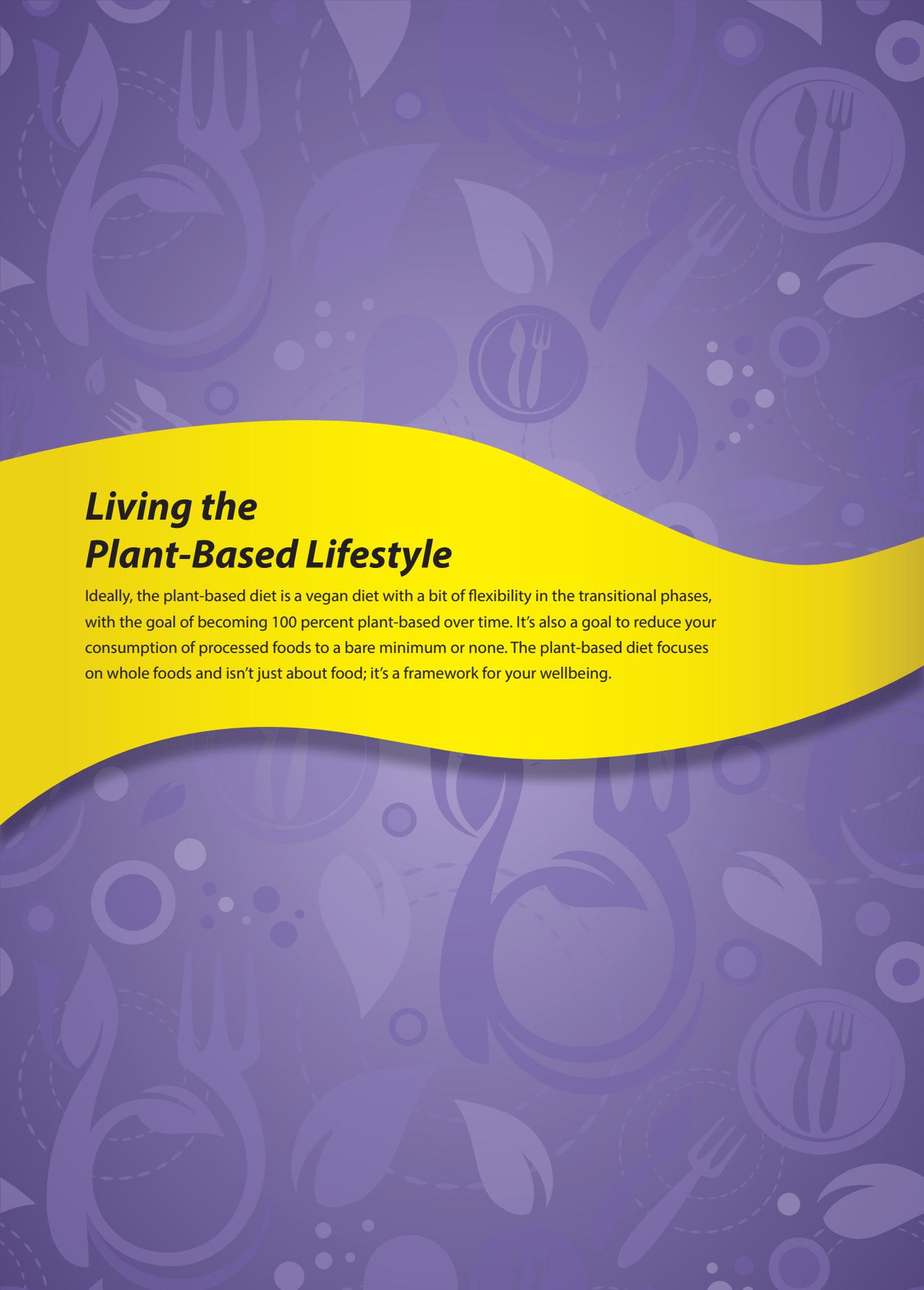
GETTING STARTED GUIDE

Plant Based Diet

**FOR
DUMMIES®**
A Wiley Brand

**Simple, effective strategies
to help you focus on**

- Quality over quantity
- Whole foods, not processed foods
- Cutting unhealthy fats from your diet
- Adding healthy carbs (Yes! Healthy carbs!)
- Preventative care through a more varied diet



Living the Plant-Based Lifestyle

Ideally, the plant-based diet is a vegan diet with a bit of flexibility in the transitional phases, with the goal of becoming 100 percent plant-based over time. It's also a goal to reduce your consumption of processed foods to a bare minimum or none. The plant-based diet focuses on whole foods and isn't just about food; it's a framework for your wellbeing.



