槐TBE A WHOLE-FOODS VEGAN

Simply removing animal products from a typical American diet is may result in mostly low-calorie foods such as salads, vegetables, and fruit. Eating only these foods could quickly leave you feeling hungry, thinking a vegan diet is a real challenge. But with a little information this shouldn’t be the case, at all!

Follow these tips for a delicious, nutritious and easy vegan diet.

1. **Protein.** As long as you’re eating a diet that is sufficient in calories and includes a variety of whole plant based foods, you’re getting enough protein. **Legumes**—beans, nuts, seeds, peanuts, peas, lentils, soy- seitan, and quinoa are the best sources of protein for vegans. Include a few servings of these foods each day—maybe even each meal.

2. **Carbs.** Carbohydrates have a bad reputation but not all carbohydrates are bad. Humans need carbohydrates for survival, but unfortunately most people today are consuming carbohydrates in their processed forms as breads, pastas, muffins, crackers and not in their whole, complex forms. **Complex carbohydrates, not simple processed ones, are a healthy source of nutrition and it provides our body with nutrients that allow it to function properly.**

3. **Fat.** Fat most frequently found in plant sources is unsaturated fat while the fat found in animal sources is primarily saturated fat. Animal fat, being high in saturated fat, is associated with the buildup of cholesterol plaque, insulin resistance, heart disease, diabetes, and other conditions. Vegan sources of healthy plant fats include avocados, almonds, peanut butter, tahini, flax seeds, chia seeds, sunflower seeds and walnuts.

4. **Vitamin B12.** Although many believe vitamin B-12 is made by animals, it is actually made by bacteria present in soil, from which wild animals eat, incorporating the bacteria and the vitamin. As we no longer live as wild animals, this vitamin is no longer available for us through this source. The most healthy and reliable source of vitamin B12 is a supplement or fortified foods.
REMEMBER

A healthy vegan diet is composed of whole foods, and low to no amounts of refined sugar, highly processed products or alcohol.

It is not restrictive or aimed at weight loss, but nutritionally adequate for every stage of life and can be adjusted to satisfy a wide range of caloric requirements, including those of athletes. By purchasing organic and locally produced foods, you’re also taking all those chemicals commonly used in food production, as well as fossil fuel consuming transportation, out of the equation.

Calcium. Vegan diets tend to contain less calcium than other diets, so we must make an effort to include good sources on a daily basis. High-calcium, lower-oxalate, dark leafy greens are the best sources of calcium for vegans—turnip greens, mustard greens, kale, bok choy, and collard greens, fortified plant milks, tofu, soy, beans and legumes also provide lots of calcium.

Vitamin D. Vitamin D is produced by our skin, liver and kidneys. The most frequent source of vitamin D is sun exposure of the skin, recommendations usually including 15 minutes of direct exposure, at least three times a week, during hours where the sun is stronger. If for geographical or lifestyle circumstances you do not meet these requirements, a vegan supplement of vitamin D is recommended.

Iron is found in a wide range of plant foods. Vegans tend to have iron intakes comparable to meat-eaters. If you’re eating a healthy, varied vegan diet, you don’t need to worry about iron as it’s plentiful in a vegan diet, especially in legumes and green leafy vegetables. Make sure to include a good source of vitamin C at meals since it binds with iron creating a more easily absorbed complex. Avoid coffee and tea at meals as they decrease iron absorption rate.

Omega-3. Omega-3 fats are important for the long-term health of the heart and brain. Walnuts, canola oil, flax seeds, chia seeds, as well as flax and chia oils, and algae DHA/EPA supplements are the most common and reliable sources.

Vitamin A plays a fundamental role in the proper functioning of the eye. Good reliable sources of this vitamin include carrots and carrot juice, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, butternut squash, spinach and cantaloupe.

Cravings. If you find yourself craving animal products, it could be because you have a strong preference for the taste of glutamate, also known as umami. Plant foods high in umami are ripe tomatoes, tamari, miso, sauerkraut, dried sea vegetables, marmite, nutritional yeast, olives, balsamic vinegar, and mushrooms. Roasting, caramelizing, browning, and grilling increase umami by freeing glutamate from proteins.

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