



10 low-budget steps to a plant-forward diet

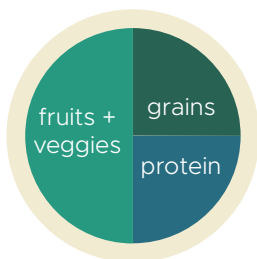
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Switching your plate to 1/2 fruits and veggies, 1/4 grains, and 1/4 protein can be easy, delicious, and budget-friendly. Below we provide 10 tips to get started. Even a small decrease in meat consumption makes a large difference for your health and the environment.

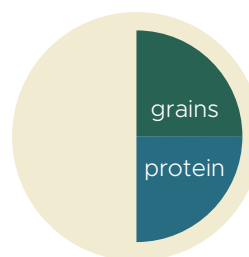
1. A grain, a green, and a bean

When in doubt, this simple formula can lead to **delicious, quick, and easy** plant-based meals. A meal with at least these three components gives you vitamins, minerals, whole grains, and protein.



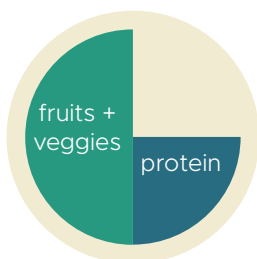
4. Great grains

Whole grains can be an excellent **base for a healthy, protein-packed meal**. Dried grains like quinoa, amaranth, and brown rice are cooked the same as regular rice and are great with veggies and in soups, salads, and casseroles. Also try whole grain bread and pasta!



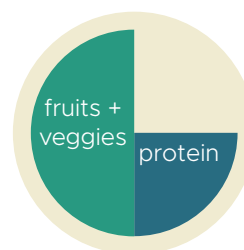
2. Meat as a side

Think of meat as a side instead of the centerpiece of your meal. The portion of meat on your plate should be about the size of your closed fist. **Swapping the starring role of meat to veggies** provides more nutrients, added protein, much less fat, and is less expensive.



5. Lovely legumes, beautiful beans

Legumes (a type of pea) and beans can be a tasty, healthy alternative to meat in any dish. They're high in fiber and are related to **reduced cholesterol, decreased blood sugar levels, and weight control**. Check out chickpeas, peas, lentils, peanut butter, and kidney, pinto, and black beans.



3. Keep the protein

Eating less meat **doesn't mean eating less protein**. Foods like Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, milk, and eggs are low-cost and rich in protein. Incorporate them into your diet to replace protein from meat.





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6. It doesn't have to be more expensive

Eating more green **does not mean spending more green**. Many veggies and grains can be purchased in bulk, leading to much **lower costs per serving**. Frozen fruits and vegetables are as nutritious as fresh and usually less expensive. They can quickly be microwaved and added to pastas, casseroles, soups and more. These delicious, nutritious ingredients all qualify for **SNAP, WIC, and EBT benefits!**

7. It doesn't have to be gourmet

You don't have to go to high-end grocery stores to get delicious foods that provide you with the nutrients you need. Basic ingredients from your favorite local store or even your own backyard are perfect - nothing fancy required! **Healthy meals also don't have to take hours to prepare or specialized cooking methods.** Quinoa, brown rice, and lentils can all be cooked just like rice, and veggies can be tossed in a casserole for a quick meal. Tacos, pasta, and burgers can also be made with half meat and half vegetables for easy plant-forward meals.

8. Eat a rainbow

Food is much more fun when it's varied! One way to make sure you're getting a diverse range of nutrients is by **eating foods of many colors**. Try eating colorful meals to incorporate every food group and many flavors into your day. For example, you could start your day with brown whole-wheat toast, enjoy orange sweet potatoes and green spinach at lunch, and eat yellow squash and black quinoa with dinner.

9. The sauce is the boss

Sometimes in meat-based meals, the best part isn't the meat- **it's the sauce**. The great news is, delicacies like barbecue sauce, hot sauce, soy sauce, curry, and honey mustard still taste amazing on plants. Although well-intentioned meals can quickly become unhealthy by drenching them with sauce, well-portioned amounts of sauce can bring **amazing flavor to a plant-based dish**.

10. Try something new

Take eating more plants as a chance to **expand your horizons**. Eating a wider variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can introduce you to new flavors, textures, combinations, cooking styles, and cultures! Cooking plants in styles from other countries is like **traveling from your kitchen**. When you're open to trying new foods, you're bound to discover some fresh favorites.