First Three Days: Preparing for the Plant-Based Diet

Getting started on a plant-based diet can seem a little daunting at first, but the good news is that you can do it relatively easily and at your own pace. Whether you change your lifestyle overnight or over the course of months or years, the main thing is to prepare yourself mentally and physically for the big changes you're going to experience.

You can choose to start your plant-based diet immediately by going cold turkey on all animal products, but it's often easier to do it slowly by removing some products and adding others you may not eat that often. Phasing some foods out as you phase others in is a great approach to switching to a plant-based diet.

The process of elimination

Giving things up that you like and are familiar with is definitely a challenge, but having a plan to phase things out makes it a lot more doable. Everyone is different, and it's important to go with what works for you, but here's the order I recommend for taking foods out of your diet over the course of a few weeks or a few months:

1. **Red meat:** The heaviest of the animal-based foods should only be consumed once in a while. Your body has to work hard to break it down. Look to minimize your intake each week, working toward total elimination. Try consuming red meat only on weekends and reducing further from there.
2. **Chicken and other poultry:** Chicken is a staple in most homes. It's lighter than red meat, so you can start at a higher consumption frequency. Try reducing your poultry intake to three meals a week to start and going down from there.
3. **Fish:** This is the lightest of the animal-flesh foods, but it's not as commonly consumed as poultry. Look at reducing your intake to one to two servings per week and then reducing that intake over time.
4. **Cheese, milk, and other dairy:** This is usually the hardest for people to give up. Most of us have an addiction to dairy. Try to consume dairy foods only one to two times per week until you wean yourself off of them completely. You can find other snacks as alternatives to help you through your transition.

Many people still consume dairy on a plant-based diet. If you're among them, I suggest opting for goat- or sheep-derived milks and cheeses. They are cleaner, higher in nutrients, and can be digested by the human body much more easily than cow dairy.

5. **Eggs:** These tend to be a staple for vegetarians, and all I can say to that is, "Everything in moderation." Eggs shouldn't be consumed every day. Save them for special occasions, if at all.



TIP

As with any new undertaking, it's out with the old before it's in with the new, so the first step is to clean up your kitchen and make some room for all the new goodies you need to stock! Look at your fridge, your pantry, and any other places where you store unhealthy, packaged, and processed food and get rid of that.

However, switching slowly to a plant-based diet gives you the opportunity to use up some of the healthier non-plant foods you have in the house. Make a plan to get rid of or eat that during your switch.

The adding-in process

As you work toward becoming 100 percent plant based, it's a good idea to add new foods on a regular basis so you can get used to cooking and eating them. In this process, you focus on adding new items to your diet on a regular basis. Choosing some plant-based essentials helps smooth the transition and give you a healthy and balanced start.

- ✔ Green leafy vegetables: I suggest adding one new green vegetable each week. Also look to add as many leafy greens to as many meals during the day as possible. They nourish you and provide your body with vitamins and minerals. Some examples are spinach, kale, and arugula.
- ✔ Non-dairy milk, such as rice or almond milk: Sometimes, totally switching the milk you drink or put in your cereal is too drastic. You can start transitioning by doing a mix of dairy and nondairy milk, gradually changing the ratio over time.
- ✔ Beans, tofu, tempeh, and quinoa: Serve these alongside your meat for one or more meals a week or day so you can get used to them, and eventually replace your meat with these options.
- ✔ Whole grains: Experiment by adding different whole grains, such as quinoa, brown rice, and millet, to the base of burgers or meatloaf.
- ✔ Have a smoothie for breakfast. Swap out bacon and eggs for a nutritious blended fruit smoothie to get you going in the morning.
- ✔ Swap out butter for coconut oil. This can be spread on toast, used in baking, and substituted anywhere else butter or margarine is used.
- ✔ Make a simple veggie dinner at least one night a week. If you're just getting started, change up at least one of your meat-centered meals to something plant-based yet familiar, like a vegetable stir-fry, hearty soup, or pasta.





