



Balance Your Vegan Plate

A vegan (or strict vegetarian) diet is one in which only plant products are consumed.

You will want to include foods from all the food groups represented on the plate, focusing on getting a good balance of protein, grains, vegetables, fruits and fats.

If you have decided to follow a vegan diet for whatever personal reasons you may have, it is important to put some thought into finding the right balance of nutrients for optimal health.

A vegan eating plan isn't just about what you don't eat, but also what you do eat

While most vegetables and even grains contribute some protein to your diet, it is important to focus on including other high protein foods at every meal.

We recommend consuming a variety of foods high in protein every day:

And in particular getting a minimum of 2 servings of nuts or seeds and 3 servings of legumes (beans, lentils, soy) per day.

Typical portion sizes for plant based proteins one serving equals:

- Protein Nutmilk (standard nut and rice milk contain little to no protein)
- 8 oz soy milk
- ½ cup legumes (beans)
- 4 oz tofu (soybean product), tempeh

(fermented soybean product with a slightly nutty taste), seitan (wheat gluten), or TPV (Textured Vegetable Protein)

- 1 oz nuts (small handful)
- 1 oz soy cheese
- 2 Tbsp nut butter
- Pea protein as a substitute to whey in a smoothie.

However depending on your weight and activity level you may need more than this.

Fill the rest of your plate with vegetables, fruits, whole grains and fats.

Be sure to get enough:

B12 – which is only found in animal products. It can also be found in fortified cereals and grains. It may be wise to take a supplement to assure you are getting enough.

Calcium – aim for 2-3 servings of calcium fortified products such as juices and soy/almond/rice milk per day. Plant based sources of calcium include dark green veggies and almonds. Again if you don't think you will be able to consume enough calcium in your diet then opt for a supplement to be on the safe side.

*note the supplement should include vitamin D.

Vitamin D – if you are consuming 2-3 servings of fortified soy/rice/almond milk daily then you are covered. If however this is a challenge for you, you should take a supplement. Vitamin D is difficult to get

from diet alone and most people do not get the daily sun exposure needed to make enough of this vitamin.

Iron – Iron is found in legumes, fortified grains and cereals, dark green veggies and tofu. Adding a food high in vitamin C at each meal will help you absorb the iron in that meal. (see list of foods high in Vitamin C below)

Foods high in Vitamin C

- Citrus fruits and juices (oranges, grapefruit, pineapple)
- Kiwi
- Strawberries
- Cantaloupe
- Baked potato
- Bell peppers
- Tomatoes and tomato products
- Cauliflower
- Dark leafy greens
- Mango and papaya

Zinc – As long as you consume whole grains, legumes, green veggies and nuts you should be meeting your needs.

Omega 3 fatty acids – aim for two servings per day of walnuts, canola oil, milled or crushed flax seed or flax seed oil.

Calories – be sure that you are eating enough to meet your daily energy needs. If you begin to lose weight quickly or are feeling sluggish, contact your doctor or Duke Nutritionist to review your diet.



