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**32 HIGHEST VEGAN  
PROTEIN SOURCES  
& COMPLETE GUIDE  
TO AVOIDING  
A DEFICIENCY**

**FEAR NOT MY FELLOW VEGANS AND ASPIRING PLANT BASED PEOPLE. PROTEIN IS TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH MEAT, BUT GETTING ENOUGH PROTEIN ON A PRIMARILY PLANT BASED OR VEGAN DIET IS EASY. HIGH PROTEIN PLANT BASED FOODS ARE ABUNDANT AND A PROTEIN DEFICIENCY IN YOUR NEW LIFESTYLE IS RARE.**

*“Vegans have not been shown to be deficient in protein intake or in any specific amino acids.”*

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**IN THIS ARTICLE WE’LL COVER:**

- How much protein you need
- What vegan food groups to eat to get enough protein
- The top 5 highest protein for each food type (with handy recipes).
- Plus tracking your protein intake, whether or not you should use protein powders and if complete protein matters.

**LET'S GET STARTED!**

## HOW MUCH PROTEIN DO YOU NEED?

Most people have a skewed perception of how much protein their body requires. Health experts suggest that the average adult should consume between 0.36 to 0.86 grams of protein per pound of body weight. Active adults and athletes may need to consume more protein based on their activity levels (we'll show you later in the article how to track your protein so you can be sure).

A study from the World Resources Institute showed that the *“Global average protein consumption was approximately 68 grams per person per day—or more than one-third higher than the average daily adult requirement.”*

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## VEGAN FOOD GROUPS TO EAT REGULARLY TO GET PROTEIN EASILY

The following ingredients can be seen as the building blocks to eat most days to ensure you're meeting your protein requirements easily.

We recommend emphasizing non-processed legumes, whole grains, seeds & nuts in your diet with minimal processed soy products in your diet (*i.e only if you are craving something especially containing it*).



### QUICK TIP:

*If you're low on time and want to come up with a quick meal idea to meet your protein requirements for the day, we recommend trying out "a grain, a bean and a green" meals.*



# THE HIGHEST RANKING VEGAN FOODS FOR PROTEIN

Along with the building blocks mentioned above, this is a list of 20 of the highest protein vegan food sources to help guide your choices on what foods to eat to meet your protein requirements.

## 5 OF THE HIGHEST RANKING SOY FOODS FOR VEGAN PROTEIN

### 1. Tofu (15g protein per 100g)

This outstanding soy product is a complete protein all by itself. Although it may seem bland, we like to think of it as a blank canvas in which you can apply any flavor to it.

Try it marinated and grilled--just be sure to press out all the liquid by squishing it between two paper towels.



#### Simple Tofu Recipes:

- Easy marinated tofu
- Quick crispy tofu
- Baked Tofu

### 2. Tempeh (20g protein per 100g)

Tempeh, Tofu's favourite cousin, boasts even more protein than tofu at an average of 20 grams per 100 grams. Due to the compacted firmness of a block of Tempeh, this is easier to grill and use as a meat-like substitute in sandwiches, salads and mains.

Tempeh can actually be sliced and cooked in the toaster. Set the toaster to high and very quickly prepare a protein packed lunch in under a minute.



#### Simple Tempeh Recipes:

- Vegan Tempeh BLT
- Vegan Tempeh Tacos

### 3. Edamame (11g protein per 100g)

Edamame are a tasty treat that pack a protein punch! Often served as a starter at Japanese restaurants, Edamame are found at most supermarket in the frozen section and are easily defrosted and brought to work for an easy snack.

Edamame can be a little bland, but cooked in a low-sodium soy sauce, make the perfect starter to any meal. 11 grams of protein will help you hit your protein goals in no time.



#### Simple Edamame Recipes:

- Vegan Edamame Sesame Salad
- Vegan Edamame Burger

### 4. Soy Beans (17g protein per 100g)

Why eat tofu and tempeh when you can go straight to the source? With 17 grams of protein per 100 grams, soy beans are cheap protein monsters that can be turned into a variety of tasty recipes, including hummus and curry.

High protein, high in vitamin C and low in saturated fat, this is absolute winner when it comes to the bean family. Stock up!



#### Simple Soy Bean Recipes:

- Vegan Soybean Burger

### 5. Soy Milk (3g protein per 100g)

Although Soy Milk packs only a small amount of protein compared to Tofu and Tempeh, it can be easily added to any recipes that require plant-milk to add that extra few grams of protein. Smoothie bowls and morning oats both love soy milk.

Don't listen to any online source that states that too much soy is bad for your health. It has proven to be very beneficial to both men and women, and has been to drastically reduce breast cancer rates in women.