First Week

As you move into your new diet, knowing what and how to eat is important. A core of foods makes up a plant-based diet. Making sure that you really understand them is key for a strong foundational knowledge that you can continuously build upon. You'll find so many wonderful foods to explore and try. For a more in-depth look at the nutritional landscape of plant-based eating, check out *Plant Based Diet For Dummies*.

Plant-based eating a glance

Once you get your diet 100 percent plant based, you should be eating a fairly standard mix of different types of food each day. The plan can be adjusted in cases of disease or food sensitivities, but for the most part this is an excellent foundation for superior health. Here's how this breakdown looks on a daily basis:

✔ Fruits and vegetables

- These should make up a majority of your overall food intake, approximately 40 percent to 60 percent, with an emphasis on leafy green veggies.
- Include at least four servings of vegetables, three of which are raw, and make sure at least one serving is green vegetables and one or more servings are starchy and colorful, such as beets, carrots, or sweet potatoes.
- Vegetables should be fresh when possible. However, many frozen vegetables are even more nutritious than fresh vegetables because they are frozen at their peak ripeness, which means they maintain their nutrients. Be sure to look for organic and non-genetically modified frozen (and fresh) vegetables. Try to avoid canned vegetables.
- Include sea vegetables, such as arame, nori, and dulse.
- Have one to two (or more) servings of fresh fruit, preferably in season and organic.



Living the Paleo Lifestyle

When you "live the Paleo Lifestyle," you remove inflammatory foods from your meals. When you remove these inflammatory foods from your diet, you reduce your risk for diseases of civilization, such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancers. When you live the Paleo lifestyle you have more energy, look younger, lose weight, get stronger, and sleep more soundly. In short, you enjoy your life more.

✓ Whole grains

- Eat two to five servings.
- Focus on gluten-free whole grains, such as brown rice, quinoa, millet, and buckwheat.
- Choose alternatives to whole wheat as often as you can (kamut, spelt, rye, barley, and oats).
- Choose sprouted-grain products as often as you can.

✓ Proteins

- You can easily get enough protein on a plant-based diet, but do pay most attention to make sure you're getting it. Plant-based protein sources like legumes, nuts, seeds, quinoa, tempeh, avocado, and green leafy veggies all have their own breakdown of amino acids, which build up inside your body to make a complete protein. The best part is, they absorb into your body much better than animal-based protein. You won't feel that same heaviness eating plant-based protein.
- Have at least two servings, one of which is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of legumes, beans, tempeh, or tofu.
- If you're using plant-based protein supplements (such as hemp, pea, or brown-rice powders), use one scoop per day. Protein supplements aren't usually necessary to obtain adequate protein on a plant-based diet because plant protein is abundant. Therefore, be careful not to consume excessive amounts of protein. As a culture, we are obsessed with getting enough protein; focus on quality protein and not quantity.

✓ Fats and oils

- Eat one serving (approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of nuts or seeds.
- Have one to two tablespoons of nut or seed butters.
- Use one tablespoon of oil (grapeseed, coconut, flax, chia, hemp, or olive) for cooking or in salads. Don't cook with flax, hemp, or chia oil. These oils should be used only with foods that don't require heating.
- Enjoy one or more servings of whole fatty fruits, such as avocados, coconuts, and olives. This can be in the form of $\frac{1}{4}$ avocado, four olives, or $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh coconut meat.



These are just general guidelines and suggestions to help get you started with your new plant-based lifestyle. As you become accustomed to these guidelines, adapt them accordingly to what works best for you.

Focusing on quality, not quantity

It's not about how much you eat; it's about what you eat. In fact, the amount you eat is irrelevant. I realize that may shock you, given that most diets are so focused on portion size, calories, and grams of protein. But restricting food and calories is not the key to health. Instead focus on the food itself — what it's made up of and what's in that recipe or package. I want to get you so connected to your food that you become obsessed with ingredients and what's in your meals, as opposed to how much your plate weighs. You may actually start to feel lighter just knowing you can let go of that concept here and now.

Try focusing on eating foods in their whole forms, not out of a package. Try to introduce at least one new food a week as you transition, while at the same time eliminating processed foods.





