

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

VEGGIE BURRITO BOWL



Protein is important for any diet. A regular supply is needed to make and repair cells, it helps fight infection, clot blood, carry vitamins and minerals around the body, and many more. Protein can be found in both animal and plant-based foods. Aiming for a variety of protein sources can aid in assisting you in getting a variety of other nutrients you need.

A heart healthy strategy is to eat a variety of foods to assure you get all the nutrients you need. Meeting your protein needs using a combination of foods, especially with plant-based proteins while keeping your consumption of animal proteins in check can assist with decreasing your overall intake of saturated fat, which is typically found in animal products while consuming sources of fiber (from plants). The recommended daily intake for protein varies based on overall health and wellness goals, current health state, activity level, age, and overall body weight.

Many plant-based proteins are considered a 'good source of protein' as defined by the FDA. Which means they contain between 10% and 19% of the Daily Recommended Value per the Regular Amount Commonly Consumed of that item. These include tofu, edamame, various varieties of legumes such as lentils and dried beans, nutritional yeast, and others. In addition, numerous plant-based proteins also are great sources of fiber.

A benefit to including more plant-based proteins in your diet is that they are flexible. Tofu and seitan can be used in place of any meat in a dish. Nutritional yeast can be included in eggs, pasta and mashed potatoes as it has a somewhat cheesy flavor. Lentils and other legumes and beans can be incorporated into side dishes.

This week take one plant-based protein and swap it for an animal-based one or use it to enhance your meal with additional protein as listed above. The more you use one of these products, the more variety you can bring into your meal planning. Many cultures use primarily plant-based proteins, such as Indian, and this exercise will make you more familiar with some of those ingredients making it less intimidating to try new dishes.

For those that choose to consume animal proteins, consider adding a sprinkle of cheese or an ounce or two of lean grilled chicken to increase the amount of protein in this meal.

MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Protein 13 g | Fat 2 g | Carbs 53 g

% CALORIES OF MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Calories 265 | Protein 18 % | Fat 8 % | Carbs 74 %

NUTRIENT / SERVING SIZE:

Fiber 13 g | Sodium 485 mg | Sat. Fat 0 g

DIRECTIONS:

1. Begin preparing the instant brown rice according to package instructions.
2. While the rice is cooking, add to a very large bowl all of the remaining ingredients and then toss gently to mix all the ingredients.
3. Evenly distribute the rice between 4 bowls. Top each bowl of rice with 1/4th of the bean mixture and serve.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

- 1 ½ cups instant brown rice
- 1-14-15 oz. can of low sodium kidney beans or black beans (drained and rinsed)
- 1-14-oz can of low sodium or no added salt whole kernel corn
- ½ of red onion diced
- ½ packet taco seasoning
- ¾ cup celery, chopped
- 1 English Cucumber (cut into bite sized pieces)
- 12-14 oz. dark leafy greens (baby spinach, baby kale, or spring mix)
- 3 tbsp. fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 tsp. hot sauce
- 1/3 cup salsa

DIETITIAN TIP

Protein has gotten a lot of attention lately as an important nutrient in our diets. Most healthy Americans can meet their needs by consuming a variety of foods because beans (legumes), vegetables, and grains, also provide some protein so there is no need to eat large portions of meat. Most adults should aim to consume at least 20-30 grams of protein at each meal using a variety of foods from multiple food groups and if you choose to consume animal proteins, aim to keep the portions in check at 3-4 oz consumed in combination with other food groups.



A list of recipes on [commissaries.com/healthy living](https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living) also has nutrition education.