#### Simple Soy Milk Recipes:

- Making Soybean Milk
- Vegan Smoothie Bowl

## 5 OF THE HIGHEST RANKING VEGETABLES FOR VEGAN PROTEIN



### 1. Potatoes (2g protein per 100g)

A compliment to every meal, Irish or not, potatoes pack 2 grams of protein per 100 grams and therefore make a great addition to any meal plan.

You may want to switch out your potatoes for sweet potatoes, which despite packing slightly less protein (1.6 grams), they are high in fibre and pack a lot of antioxidants.

#### Simple Potato Recipes:

- Creamy Vegan Potato Bake

### 2. Spinach (3g protein per 100g)

Popeye wasn't just a heavy smoking hero, but he was clever too, as his constant consumption of spinach may well have contributed to his abnormally large biceps.

3 grams per 100 grams of protein is more than it sounds for a very healthy dark leafy green that should be added to every meal you make. Don't hesitate to chuck it in every smoothie you, sweet or sour.



#### Simple Spinach Recipes:

- Tempeh and Spinach Wrap
- Vegan Spinach Pie



### 3. Bok Choy (1.4g protein per 100g)

Delicious and nutritious, Bok Choy doesn't make it onto many American dinner plates, but as a dark leafy green with 1.4 grams of protein, it should!

Avoid the traditional Chinese recipes that are heavily soaked in oil and opt for steaming it with a small dose of low-sodium soy sauce or a healthy Siracha.



#### Simple Bok Choy Recipes:

- 10 Minute Garlic Bok Choy
- Bok Choy and Mushroom Stir Fry

### 4. Asparagus (2.5g protein per 100g)

Packed with antioxidants, this super nutrient packed vegetable is also known to boost brain power through folate, deliver your daily fibre and provide you with a bonus 2.5 grams of protein to help top off your daily requirements.

Roast it, grill it, fry it, steam it, just get some of this on your plate to give your mains some nutritional companionship.



#### Simple Asparagus Recipes:

- Vegan Asparagus Risotto
- Vegan Cream of Asparagus Soup

### 5. Broccoli (2.8g protein per 100g)

This dark green cancer fighter should be your best cruciferous friend. Well known plant based doctor, Dr Michael Greger, recommends Broccoli as an absolute must in any diet, vegan or not, which is a bonus due to its high protein count of 2.8 grams per 100 grams.

Avoid smothering it in salt and oil in the frying pan and opt for a more health cooking technique like steaming, baking or simply throwing in a salad raw.



#### Simple Broccoli Recipes:

- Vegan Cream of Broccoli Soup
- Vegan Broccoli Pasta

## 5 HIGHEST RANKING FRUITS FOR VEGAN PROTEIN



### 1. Avocados (2g protein per 100g)

Hitting the gym and not seeing any results? It might be because you're not getting enough protein and healthy fat in your diet. Avocado is fortunately full of both and deserves to be featured in more of your meals.

Known for being super adaptable, avocado can be made into an amazing chocolate moose dessert that is both healthy and protein packed. See the recipes section below :)

#### Simple Avocados Recipes:

- Vegan Chocolate Peanut Butter Avocado Mousse
- Vegan Avocado Protein Smoothie

### 2. Dried Apricots (4.5g protein per 100g)

Throw away the unhealthy oily snacks in your desk drawer and replace them with a bag full of nuts and apricots. Delicious, ever-lasting and pretty to look at, dried apricots pack 4.5 grams of protein per 100 grams, which may not sound like much, but will quickly add up if you're an avid snacker.



#### Simple Apricot Recipes:

- Apricot and Almond Vegan Energy Bites
- Vegan Apricot Bars



### 3. Kiwi Fruits (1.1g protein per 100g)

This oversize berry is packed with nutritional goodness. It's been known to help improve your skin, sleep, heart health and blood pressure, while decreasing your chances of obesity and... serving you over a gram of protein per 100 grams.

For something as delicious as a kiwi fruit, it's almost a crime that it's so healthy.



#### Simple Kiwi Fruit Recipes:

- No Bake Vegan Kiwi Cheesecake

### 4. Blackberries (1.4g protein per 100g)

A daily serve of berries is absolute must, so why not pick this winner every now and then. Blackberries help get you to your protein goal while packing in all essential nutrients like vitamin C, K and A, a decent amount of fibre and all important antioxidants.

Pick them up fresh from a local market and consumer a cup a day. Buy them frozen to bring down the price and slightly up your intake.



