



BALANCED PLANT-BASED EATING GUIDE



BLUE ZONES PROJECT®



Beach Cities
Health District
A Public Agency

What is a balanced plant-based eating pattern?

A balanced plant-based eating pattern consists of whole foods of plant origin such as grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds. It limits meat, dairy, eggs and processed foods with high refined sugar and fat content.

It is important to eat a variety of foods that contain enough calories, protein, vitamins, fat and carbohydrates to sustain you. Not eating a balanced amount of nutrient-dense foods can result in negative effects such as:

- Decreased energy levels
- Feelings of deprivation
- Changes in personality
- Obsessive thoughts about food and binges

The benefits of a balanced plant-based eating pattern

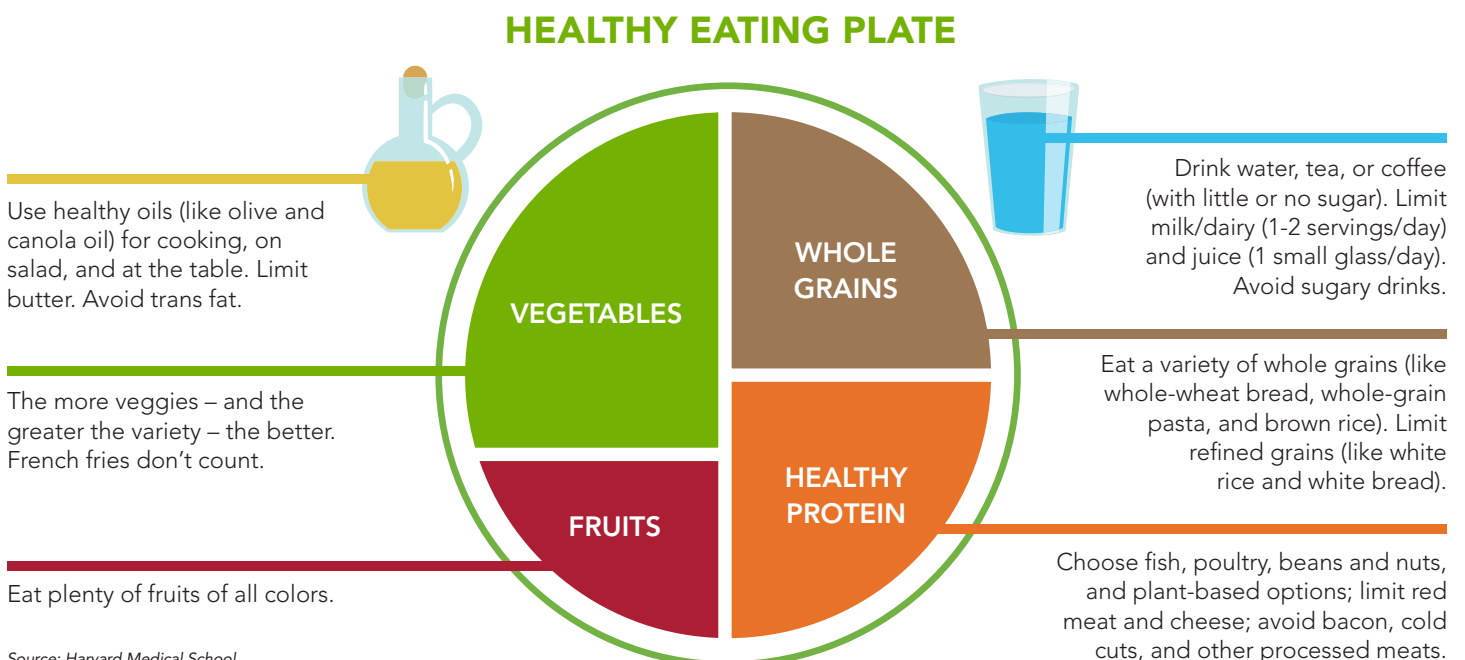
When you are eating enough calories and variety overall, the plant-based eating pattern will be both satiating and nutritious.

Consuming high-quality, nutrient-dense plant-based foods is associated with a lower risk of death from cardiovascular diseases. It is linked to:

- Improved cholesterol, blood pressure and sugar levels
- Lower risk of obesity, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and many cancers

Blue Zones recommendations

Blue Zones® are pockets around the world where people live longer, better. They eat a plant-based eating pattern known as “plant-slant.” It is a principle in which they eat an array of fresh fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts and whole grains.