First Month: Living the Plant-Based Diet

Setting reasonable expectations for what life will be like after you adopt a plant-based diet is important because you will encounter challenges, and you need to prepare to handle them well. Shopping may be more complicated. You may find it harder to attend social events or eat out because you're not sure you'll be able to find something you can eat. You can overcome these trials and emerge stronger for them.

Shopping

When you embark on a new diet, it can be hard to figure out what's what and where to buy different items (heck, even if you've been eating plant-based for a while, you may still be stumped when it comes to procuring the best stuff).

Luckily, I have a few general rules that you can use to navigate toward the healthy and away from the traps. Shop the perimeter of the grocery store (where the fresh foods are stocked), avoid the center aisles (where junk food and sugared cereals lurk), choose real foods (such as 100 percent fruit juice or 100 percent whole grain), stay clear of foods with cartoons on the label, and avoid foods that contain more than five ingredients or artificial ingredients that you can't pronounce. When you look at the nutrition label, here are some simple guidelines:

- ✔ The order of ingredients: The ingredients are listed in order of prevalence, with the most prevalent coming first. See which ingredients are listed in which order. Of particular note is the first ingredient: Is it something bad, like high-fructose corn syrup, or is it healthy, like whole grain? If the first three ingredients aren't whole, recognizable items, don't buy the product.
- ✔ The amount and type of sugar: When it comes to sugar, you first want to see how much is in the food (ideally not much more than 5 to 10 grams per serving, depending on the item and the grams overall). Next, you need to identify the source of that sugar. Select products that have healthier sources.
- ✔ The amount of fiber: Depending on what the product is, it's likely to have some form of fiber (especially because it's plant based). Look for items that have more than five grams of fiber per serving. High-fiber foods are more wholesome and better for your digestion and overall health.

Getting out of the house

Good places for plant-based eaters to eat do exist — and you can find them. If you happen to be in a big city, it's probably easier to find amazing little cafés and restaurants that feature specialty vegetarian delights. If you live in a not-so-big city, you may have to be a little extra savvy, but it's not hard to do your research and find places to eat that suit your lifestyle. To find good places, go online, ask around at restaurants or farmers markets, and ask friends.



A restaurant doesn't have to be a hippie, veggie-loving cafe to be plant-based friendly; you can find options almost anywhere. You actually may end up frequenting mainstream restaurants because they typically have more options that can accommodate many types of diets.

The background is a solid purple color with a repeating pattern of white and light purple icons. The icons include various food items like leaves, fruits, and vegetables, as well as dining-related symbols like plates, forks, and knives. The pattern is dense and covers the entire page.

Recipes

One fear people have when switching to the plant-based diet is leaving behind their favorite recipes, but you can usually find many new twists on old favorites!

Blueberry Buckwheat Pancakes

Prep time: 10 min • Cook time: 25 min • Yield: 4–6 servings

Ingredients

2 cups (240 g) sifted buckwheat flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons maple crystals or coconut sugar
3 tablespoons apple-cider vinegar
2 cups (1 pint or 475 mL) rice milk
1 to 2 very ripe bananas, mashed
1 cup (150 g) fresh or frozen organic blueberries
1 tablespoon coconut oil

Directions

- 1** In a small bowl, combine the buckwheat flour, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and maple crystals. Set aside.
- 2** In a large bowl, combine the apple-cider vinegar and rice milk. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes, then add the mashed banana.
- 3** Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Beat only until blended.
- 4** Add the blueberries.
- 5** Heat the coconut oil on a griddle. Using a 1-ounce ladle, pour the batter onto the greased griddle. Cook the pancakes until the bubbles in the batter break on the surface; flip and cook until browned. Repeat until you're out of batter.
- 6** Serve on a plate and top with maple syrup, cinnamon, fresh fruit, coconut yogurt, or cashew cream.

Vary It! Try these pancakes with different fruits, such as cranberries or strawberries, or make them even more decadent by adding some non-dairy chocolate chips. You can also substitute another gluten-free or whole-grain flour such as brown rice or oat flour for the buckwheat flour.

Per serving: Calories 349 (From Fat 63); Fat 7g (Saturated 3g); Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 701mg; Carbohydrate 65g (Dietary Fiber 10g); Protein 12g.



