

# The Plant-Based Protein Cheat Sheet





Hi,

I'm **MATT FRAZIER**, co-founder of **Complement**, founder of *No Meat Athlete*, and The New York Times bestselling author of *The Plant-Based Athlete*.



In this guide, I share a grocery list of protein-rich plant foods and provide a few recipes demonstrating how to use them.

But before we get to that list, let's try to answer the big question you're probably asking yourself:

## **How much protein do I really need?** **The answer is not as much as people would have you believe.**

For example, the U.S. recommended daily allowance of protein is .8 grams per kilogram of body weight (.36 grams per pound) for the general population.

**Protein for vegan athletes** is somewhat more complicated, as greater tissue repair requires more protein.

Several sources cite a **study** that concluded endurance athletes benefit most from 1.2 to 1.4 daily grams per kilogram of body weight, while strength athletes do best with 1.4 to 1.8 grams per kilogram. In pounds, that's .54 to .63 grams per pound for endurance athletes and .63 to .81 grams per pound for strength athletes.

Studies also show that people **over age 65 need slightly more protein** to preserve muscle mass.

Let's break that guidance down, using a 140-pound runner as an example.

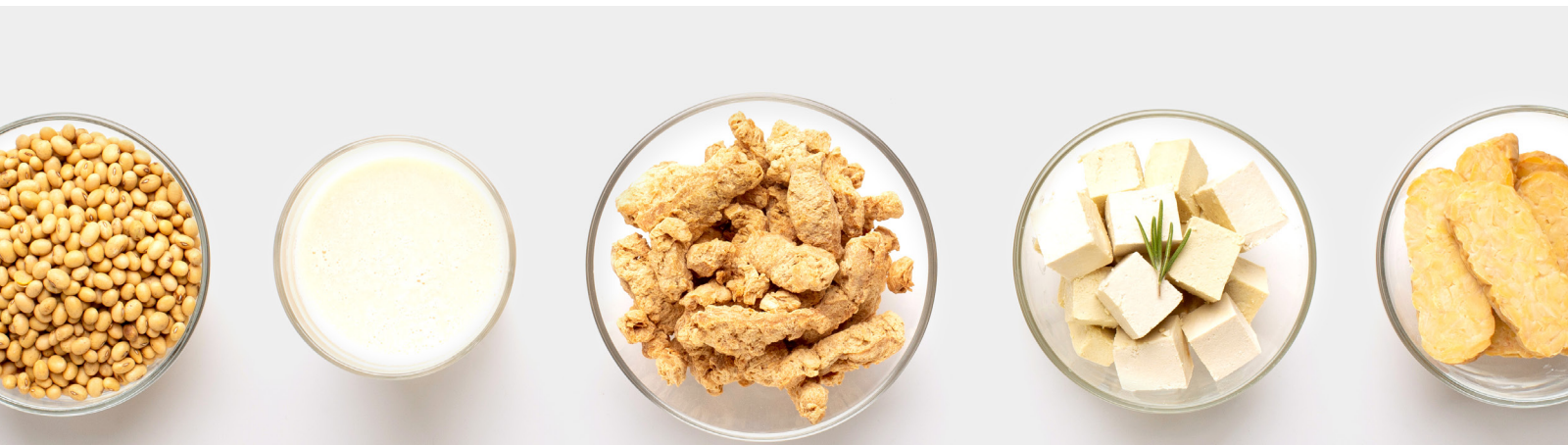
We'll split the daily protein range for endurance athletes in the middle and aim for .59 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight:

**140 pounds \* .59 grams/pound = 83 grams of protein per day.**

Keep in mind that's for a 140-pound endurance athlete, so you'll need to plug in your own weight and, if you do a strength sport, use a different protein figure.

83 grams for this example runner is probably not as much as you might have thought, and wouldn't be difficult to get through a well-rounded plant-based diet.

Still, ensuring you meet your protein requirements is incredibly important, and diversifying your protein sources to ensure a complete amino acid profile is equally critical.



## Understanding Amino Acids

All protein is not created equally. Protein is made up of amino acids, and there are certain ones, called “essential,” which your body cannot produce on its own and must get through food.

As long as you're eating a wide variety of whole foods — a good practice to follow for many reasons — you're probably getting a nice mix of amino acids. One, though, that's particularly tough for vegetarians and vegans to get, is lysine, as explained in this article on protein from [Vegan Health](#).