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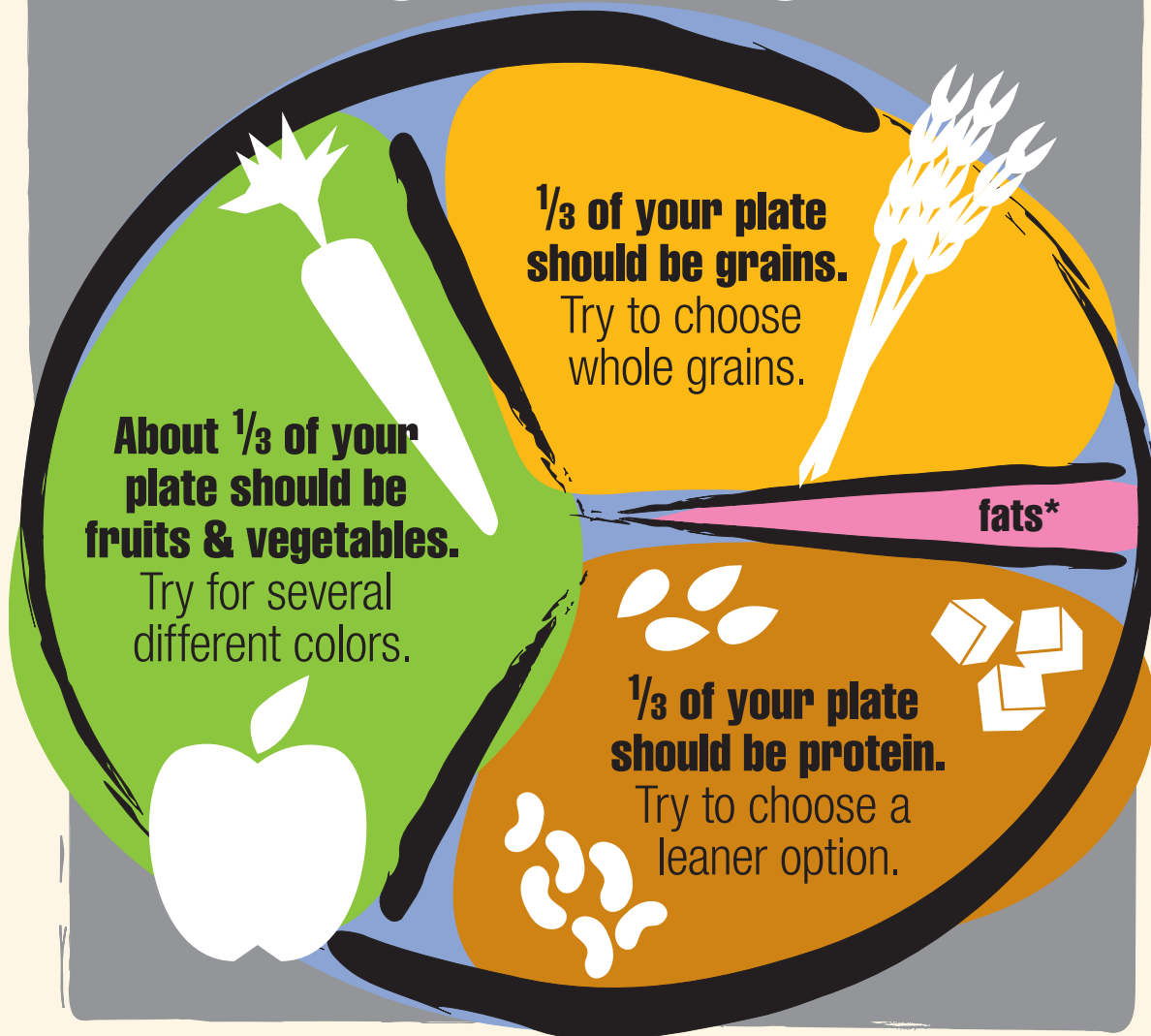


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Optimize your health and weight by following these suggestions for

Balancing Your Vegan Plate



Fruits & Vegetables

- Provide vitamins and minerals, antioxidants, fiber and carbohydrates for energy.
- Choose a rainbow of colored fruits and vegetables everyday to assure you are getting the full spectrum of health benefits.



Grains

- Provide fiber, B vitamins, and carbohydrates for energy
- Try to vary the grains you eat at each meal
- Include: breads (whole wheat is recommended), pastas, cereal, rice, tortillas, crackers



Plant Protein

- Includes:
Legumes, soy/tofu,
nuts, seeds, nut butters,
tempeh, seitan



Fats*

- Yes! Your body needs fats to survive. Some fats impart more health benefits than other. (avocado, nuts, olives, olive oil & canola oil)
- Nuts, seeds, avocado, milled or crushed flax seed or flax seed oil, olives are good sources of essential fats that enable your body to work properly.
- Occasionally choose sweets such as candy and other desserts only in addition to your balanced plate, rather than a large part of it.
- Fried foods provide fats, but should only be eaten less frequently.



*If your foods already contain fat, added healthy fat is not necessary.