New Age Minestrone

Prep time: 25 min • Cook time: 60 minutes • Yield: 12 servings

Ingredients

- 1 white onion, cut into large cubes
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 4 cups (2 pints or 950 mL) water
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 butternut squash, peeled and cut into medium cubes
- 3 parsnips, peeled and cut into medium cubes
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into large cubes
- 3 ribs celery, cut into medium pieces
- 1 large zucchini (courgette), cut into small chunks
- 4 to 5 cups of Swiss chard, cut into bite-sized pieces (600 g – 750 g)
- 1 cup soaked and cooked kidney beans, or one 14-ounce can organic kidney beans (150 g or one 400 g gram can)
- ½ cup (70 g) cooked brown-rice macaroni noodles

Directions

- 1 In a large pot, sauté the onion and garlic in oil with sea salt until soft.
- 2 Add the oregano and basil, and sauté for a few more minutes.
- 3 Add the water and bay leaf.
- 4 Add the squash, parsnips, and sweet potatoes to the pot. Bring everything to a boil and then reduce the heat to low. Simmer for 10 minutes.
- 5 Add the celery and zucchini (courgette). Turn up the heat again until the water boils and then lower the heat and simmer, covered, for 40 to 45 minutes.
- 6 Stir the vegetables until the squash falls apart, or press the squash against the side of the pot to break it down.
- 7 Add the chopped chard. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
- 8 Add the cooked kidney beans and macaroni noodles. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove the bay leaf. Stir a few times and serve.

Tip: Be sure to cook your macaroni noodles al dente in a separate pot so they don't get too hard or too soft. Then add them into the hot soup at the end.

Per serving: Calories 100 (From Fat 4.5); Fat 1.5g (Saturated 0g); Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 421mg; Carbohydrate 20g (Dietary Fiber 5g); Protein 4g.



Zesty Pesto Pasta with White Beans

Prep time: 5 min • Cook time: 20 min • Yield: 10 servings

Ingredients

Sea salt

One 16-ounce (500 g) package wholegrain pasta, such as kamut pasta or brown rice pasta

Pesto Sauce (see the following recipe)

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 cups (300 g) spinach or Swiss chard

1 cup (150 g) cooked white beans

Directions

- 1 Boil a large pot of water, add sea salt, and cook the pasta until al dente or tender, about 7 to 10 minutes. Drain, but keep the pasta in the pot.
- 2 On low to medium heat, add the pesto to the cooked pasta; add the beans and spinach. Stir until well combined and the spinach has wilted.
- 3 Place a few ladles of the pasta into a bowl and serve alongside a salad or a bowl of minestrone soup.

Pesto Sauce

Ingredients

1/4 cup (40 g) pine nuts or walnuts, toasted

2 cups (300 g) fresh basil

1/4 cup (60 mL) olive oil

1 to 2 cloves garlic

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1 teaspoon white miso

1 tablespoon honey

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

- 1 Grind the nuts in a food processor until you get a paste.
- 2 Add the remaining ingredients and process for a few minutes until well combined.

Note: Gluten-free pasta, like brown-rice pasta, often takes about 15 minutes to cook.

Tip: For perfect pasta every time, bring your pot of water to a boil. Add the pasta, bring the water back up to a boil, cover, turn off the heat, and let stand for 12 to 15 minutes. Don't touch or stir your pasta, and it will be perfectly cooked!

Per serving: Calories 279 (From Fat 90); Fat 10g (Saturated 1g); Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 28mg; Carbohydrate 40g (Dietary Fiber 6g); Protein 8g.

Zesty Kale Krisps

Prep time: 10 min • Cook time: 30 min to 8 hrs • Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients

1 bunch of kale, washed and torn
1/4 cup (60 g) tahini
2 to 3 tablespoons tamari
2 tablespoons apple-cider vinegar
1 clove garlic
juice of half a lemon
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
2 tablespoons nutritional yeast

Directions

- 1** Place the kale in a large mixing bowl by itself.
- 2** Combine the rest of the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth to get a thick consistency. You may have to add a bit of water.
- 3** Pour the mixture over the kale and massage thoroughly with your hands to coat the kale. Make sure the mixture covers the kale well.
- 4** Cook the kale chips in either a dehydrator or an oven:
In the dehydrator: Place the kale onto two dehydrator trays and dehydrate for 4 to 8 hours at 115 degrees (45° Celsius). Rotate the kale occasionally to dry uniformly.
In the oven: Place the kale on parchment paper on a baking sheet and bake at 200 degrees (90° Celsius) or your oven's lowest setting for about 30 minutes. Keep an eye on them and turn them often to make sure they dry evenly.