Only a few vegan foods contain lysine in large amounts, but fortunately, they're staples in many of our diets: tempeh, tofu, and legumes. If you don't eat beans or soy, because of allergies or some other reason, you'll need to pay special attention to lysine, and it might be worth considering a protein complement.

With the above in mind, let's dig into the high-protein plant foods you can find at just about any grocery store.



## Nuts and Seeds

Food	Serving Size	Calories (Cal)	Protein (G)	Calories from Protein
<b>Peanuts Without Shells</b>	1 oz	164	10	24%
<b>Black Walnuts</b>	1 oz	173	7	16%
<b>Hemp Seeds</b>	1 oz	162	10	25%
<b>Flax Seed</b>	1 oz	110	3.8	14%
<b>Chia Seed</b>	1 oz	138	4.7	14%
<b>Almonds</b>	1 oz	161	6	14%
<b>Cashews</b>	1 oz	156	5	13%
<b>Pistachios</b>	1 oz	158	5	13%





# Vegetables

Food	Serving Size	Calories (Cal)	Protein (G)	Calories from Protein
Spinach, Cooked	1 cup	41	5	49%
Asparagus	1 cup	27	3	44%
Broccoli	1 cup	31	2.6	34%
Brussels Sprouts	1 cup	38	3	32%
Peas	1 cup	118	8	27%
Sun-Dried Tomatoes	1 cup	139	8	23%





## Bread, Grains and Pasta

Food	Serving Size	Calories (Cal)	Protein (G)	Calories from Protein
Seitan	½ cup	180	31.5	70%
Oat Bran, Cooked	½ cup	44	3.5	32%
Whole Wheat Pasta, Cooked	½ cup	87	3.5	16%
Buckwheat Flour	½ cup	291.5	11.5	16%
Wheat Flour	½ cup	203.5	8	16%
Quinoa, Cooked	½ cup	111	4	14%
Oats, Cooked	½ cup	153.5	5.5	14%





## Beans and Legumes

Food	Serving Size	Calories (Cal)	Protein (G)	Calories from Protein
<b>Tempeh</b>	½ cup	160	15.5	39%
<b>Soy beans</b>	½ cup	127	11	35%
<b>Brown lentils</b>	½ cup	115	9	31%
<b>Red lentils</b>	½ cup	115	9	31%
<b>Green lentils</b>	½ cup	115	9	31%
<b>Kidney beans</b>	½ cup	109.5	8	29%
<b>Split peas</b>	½ cup	115.5	8	28%
<b>Lima beans</b>	½ cup	108.5	7.5	28%
<b>Black beans</b>	½ cup	113.5	7.5	26%
<b>Black-eyed peas</b>	½ cup	99	6.5	26%
<b>Tofu</b>	½ cup	94	6	26%
<b>Pinto beans</b>	½ cup	122.5	7.5	24%
<b>Navy beans</b>	½ cup	127.5	7.5	24%





# Protein Powder

Food	Serving Size	Calories (Cal)	Protein (G)	Calories from Protein
Pea Protein	1 oz	103	24	93%
Brown Rice Protein	1 oz	110	15	55%
Hemp Protein	1 oz	113	13	46%
Watermelon	1 oz	160	10	25%
Pumpkin	1 oz	126	5	16%
Almond	1 oz	161	6	14%
Chia	1 oz	138	4.7	14%



## A word on protein powder.

Protein powders can play an important role in a plant-based eater's diet. Whether you're an athlete, an adult over a certain age, or simply an active person looking for a little peace of mind, getting a serving or two per day from protein powder is an easy way to hit your goals.

If you plan to use protein powder, I'll offer two important suggestions:

- 1 • Be careful about **what's in your protein powder** (watch out for heavy metals, fillers, sweeteners, and common allergens), and
- 2 • Make it a complete protein. Many protein powders use just one ingredient (pea) or "proprietary blends" that don't tell you how much of each ingredient is included. If you're going to add 15-20 grams of protein through protein powder, I recommend using that as an opportunity to get each of the essential amino acids.