How to try a balanced plant-based eating pattern

EAT DAILY

Whole grains

Barley, millet, oats, quinoa, brown rice, flours, bread, etc.

Legumes

Black beans, chickpeas, lentils, etc.

Tubers & starchy vegetables

Potatoes, corn, green peas, winter squash, etc.

Vegetables

Broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, etc.

Fruits

Bananas, blueberries, oranges, strawberries, etc.

Whole nuts & seeds, nut/seed butters

Walnuts, pumpkin seeds, tahini, almond butter, etc.

Plant-based proteins

Tempeh, edamame, tofu, etc.

Plant-based milks

Rice, soy, oat, almond, hemp, etc.

Healthy fats

Olive oil, avocado, flax seed, etc.

Nicoya, Costa Rica

Black beans are a Blue Zones longevity ingredient that is loaded with fiber that reduces bad cholesterol.

Okinawa, Japan

Tofu is a Blue Zones longevity ingredient that lowers cholesterol and the risk of heart disease.

Ikaria, Greece and Sardinia, Italy

Olive oil is a Blue Zones longevity ingredient that protects against heart disease.

LIMIT

Meat, poultry and seafood

Eggs

Dairy products

Bleached flours, white bread, white rice and white pasta

AVOID

Refined sweeteners

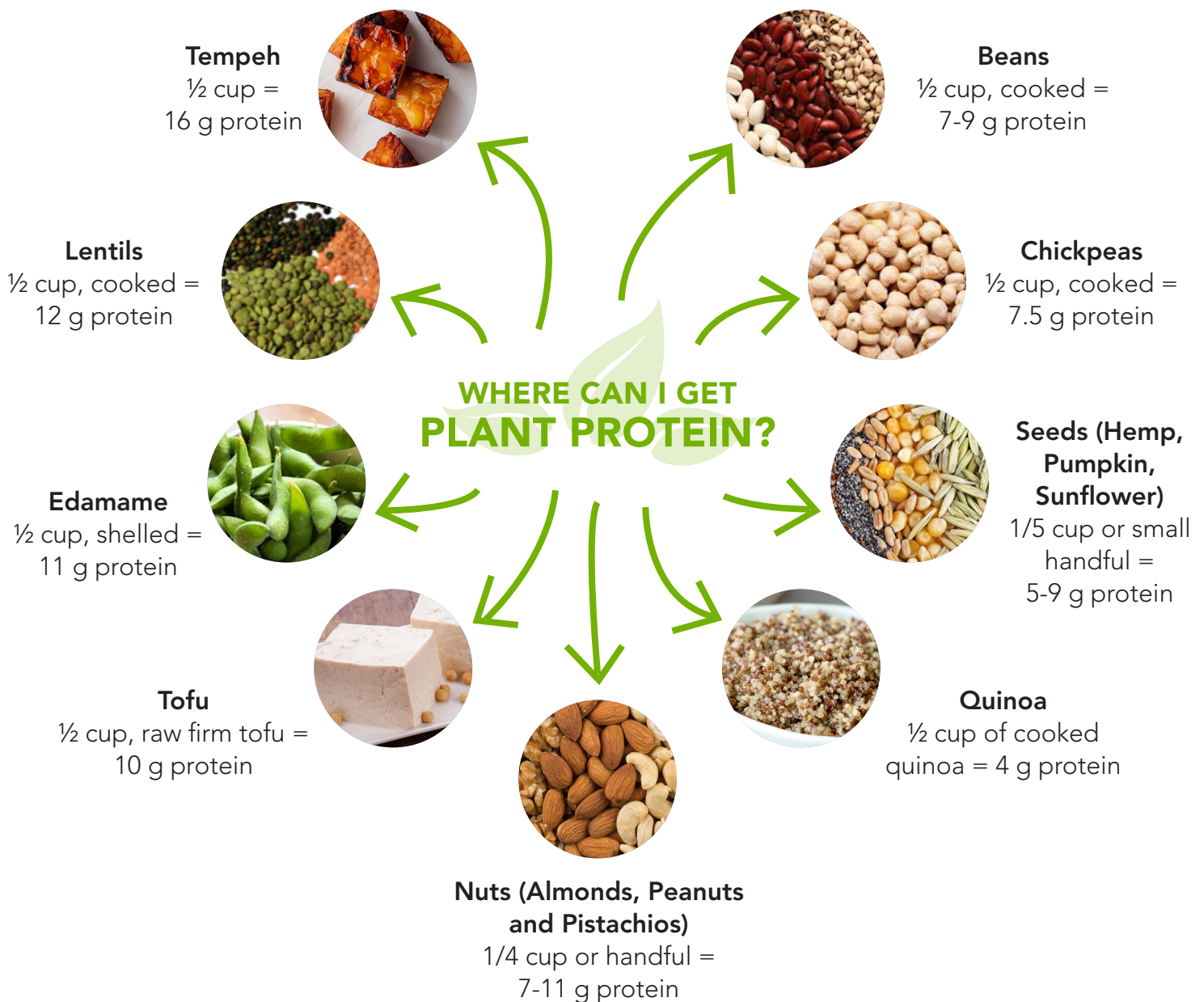
Minimally processed foods

Sugar-sweetened, beverages, frozen meals, lunch meats, etc.

FAQ #1: Will I get enough protein on a balanced plant-based eating pattern?

The recommended daily protein intake is 48 g for women and 56 g for men. For example:

- 1 cup of quinoa, 1 cup tofu, ½ cup lentils, ¼ cup almonds = 48 g
- 1 cup of quinoa, 1 cup tofu, ½ cup lentils, ¼ cup almonds, ½ cup beans = 56 g



FAQ #2: If I'm minimizing dairy, how would I ensure I'm getting enough calcium?

Foods high in calcium include tofu, collard greens, spinach, kale and more. Non-dairy milks are also now calcium fortified.

FAQ #3: How can I have a balanced plant-based eating pattern when eating out at a restaurant?

- Look on the menu for special icons to find plant-based options:



Vegetarian



Vegan

- If plant-based options are not available, ask to substitute tofu, beans, tempeh or a veggie burger.
- Get creative, order a few plant-based side dishes to create a meal, sides of brown rice, beans or tofu and veggies easily adds up to a balanced meal.
- Order a side salad before the main course to add some extra veggies to your meal. It will also fill you up so you will eat less calories overall.
- Ask for dressing on the side to control your calories and avoid excess fat.

Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurants

