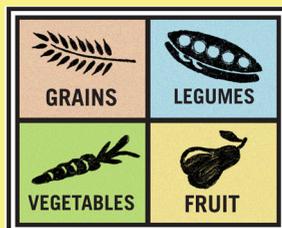


# a well-balanced vegan diet

A well-balanced vegan diet includes a wide variety of whole-grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds.

For more comprehensive information on optimal plant-based nutrition, making the transition to plant-based meals, key nutrition during pregnancy and breastfeeding and how and what to feed vegan kids we recommend the book *Vegan for Life* by dietitians and long-time vegans Jack Norris and Virginia Messina.



*"A vegan diet is a great choice for your health, for the environment and for the animals."*



## Grains 6+

**6 or more servings per day** (a serving is ½ cup cooked).

**Includes:** wheat, oats, buckwheat, rice, corn and quinoa.

Choose whole grains as refined grains have lost valuable nutrients. Whole grains are high in fibre and provide protein, minerals and B vitamins.



## Legumes 3-4

**3 to 4 servings per day** (a serving is a ½ cup of cooked legumes or 1 cup soy milk). **Includes:** beans, peas, and lentils.

Legumes are the most protein-rich of all plant foods and provide 7 to 8 grams of protein per serve and even higher for soy foods (tofu, tempeh, soymilk). While it is easy to get enough protein on a well-balanced vegan diet, legumes are a rich source of the essential amino acid lysine which is limited in other food groups.



## Vegetables 5+

**5+ servings per day** (a serving is ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw).

Vegetables are the most nutrient dense foods, and we should include generous portions of these every day. Leafy greens like spinach, silverbeet, and kale are particularly nutritious and important.

## Fruits 2+

**2+ servings per day** (a serving is 1 medium piece of fruit; 1/2 cup cooked fruit; 1/4 cup dried fruit). Fruits are an excellent source of fibre, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals.



## Nuts & Seeds

A small handful of mixed nuts and seeds eaten every day is a great nutrition boost. Some nuts have valuable nutrients (like selenium) not common to other foods.

**Includes:** Almonds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, cashews, brazil nuts, walnuts and sesame seeds

## other essential nutrients



## Vitamin B12

There are no reliable plant-based food sources of vitamin B12. Vegans must get vitamin B12 from fortified foods or a supplement. Vitamin B12 is critical for nervous system, mental health and red blood cell health.

## Iron

Iron is critical for helping to transport oxygen to every cell in the body to produce energy so each cell can perform its vital function.

Good food sources of iron include legumes (peanuts, beans, lentils, peas), nuts and seeds (cashews, almonds, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds), dried apricots, raisins, and rolled oats.



## Omega 3 Oil

A source of omega-3 oil is essential and should be included in the diet every day. Omega-3 oils are important for decreasing inflammation in the body, maintaining healthy cell membranes and healthy brain function.

Top sources of omega-3 oils are flax seed oil, walnuts, chia seeds and hemp seed oil.



## Calcium

Calcium is need for strong healthy bones and the proper function of muscles including your heart!

Top plant-based food sources of calcium include legumes, tofu, nuts, seeds, and dark green leafy vegetables.



## Vitamin D

Vitamin D is critical for mental health, preventing depression, bone health and a strong immune system. The best source of vitamin D is from exposure to sunlight. There are no reliable plant-based food sources of Vitamin D. If you are unable to get enough sunlight then there are some great vegan Vitamin D supplements available.

Check out our healthy and delicious vegan recipes on [www.vegansociety.co.nz](http://www.vegansociety.co.nz)



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