

6 STEPS TO AN OPTIMAL DIET

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Introduction

Hello and congratulations on taking this opportunity to learn these six simple steps to adopting a plant based diet.

What you eat can have SUCH a powerful effect on your health, body, mind and spirit!

A couple of tips I'd like to share:

1. Read through the whole booklet first-step one needs to be first, the rest you can arrange in any order that seems right for you.
2. Planning is essential. Use your planner/scheduler/calendar to set dates to do, to evaluate, review and revise. This will be a process, not an event.
3. Be gentle with yourself. Changing habits takes time and repetition, and repetition, and repetition. Sometimes things will not go as planned, sometimes you will "mess up". It's ok. You can start over as many times as you like/need to.
4. Enjoy the process-trying and learning new things can be great fun!





Step one

Get Ready

Take 5-10 minutes to think about your reasons for adopting an optimal diet.

How important to you is it?

What do you hope to gain, avoid, experience?

Write it down.

- Watch Food Choices or Forks Over Knives, these are both excellent documentaries. (netflix/amazon)

• If you are on medications, especially for diabetes or high blood pressure, or any chronic condition, consult your doctor, and ask for his/her support and supervision as you transition. When you really change your diet blood pressure and blood sugar can respond very quickly and medications may need to be adjusted. You need your provider's advice, not permission.

- How long do you want to take to get there? Assign a date, write it in your calendar/planner. (get one if you don't have one)
- Who is going to help you?
- Who is going to make it harder?



Notes to Self

Use this page to write down your "why"

Other Thoughts, Ideas, Resources, etc.



Step Two

Cut Out Meat, Fish, and Chicken

Start date:_____

Start by going meatless 2-3 days/week. Mark the days in your planner.

Take foods you like and take the meat out. (you may need to increase whole food carbs)

Examples: chile without meat, add more beans

Stir fry with veggies, add extra veggies, mushrooms or tofu

Chicken soup, without chicken, use more veggies, rice or potatoes.

Review date #1_____ How's it going? Next step?

Review date #2_____ How's it going? Next step?

Recipe: Beans and Rice



Beans and Rice-Mary Marshall

Rice-Cook brown rice according to package directions but without any oil.

Beans-

1 large onion

Dice 1-2 green, red or yellow peppers (I like using multiple colors)

1-2 tomatillos (optional)

Jalapeno (optional)

2-3 cloves garlic

One can of mild chile beans

1 can of black beans

1 can of dark red kidney beans (I just like a variety of beans, you can use whatever you have or like)

1 can of ro-tel (aldi's brand is fine)

1 c. Salsa

Veg. broth-1-2 C. or till you get consistency you want.

Chile powder-1-2 Tbsp

Cumin-1 tsp

Cayenne (opt)-1/4 tsp

Salt (1/2 tsp) and pepper

Heat dutch oven, add onion, peppers, and tomatillo-saute till translucent. When they start to stick, use a little broth or water added to pan. You can't really walk away from them, keep stirring around. Add garlic at very end so it doesn't scorch.

Add the rest of the ingredients, and heat through. Can make ahead of time. Great leftover too!



Step Three

No Eggs or Animal Milk

Take Inventory of Your Kitchen

Start date:_____

Switch to plant milks (almond, soy, rice, coconut etc). You may feel you need to start with sweetened, work your way to unsweetened.

What appliances and/or ingredients do you need? decent knives, cutting boards, I love my pressure cooker and blender.

Review date #1_____ How's it going? Next step?

Review date #2_____ How's it going? Next step?

Recipe: Aqua Faba French Toast



Recipe:

Aqua Faba French Toast

Ingredients:

10 slices whole grain bread
2-3 ripe bananas
1/4 C. peanut (or other nut/seed) butter
Liquid from 2 cans of chick peas (about 1 c. or so of aqua faba)
1 C. plant milk
2 Tbsp. maple syrup (or use sweetened plant milk)
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. cinnamon
I also like to grate a little orange peel in sometimes/

Spread a thin layer of peanut butter on 4 slices of bread.
Top with sliced bananas, then second slice of bread.
Combine remaining ingredients, whisk together well, until kind of foamy.
Dip sandwiches in liquid, both sides. (quick, it can soak the bread pretty fast)

For a "bake" place sandwiches in lightly sprayed or parchment lined 9 x13 pan and bake at 375 deg F for total of about 30 minutes. Flip sandwiches halfway through.

Griddle-place on a no stick hot griddle/pan-flip when slightly "set". After a couple of minutes, be careful, the bread can get a little fall apart-y. You want to make sure the inside gets hot also, so don't get the skillet super hot.
Top with maple syrup, fresh fruit if desired.
You can change this up with other fruit spreads.

