

Hints for Herbivores

Many students are adopting vegetarian diets to improve health, take an environmental stance, follow a spiritual path, or just to try a different eating approach. Vegetarian diets are usually classified into four different categories:

Semi-vegetarians - exclude some but not all foods of animal origin. They may not eat beef for example, but will sometimes eat chicken or seafood.

Lacto-ovo vegetarians - include milk or milk products and eggs in their diets, but omit meat, fish and poultry.

Lactovegetarians - include milk products, but don't eat eggs, meat, poultry or seafood.

Vegans - don't eat any animal products.

Any of these eating styles can be healthy and adequate ways to eat, with a little knowledge to guide you. Each day you should consume

1. at least 6 servings of bread, cereal, rice or pasta
2. at least 2 servings of fruit
3. at least 3 servings of vegetables
4. at least 2 servings of dry beans, nuts, seeds, eggs or meat substitutes
5. at least 3 servings of milk, yogurt, or cheese (or other sources of calcium for vegans)
6. fats, oils and sweets (use sparingly)

As a vegetarian be especially careful about the following nutrients in your diet:

Protein - Consume a diet of whole grains, legume, nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and soy products to meet needs for protein. Dairy products also help meet protein needs.

Iron - Legumes (beans); nuts; dark-green, leafy vegetables; and iron-fortified breakfast cereals are good sources of iron

Vitamin B12 - Only animal foods provide vitamin B12. If you don't eat eggs or milk products, eat cereals fortified with vitamin B12, or take a daily vitamin B12 supplement.

Calcium - If you don't consume dairy products use dark green, leafy vegetables; beans; figs; almonds; soy milk; tofu; and orange juice fortified with calcium. Take a supplement if you can't get enough calcium from foods.

Vitamin D - Vegans may need a vitamin D supplement if they don't have daily exposure to sunlight.

Planning Your Menu

Start with Starch:

Brown rice, whole potato, whole wheat tortilla, bagel, or pasta. Whole wheat bread, roll, or pita.

Add any combo of:

Fresh or frozen vegetables. canned or dried beans (kidney, black, lentil, or low fat refried)

Tomato sauce, peanut butter, nuts, or seeds. Also, tofu and low fat cheese are good choices.

Jazz it up with:

Spices, soy sauce, salsa, low fat salad dressings and/or olive oil. Onion and/or garlic are also good.

Put it all together:

Stir fry, toss microwave, bake, grill, or sandwich it. Add some fruit and milk or soy milk and you have a complete meal!