



# *Are you Ready for the Plant-Based March Challenge ?*

Welcome to the [Plant-Based March Challenge](#)! We are thrilled you to have your participation, and look forward to collectively thinking and eating with our planet & bodies in mind this March! In order to give you a head start, we wanted to send you some initial information that will hopefully make it easier for you to get going.

The most important thing is not to let 'perfect' get in the way of 'progress'. No matter where your dietary journey finds you, the goal is to become more aware, and take steps toward making more conscious choices, so if you slip up, or make a small exception, it's not a big deal! The important thing is that you are here, with the intention of making a positive effort, so don't be hard on yourself. You can access all of the information in this e-mail here, we encourage you to download or bookmark this page so you can keep coming back to it.

**- Liz Clark**

# The Fundamentals

***You'll get enough protein!*** Don't worry. Plants have protein in them too! We actually don't need to consume meat or dairy for protein, what we need is to meet our requirements for the nine essential amino acids which our body synthesizes into protein on its own. As long as you are eating enough calories to sustain yourself and are focusing on whole foods instead of refined foods, it's nearly impossible to become deficient in protein. Some examples of plant foods high in protein: beans, nut butters, tofu, lentils, quinoa, tempeh, peas, hemp seeds, chia seeds, edamame.

***Do I need supplements on a plant-based diet?*** We can get every essential vitamin and amino acid our bodies need from plant foods, except in most situations, B12, which doctors recommend as a supplement for everyone these days, plant-based or not. [Here is some more info on B12](#) and why the best way to get it is with a supplement.

***Eat when you're hungry.*** You may have to up your food consumption, because while a plant-based diet is nutrient rich, it's often lower in calories. Meat and dairy products are calorically dense, so don't be surprised if you feel like you want to eat more than usual. Listen to your body! If you want to track your calories—Here are some Apps for calorie tracking: [My Fitness Pal](#), [Chronometer](#).

***Don't feel restricted.*** Write down the meals that you love that seem too difficult to give up, and research recipes for their plant-based versions. Almost everything has a plant-based alternative that's bound to satisfy those deep cravings for foods you just can't do without!

***Remember the WHY.*** When you find yourself in a moment of weakness that you're determined to overcome, we encourage you to remind yourself WHY you are taking this challenge. Whether you're a gung-ho environmentalist, or curious about the health benefits, want to be kinder to the animals, or ALL of them, when you remind yourself of the 'why' it helps you push thru those moments when you want to default to your normal habits.

# Our Recommendations

## ***We Encourage You to Choose...***

***Plant-based foods.*** Foods that come from plants and don't include animal ingredients such as meat, fish, poultry, milk, eggs, and cheese.

***Whole foods.*** Foods in their natural form that are not heavily processed. That means foods that are unrefined, or have minimally refined/processed ingredients.

***Local.*** Prioritize local options, or even grow your own!

***Organic.*** Choose consciously grown plant foods when possible.

***Seasonal.*** Foods that are in-season generally taste better, are more nutritious, and have a smaller environmental footprint.

***Conscious packaging.*** Support brands and options that use plastic alternatives or minimal plastic.

***Substitute when appropriate!*** This is a global challenge, so since we cannot tailor recipes and to meet the above criteria for all places, so we hope that you will take the liberty of swapping comparable ingredients in our recipes for those local and seasonal to your area!

## ***We Encourage You to Avoid...***

- Highly-processed foods
- Industrially farmed & GMO foods
- Foods with added sugars
- Foods with weird additives & chemicals you can't pronounce

# The Shopping List

- FRUITS**  
Berries, citrus fruits, pears, peaches, pineapple, bananas, papayas, raisins, mango, raisins, figs, dates, etc. Bulk organic frozen fruits & dried fruits can be good options in places that are seasonally limited with fruits.
- VEGETABLES**  
Onions & garlic! Spinach, arugula, zucchini, kale, cabbage, tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, asparagus, peppers, corn, avocados, lettuce, peas, beets, collards, mushrooms, etc.
- STARCHY VEGETABLES**  
Potatoes, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, plantains etc.
- WHOLE GRAINS**  
Brown rice, rolled oats, farro, quinoa, bulgar, brown rice pasta, grains, cereals, popcorn, tortillas
- HEALTHY FATS**  
Avocados, olive oil, coconut oil, sesame oil
- LEGUMES**  
Beans of all kinds! Peas, chickpeas, lentils, etc.
- SEEDS, NUTS AND NUT BUTTERS**  
Walnuts, cashews, macadamia nuts, pecans, peanuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, almonds, natural nut butters, tahini, etc.
- UNSWEETENED PLANT-BASED MILKS**  
Oat milk, coconut milk, cashew milk, rice milk, soymilk, etc ... or make your own!
- SPICES, HERBS & SEASONINGS**  
Basil, rosemary, turmeric, ginger, curry, black pepper, sea salt, cumin, oregano, cilantro, etc.
- CONDIMENTS**  
Salsa, hummus, mustard, soy sauce or liquid aminos, hot sauce, apple cider vinegar, balsamic vinegar, maple syrup, coconut sugar, tomato sauce, miso paste, etc.
- BEVERAGES**  
Coffee, tea, kombucha, fresh pressed juices, etc.
- PLANT-BASED MEAT REPLACEMENTS**  
Tofu, tempeh, jackfruit
- TREATS**  
Vegan chocolate chips or bars, plant-based ice cream with simple ingredients (stay tuned for a recipe this month on how to make your own banana ice cream)
- LESS FAMILIAR PLANT-BASED INGREDIENTS**  
Nutritional yeast, chia seeds, hemp seeds, ground flaxseed, Arrowroot powder, tapioca flour, or cornstarch (for thickening sauces), raw cacao powder

# The Plant-Based Meal Planner

Start with foods you have always enjoyed that just happen to be plant-based, then build on those meals. Here are some general ideas of what to eat.

## BREAKFAST

OATMEAL OR OVERNIGHT OATS, AVOCADO TOAST, SMOOTHIES, FRUIT SALAD, TOFU SCRAMBLE, GRANOLA, HASH BROWN POTATOES WITH SAUTÉED SPINACH, ACAI BOWL, TOAST WITH ALMOND BUTTER, CHIA PUDDING

## LUNCH

VEGGIE TACOS, BEAN BURRITO, BUDDHA BOWL, LENTIL SOUP, CHICKPEA 'TUNA SALAD' SANDWICH, PEANUT BUTTER & BANANA SANDWICH, TEMPEH STIR FRY, BIG HEARTY SALAD

## SNACKS

FRUIT, HUMMUS & VEGGIES, DRIED FRUITS, RAW OR ROASTED NUTS, KALE CHIPS OR HEALTHY CHIPS, CASHEW OR COCONUT BASED YOGURT WITH BERRIES OR PEANUT BUTTER, BANANA WITH NUT BUTTER

## DINNER

EGGIE CURRY, BEAN ENCHILADAS, SPAGHETTI OR PESTO PASTA, PLANT-BASED PIZZA, PORTOBELLO MUSHROOM BURGER, VEGGIE BURGER, BUFFALO CAULIFLOWER WINGS, MACARONI & 'CHEESE' WITH STEAMED BROCCOLI, PLANT-BASED SUSHI, LENTIL & MUSHROOM TACOS, EGGPLANT LASAGNA, FALAFEL, ROASTED SWEET POTATOES, BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

---

## Dessert

NUT BUTTER STUFFED DATES, AVOCADO CHOCOLATE MOUSSE, PLANT-BASED ICE CREAM OR SORBET, PLANT-BASED BROWNIES, BANANA FLAMBE, FRESH FRUIT