#### Simple Blackberry Recipes:

- Vegan Blackberry Muffins
- Vegan Blackberry Cobble

### 5. Bananas (1.1g protein per 100g)

While known for their potassium powers, energy kickers and straight up goodness, bananas also include over a gram of protein per 100 grams.

Throw them in a smoothie has a health, relatively high carb filler. Keep them frozen for you smoothie bowls and raw for your banana bread.



#### Simple Banana Recipes:

- Vegan Banana Bread
- Vegan Banana Protein Pancakes

# 5 OF THE HIGHEST RANKING BEANS & LEGUMES FOR VEGAN PROTEIN



## 1. Pinto Beans (9g protein per 100g)

Pinto beans pack a solid 9 grams of protein per 100 grams, which is up there with Tofu. High in fibre, this bean is one of the most popular beans in the US and is commonly included in a lot of Mexican meals.

It's healthy, it's high protein, it's tasty, it's cheap. Invest.

### Simple Pinto Bean Recipes:

- Vegan Mexican Pinto Beans
- Vegan Pinto Bean Tacos

## 2. Lentils (9g protein per 100g)

Lentils are a vegans best friend. Extremely cheap and high in protein and fibre, lentils are easily prepared and a super easy way to pack out any salad or fill any wrap.

Drain a can of lentils, throw in a frying pan with some burrito spice mix and black beans, and enjoy an extremely easy protein snack or filler for any meal.



### Simple Lentil Recipes:

- Vegan Lentil Bolognese
- Chili Lime Lentil Tacos

### 3. Chickpeas (9g protein per 100g)

Chickpeas should take up at least half your basket during any supermarket shop, as they are one of the easiest ways to increase your protein through the day in many different ways and form.

The common can has 400 grams, meaning 36 grams of protein for less than \$0.50! It only gets better when you learn how easy it is to make an amazing hummus which can go with you to work or any adventure.



#### Simple Chickpea Recipes:

- Vegan Chickpea Hummus
- Vegan Chickpea Salad

### 4. Black Beans (9g protein per 100g)

These bone strengthening legumes pack a huge amount of protein in every can while costing next to nothing and complimenting almost anything!

Throw them in a frying pan with a can of lentils and some burrito mix for a quick protein snack or an awesome plant-based burrito filling.



#### Simple Black Bean Recipes:

- Vegan Black Bean Brownies
- Vegan Black Bean Burgers

### 5. Green Peas (5g protein per 100g)

The star of the majority of plant based proteins on the market in 2019 is the almighty fibre and antioxidant rich green pea, not to mention a decent amount of protein for a small vessel.

They're cheap, they last forever in the freezer, and they're ready to help you reach your daily protein goal.



#### Simple Green Pea Recipes:

- Vegan Green Pea Soup
- Vegan Rocket and Green Pea Risotto



# 5 OF THE HIGHEST RANKING NUTS AND SEEDS FOR VEGAN PROTEIN



## 1. Pumpkin Seeds (25g protein per 100g)

Pumpkins have been holding out on us, as it turns out their seeds are packed nutrients and goodness. These wondrous little seeds are high in magnesium, zinc, healthy fats, and yes, a huge amount of protein at 25 grams per 100 grams.

Several companies have started using these seeds as the chief ingredient in their vegan protein powders and it's easy to understand why.

### Simple Pumpkin Seed Recipes:

- Roasted Pumpkin Seeds
- Pumpkin Seed Crackers

## 2. Hemp Seeds (25g protein per 100g)

Hemp products are blowing up world wide and that includes these nutritious protein-filled dorsals of goodness. With a whopping 25 grams of protein per 100 grams, these seeds need to make a bigger appearance in your life.

Throw them in your smoothie bowls, cookies, cereal, oats or anything for that matter that needs a big protein punch.



### Simple Hemp Seed Recipes:

- Vegan Creamy Cauliflower and Hemp Alfredo Sauce
- Vegan Hemp Seed Muffins

### 3. Chia Seeds (16g protein per 100g)

Known for delivering a super amount of nutrition for so few calories, this super seed will give you much more than 16 grams of protein per 100 grams. Top up on fibre, magnesium and the all important Omega-3.

While we still recommending supplementing omega-3, chia seeds will help you top off your daily needs with a good dose of protein.



#### Simple Chia Seed Recipes:

- Vegan Chia Seed Pudding
- Chia Seed, Banana and Strawberry Smoothie

### 4. Flaxseeds (18g protein per 100g)

This super food is still not the biggest socialite and isn't known by most Americans, which is a shame as it's an absolute hidden gem. 18 grams of protein puts it in the top 5 high protein seeds, but flaxseeds deliver a lot more.

Buy them ground and throw them in just about anything.