- If eating out in the Beach Cities (Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach), try to eat at Blue Zones Project Approved™ Restaurants. These restaurants have healthy options and plant-based items.
- These restaurants usually have a decal on their window and a framed certificate displayed to show that they are a Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurant!



For the full list of Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurants, Grocery Stores and Caterers, visit www.bchd.org/restaurants.

For many patients, nutritious food is medicine. According to some studies, several plant-based foods have been found to be as or more effective than prescription medication in lowering cholesterol with legumes, lowering blood pressure with soy nuts, or addressing metabolic syndrome by incorporating tree nuts into your meals. Risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and hypertension, along with other complications that affect well-being are strongly linked to dietary choices. A healthy nutrient-dense, plant-based eating pattern is a solution to prevent and treat chronic diseases.

– William Kim, M.D., Beach Cities Health District Chief Medical Advisor

The Blue Zones Kitchen: Hearty Barley and Kale Bowl

Total Prep Time: 10 minutes

Servings: 4



Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked barley
- 1 cup thinly sliced, loosely packed kale
- ½ cup cooked cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 carrot, peeled and cut into small dice
- 5 to 6 pitted Kalamata olives, sliced in half
- 2 cornichons, cut into small dice
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 3 to 4 basil leaves, sliced thin
- 1 pitted date, diced (optional)

Directions:

Combine all the ingredients – except date – and let sit for at least 10 minutes before serving to allow the flavors to marry. If you like a salty/sweet contrast, add the date; if you want something purely savory, simply omit it.

Recipe from The Blue Zones Kitchen, Dan Buettner

Resources and Recipes

WEBSITES TO EXPLORE

Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics: Eat Right www.eatrightpro.org

Blue Zones www.bluezones.com

Choose My Plate www.choosemyplate.gov

BOOKS TO EXPLORE

The Blue Zones Kitchen

The Blue Zones Solution

RECIPE IDEAS

Blue Zones Recipes www.bluezones.com/recipes

Center for Nutrition Studies: Recipes www.nutritionstudies.org/recipes

The Nutrition Source: Home Cooking www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/recipes-2/home-cooking

Disclaimer: Always seek the advice of your physician or qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.