Vary It! Add more nutritional yeast to give your krisps a cheesier flavor.

Per serving: Calories 71 (From Fat 45); Fat 5g (Saturated 0.5g); Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 342mg; Carbohydrate 4g (Dietary Fiber 1g); Protein 4g.



Carob Fig Frozen Fudge

Prep time: 10 min, plus soaking and freezing time • **Yield:** 12 servings

Ingredients

1 cup (150 g) figs
1½ cups (350 mL) water
1 tablespoon pure vanilla
½ to 1 cup (120–240 g) almond butter or sunflower butter
½ to 1 cup (60–120 g) raw carob powder
½ cup (75 g) hempseeds

Directions

- 1 Place the figs in a bowl, cover with water, and soak for about an hour, until soft. Drain, reserving the liquid.
- 2 In a blender, blend the figs and vanilla until smooth, slowly adding the water from the figs, as needed, to form a creamy consistency.
- 3 Transfer the fig mixture into a large bowl, add the almond butter, and stir to combine.
- 4 In a separate bowl, mix the carob powder and hempseeds.
- 5 Gradually add the dry carob mixture into the wet fig mixture. Stir well.
- 6 Press evenly into an 8-x-8-inch (20-x-20-cm) baking pan and freeze until firm (about 3 hours).
- 7 To serve, cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) squares.

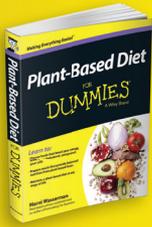
Vary It! You can roll this mixture into bite-size balls instead of squares for little fudge bites on the go.

Per serving: Calories 115 (From Fat 45); Fat 5g (Saturated 0.5g); Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 8mg; Carbohydrate 12g (Dietary Fiber 3g); Protein 4g.



Other Resources

Plant-Based Diet Books



Books for Fitness & Healthy Living

Weight Training For Dummies, 4th Edition
Mindful Eating For Dummies
Yoga For Dummies, 3rd Edition
Fitness For Dummies, 4th Edition
Kettlebells For Dummies
Mind-Body Fitness For Dummies
Mindfulness For Dummies
Cross-Training For Dummies
Core Strength For Dummies
Heartburn and Reflux For Dummies
Pilates For Dummies
Exercise Balls For Dummies
Running a Marathon For Dummies

Plant Based Diet Recipes

Light Plant-Based Snack Recipes
Plant-Based Breakfast Recipes for Energy and Endurance
Protein-Filled Plant-Based Lunch Recipes
Protein-Filled Plant-Based Dinner Recipes
Vegetarian Recipes with Chia Seeds
Making Vegan Substitutions in Nonvegan Recipes

Plant-Based Diet Cheat Sheets (Shopping Guide, Eating Out, Maintaining Your Positive Plant- Based Attitude and Energy)

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Plant-Based Diet Articles

Dozens of articles to help you make sense of a Plant-Based Diet can be found here

Books for Nutrition and Diet

Boosting Your Immunity For Dummies
Boosting Your Metabolism For Dummies
Belly Fat Diet For Dummies
Flat Belly Cookbook For Dummies
Preventing and Reversing Heart Disease For Dummies
Probiotics For Dummies
Organic Gardening For Dummies, 2nd Edition
Cooking with Chia For Dummies
Juicing and Smoothies For Dummies
Ayurveda For Dummies
Cooking with Quinoa For Dummies
The Calorie Counter For Dummies
Green Smoothies For Dummies
Gluten-Free Cooking For Dummies, 2nd Ed.
Gluten-Free Baking For Dummies
Living Gluten-Free For Dummies, 2nd Ed.
Pressure Cookers For Dummies, 2nd Ed.
Living Wheat-Free For Dummies
Mediterranean Diet Cookbook For Dummies
Mediterranean Diet For Dummies
Cooking with Spices For Dummies
Celiac Disease For Dummies
Diabetes Meal Planning and Nutrition For Dummies
Macrobiotic For Dummies
Beating Sugar Addiction For Dummies
Detox For Dummies
Glycemic Index For Dummies
IBS For Dummies