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Staples: Stock Your Pantry and Fridge

Fridge

Plant Milk

Greens for salad/sides

Onions

Potatoes

Garlic

Veggies(**keep well**):

carrots, celery, peppers, beets, squash

Fruits (**keep well**):

apples, grapes, pears, oranges, grapefruits

Herbs

Tofu (optional)

Fat Free (no oil or tahini) Hummus

Whole grain tortillas

Miso paste (optional) soybean paste

Freezer:

Frozen veggies, fruits

Garlic/ginger

Whole grain breads/wraps (look for no/minimal oil versions)

Cooked beans and grains

Pantry:

Dried fruit

Medjool dates (they are like candy!)

Nuts and seeds

Salsa

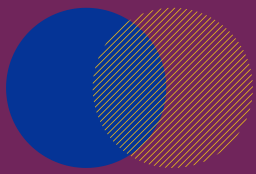
Mustards

Vinegars

Nutritional Yeast

Bragg's/tamari/soy sauce

Hot sauce



Step Four

Eliminate Oil-In Cooking and As a Spread

Use a product like Earth Balance for special occasions, not everyday use. (it's still fat and calories, as is any kind of oil)

You can use cooking spray when you need to, but parchment paper, silicone sheets, and really good non-stick pans are best option.

Saute without oil-veggies release their own liquid. You may need to add a tbsp water or broth at a time if they start to stick.

Oil substitutes for baking:

applesauce, pumpkin puree, ground flax seed and water, purchased egg substitute (tapioca flour based).

Review date #1_____ How's it going? Next step?

Review date #2_____ How's it going? Next step?

Recipe: Oil Substitute

Combine 1 Tbsp. cornstarch or arrowroot powder per cup of vegetable broth. Whisk over medium heat until thickened. Use this as a substitute for oil in any salad dressing recipe that calls for oil.

My fave-Good Seasons packets, using this instead of oil, and use balsamic vinegar.





Step Five

Give Up Cheese

Yes, you can! What if your life depended on it? Well, it kind of does!

Tip:

Dining out, ordering salad: request no cheese (so many places add it automatically).

Start Date _____

Review date #1_____ How's it going? Next step?

Review date #2_____ How's it going? Next step?

I make a batch of "uncheese sauce almost weekly.

Un-Cheez Sauce

1 1/4 C. unsweetened plant milk

1/3 tsp. nutritional yeast

1 tsp onion powder

1 tsp garlic powder

1/2 tsp. paprika, 1/4 tsp turmeric

2 Tbsp. light miso paste (optional-don't worry if you don't know what it is!)

Whisk milk into remaining ingredients, cook over medium heat until thickened.

Whisk often.





Step Six

Plan to Plan

Take time once each week to PLAN your meals. (mark this time in your planner)

Look at your schedule, consider where you will be, what else is going on.

Will you need to pack meals, dine out, will you be celebrating?

You can't plan for EVERYTHING, but you can plan a lot.

If you can, prep cook on one/two days a week. (see Big Batch guide).

Maybe you can do this with a friend(s)? Or you can pay someone (like a kid who wants some extra spending money???) If you can't take a chunk of time to big batch cook all at once-do smaller bits when you are already cooking anyway.

Have the oven on? Throw in some potatoes to bake.

Making salad? Make enough for the week.

If you are rinsing and cleaning veggies for one meal, prep for other meals at the same time.

PLANNED LEFTOVERS ARE THE BOMB!!! If you are making one meal, make enough for two. Use that for lunches, leftovers, or to freeze.

Recipe: Pumpkin Pie ONO's (overnight oats)



Pumpkin Pie ONO's

- 2 C. old fashioned oats
- 2 C. plant milk
- 1 C. pumpkin puree
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 Tbsp. ground flax seed
- 2-4 Tbsp. maple syrup
- 2 Tbsp. chopped walnuts

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. You can prepare 2-3 days in advance. Oats will soak up liquid-you can add more to thin it out.

You can also place in small tupperware or glass containers.

Weekly Meal Plan

Meals at home _____

Meals away

Special Occasions

Tricky Situations

Meals/Recipes

(soups/stews/casseroles/"meat"loaf etc...)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Big Batch Weekly Guide

Having building blocks and meal basics handy can save you a lot of time each day!

Salad/Dressing (can be purchased) _____

Grain _____

Potatoes _____

Beans _____

Dips/Spreads (like hummus) _____

Sauce _____

Oats _____

Snacks/Mini meals _____



Review

- Keep it simple-you don't have to become a vegan chef.
- Beans and rice, oatmeal, fruit, salad, potatoes. You really can live off of these.
- Don't be afraid of starches-they keep you "happy"!
- I have a lot of recipes in my FB group.
- Remember just because something is vegan doesn't mean it's healthy-watch for hidden fats and oils
- You don't ever have to eat tofu if you don't want to.
- Get help learning to structure and prepare foods that will support your best health. Consider joining Wellness Forum Health-membership includes a whole series of classes to help you learn the science and skills to adopt this way of eating and to also learn how to practice informed healthcare decision making.

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