

Vegetarian or Vegan Eating

Protein needs:

- Protein needs are approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ gram per pound of body weight. Growing athletes may need up to 1 gram of protein per pound.
- Protein is best utilized when distributed throughout the day. A general recommendation is 20-30 gm (or more) per meal. Include protein at snacks, as well.
- High protein vegetarian foods are eggs, dairy, legumes, and nuts—try to include some at each meal. Note that vegetables and grains contain protein, but fruits are low in protein.
- Look at food labels or online data for more info on protein content.
- Complementation—soy, dairy and eggs contain more “complete” protein. Other legumes “complement” nuts, seeds, and grains. Usually complementation is not a concern if a variety of foods are consumed each day.

Lacto-ovo foods:

• Eggs (1 egg or 2 egg whites)	7
• Milk, regular yogurt (8 oz)	8
• Cottage cheese ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	15
• Greek yogurt ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	10
• Cheese (1 oz, approx 1 slice)	7

Protein content (grams):

Plant-based foods:

• Soymilk (8 oz)	8
• Nuts and seeds (1 oz or approx $\frac{1}{4}$ cup)	6
• Peanut butter (1 T)	4
• Cooked dried beans or lentils, peas, dal, tofu ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	7
• Veggie burger	5-15
• Protein bar	10-30
• Seitan or tempeh ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup or 3-4 oz)	21-28
• Almond milk, rice milk	1
• Vegetables ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup or 1 cup leafy)	2
• Bread (1 oz, approx 1 slice)	3
• Grains ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked) or quinoa	3 or 4
• Fruits	Low

Sample vegan menu:

Total daily protein: 86 grams

• Breakfast—peanut butter, 2 pieces toast, 1 cup soymilk	22
• Lunch—1 c chili, 1 c pasta, salad with cashews	24
• Snack— $\frac{1}{2}$ c hummus and crackers	10
• Dinner—1 c split pea soup, veggie stir-fry with tofu, 1 cup rice	<u>30</u>

Micronutrients:

- Vitamin B12—low in any unfortified vegan diet. A multivitamin or single Vitamin B12 supplement is recommended (50-100 micrograms daily is ample, but a higher dose can be used on a weekly basis).
- Vitamin D—low in any diet. The RDA is 600 IU/day, but up to 3000 IU as a daily average is considered safe.
- Calcium—low if no dairy products or fortified foods such as soymilk are included. The RDA is 1000 mg/day from all sources.
- Iron—low in many food patterns. Good sources are legumes, fortified cereals and fortified grains. Supplements may be needed for runners and for people who menstruate.

Resources:

- **The Starving Students' Vegetarian Cookbook**, by Dede Hall
- **Vegan Meals for One or Two**, by Chef Nancy Berkoff, a cookbook for college students living on their own, published by **The Vegetarian Resource Group**, www.vrg.org