#### Simple Flaxseed Recipes:

- Vegan Lentil Quinoa Loaf
- Vegan Black Bean Quinoa Burger

### 5. Almonds (21g protein per 100g)

Almonds are an athletes best friend, but usually not your banks. With a massive 21 grams of protein per 100 grams and a solid source of healthy fat, almonds should go with you wherever you go if you goal is to increase your protein intake.

It's recommended you keep it to a handful a day, but we won't tell anyone if you double that.



#### Simple Almond Recipes:

- Vegan Almond Feta Cheese
- Vegan Almond Dark Chocolate Bark



## 5 OF THE HIGHEST RANKING WHOLE GRAINS FOR VEGAN PROTEIN



### 1. Oats (17g protein per 100g)

These deliciously affordable whole grains are a secret source of protein that make the perfect breakfast all year round. Cold overnight oats in summer and hot boiled oats on the cold winter morning, make this both versatile and a great way to hit your daily protein goals.

If you want to up the protein, throw in a scoop of vanilla protein to make it both extra powerful and tasty.

#### Simple Oats Recipes:

- Vegan Peanut Butter Overnight Oats
- Vegan Oat Bar

### 2. Quinoa (4.5g protein per 100g)

Another super food to more recently join the hall of fame, quinoa has been putting rice to shame with 4.5 grams of protein and a good source of antioxidants. A nice dose of fibre and magnesium top this one off and put it in our top 5.



#### Simple Quinoa Recipes:

- Quinoa and White Bean Vegan Burger
- Vegan Fresh Quinoa Salad



### 3. Whole Wheat Pasta (6g protein per 100g)

You'll never look at pasta the same way after switching to whole wheat. Not only is it a much healthier option than standard kind, it's also packing in 6 grams of protein which combined with a vegan protein packed sauce (think TVP bolognese), will help you hit your daily protein goal with ease.



#### Simple Whole Wheat Pasta Recipes:

- Whole Wheat Pasta with Creamy Vegan Pesto
- Whole Wheat Pasta Mushroom Stir Fry

### 4. Couscous (3.8g protein per 100g)

So nice they named it twice, couscous is awesome filler for the big salad eaters or for those of you who enjoy a good curry. With a surprising amount of protein for a healthy wheat grain, a packet of couscous always deserves a spot in your cupboard.



#### Simple Couscous Recipes:

- Vegan Couscous Salad with Chickpeas
- Vegan Lentil Couscous Pattie

### 5. Buckwheat (3.4g protein per 100g)

Another wheat with a hidden protein punch, Buckwheat sneaks into the top 5 with 3.4 grams of protein per 100 grams and a solid foundation of nutritional goodness, including a good amount of fibre, magnesium, calcium and potassium.



#### Simple Buckwheat Recipes:

- Cashew Buckwheat Curry
- Vegan Buckwheat Crepes

## 2 MORE HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Both nutritional yeast and spirulina are high protein vegan foods.

Simply add some spirulina to your morning smoothie and add sprinkle some nutritional yeast on your lunch or dinner for a little extra protein boost!

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## WHAT ABOUT PROTEIN POWDERS?

We recommend trying to get the majority of your protein from a whole foods plant based diet.

However if you have specific protein requirements around your exercise goals or you're just having a hard time getting to your protein requirements with your daily food choices, a protein powder can be a great option.

We would recommend a pea or pumpkin seed based protein with at least 20 grams of protein per serving.

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## DO COMPLETE PROTEINS MATTER?

Amino acids for proteins that allow our cells to grow and complete protein sources are those that contain all 9 essential amino acids for this to happen.

The old school way of thinking was that you needed to consume a diet with complete proteins for every meal . However modern science has shown that this just isn't true.

You just need to ensure you get some of each of the amino acids over the course of the day. Here are a few handy tips to ensure you do this:

1. Quinoa and chia seeds are both complete proteins.
2. Rice and beans is a simple meal that makes a complete protein.
3. Eat a variety of different plant based whole foods.

Again if you're worried about this simply use Cronometer as featured in the above video to track your intake.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Protein deficiencies among vegans are few and far between with the proper knowledge of what food to eat.

If you have a concern or want to make sure you're hitting higher levels of protein for other reasons, simply track your food intake and adjust accordingly with more high protein vegan foods or a protein supplement.

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## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Heather Fields, Barbara Ruddy, Mark R. Wallace, Amit Shah, Denise Millstine, Lisa Marks. **How to Monitor and Advise Vegans to Ensure Adequate Nutrient Intake.** *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, 2016; 116 (2): 96 DOI: [10.7556/jaoa.2016.022](https://doi.org/10.7556/jaoa.2016.022)