

# Balance Your Vegetarian Plate



A vegetarian eating plan is one that excludes the consumption of meat, fish and poultry. If egg and dairy products are consumed, this is called a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet.

When following a vegetarian style of eating, it is just as important to consider what you “do” eat as what you “don’t” eat. For example, someone who doesn’t eat meat fish or poultry but only eats cheese and pasta—is technically following a vegetarian style of eating—just not a very balanced or nutritious diet.

You will want to include foods from all the major food groups represented on the plate, focusing on vegetables and fruits as the majority of your plate with moderate portions of foods high in protein and grains.

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.

## One serving equals:

- 1 whole egg
- 8 oz milk/soy milk or yogurt
- 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 cheese
- 2 Tbsp nut butter

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

## 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** — dairy products are your best source — aim for 2-3 servings of dairy or calcium fortified products such as juices and soy 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 milk, yogurt or fortified soy or rice milk daily then you are covered. If however this is a challenge for you, you should take a supplement. Vitamin D is challenging to get from diet alone and most people do not get the daily sun exposure needed to make enough of this vitamin.

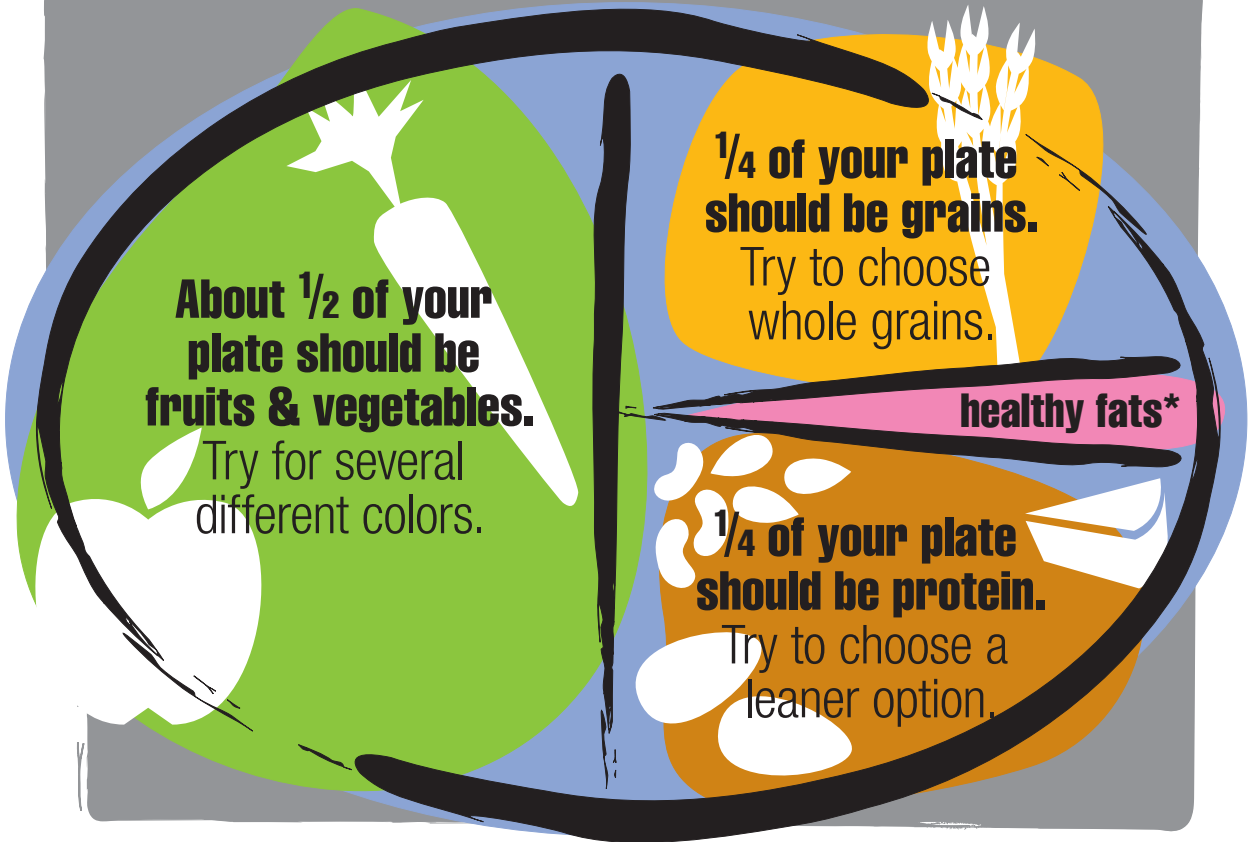
**Iron** — Iron is found in egg yolk, legumes, fortified grains and cereals, dark green veggies and tofu. Adding a food high in vitamin C at each meal will help you absorb the iron in that meal. (See list below)

## Foods high in Vitamin C

- Citrus fruits and juices (oranges, grapefruit, pineapple)
- Kiwi
- Strawberries
- Cantaloupe
- Baked potato
- Bell peppers
- Tomatoes and tomato products

Optimize your health and weight by following these suggestions for

# Balancing Your Vegetarian 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



## Meat Substitutes/ Dairy and Eggs

- Provide protein, fats and iron
- Include eggs, yogurt, milk, cheese, legumes, seeds, nuts and nut butters, soy



## Fats\*

- Yes! Your body needs fats to survive. Some fats are better than others. (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 in moderation.



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