## Do more with your protein.

**5** organic, real food protein ingredients to mix, blend, or bake into anything.

**SHOP NOW**



Here's a look at the benefits of a few popular plant-based protein powders, including ours, Complement Protein:



# Protein Powder Continued...



**Made with real food ingredients only.**



**100% certified organic.**



**3rd party tested, transparent production.**



**Free of additives or fillers.**



**Free of sketchy “natural flavors.”**



**Free of misleading protein “blends.”**



**CA’s Prop 65 standards for heavy metals.**



**30+ servings per package.**



**Biodegradable packaging.**



**Cost per serving.**

**\$1.67**

**\$2.47**

**\$1.60**

**\$1.92**



# Plant-Based Protein Bowl Recipe



## Ingredients:

- ¼ recipe sour cream (see recipe below) – 7 g
- ½ cup (cooked) kasha – 9.5 g
- ½ cup (cooked) black beans – 7.5 g
- ½ cup corn – 2.5 g
- ½ cup red peppers – 3 g
- ½ small avocado – 1 g
- ½ cup sweet potato – 1 g

## Sunflower Seed Sour Cream Recipe:

- 1 cup raw sunflower seeds (soaked, hot soaked or boiled and rinsed)
- ½ cup water
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp apple cider vinegar
- ½ tsp salt





## Directions:

### • Sweet Potatoes:

Chop into 1/2 inch cubes and mix with either 2 tsp of olive oil or place directly on parchment paper if roasting with no oil. Bake at 400 F for 25-30 mins, stirring halfway through. Note: I tend to pre-prepare lots of sweet potatoes ahead on the weekend so they are ready to just re-heat and eat during the week without having to take the time to roast.

### • Kasha:

Cook 1 cup of kasha (toasted buckwheat) in 2 cups of water or veggie stock. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer with the lid on until all the liquid is absorbed. This should take about 12 minutes.

### • Assembly:

Place desired amount of cooked kasha to bowl, then add cooked and strained black beans and corn, raw red peppers, and avocado.

### • Drizzle Sunflower Seed Sour Cream on top:

Toss all the ingredients in a high powered blender and whiz for 2 mins until well-blended. You might need to scrape down the sides with a spatula. Make sure it is smooth and creamy and well-blended. Add additional salt if needed.

**This sour cream is so delicious and you can use it on your bowls, your baked potatoes, and your vegan tacos and nachos.**



## Tip:

Did you know that sunflower seeds make a great, lower-cost swap for cashews? And they are higher in protein and better for the environment too.





# Apple Pie Energy Ball Recipe



## Ingredients:

- 5 Large Medjool Date, pitted
- ½ C **Complement Protein**
- ½ C Unsweetened Applesauce
- 1 Tsp Cinnamon
- 1 Tsp Maple Syrup (omit if using sweetened applesauce)
- ½ Tsp Vanilla Extract
- ½ C Walnuts

**Yields: 12 balls**



## Directions:

- 1** • Blend in a food processor until finely ground.
- 2** • Scoop palm-sized/golf-ball-sized handfuls, roll into a ball and freeze.
- 3** • Top with cashew frosting, if desired.





# Mexican Sliders Recipe



## Ingredients:

- 1 can pinto beans
- 1/2 cup onion
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 cups of veggies: 1 cup canned yellow corn, 2/3 cup sweet red pepper, 1/3 cup packed spinach
- 3 tablespoons liquid: 1 tablespoon lime juice (1/2 a lime), 2 tablespoons red prepared salsa
- 4 teaspoons spice: 2 tsp cumin, 2 tsp chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup dry ingredient: cornmeal
- 1/2 cup texture ingredients: 1/4 cup cilantro, 1/4 cup white rice

**Yields: 18 small patties**



## Directions:

- 1** • Heat 2 teaspoons oil in a pan over medium heat. Fry the onion, veggies, and garlic until softened, about 5 minutes.
- 2** • Transfer to a food processor and pulse with beans, liquid flavor, spice, salt until combined but still chunky. Pulse in the dry base and texture ingredient.
- 3** • Form into golf ball size balls and flatten into patties.
- 4** • Heat 2 tablespoons oil over medium-high heat. Fry patties 2-3 minutes per side until browned and heated through.



# Protein Smoothie Bowl



## Ingredients:

### Base:

- 3 frozen bananas
- Taro powder
- Splash of oat milk to blend
- ¼ cup **Complement Protein** powder

### Topping:

- GF granola
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Figs
- Sliced banana
- Peanut butter
- Melted vegan dark chocolate



## Directions:

- 1 • Blend all base ingredients into a creamy texture.
- 2 • Top it all off with your choice of toppings.





# Peanut Butter Tofu with Snow Peas



## Ingredients:

- One carton extra-firm tofu (14 ounces)
- 1 tsp coconut oil or other cooking oil
- 1/2 lb Asian noodles, like soba
- 1 cup snow peas or snap peas, trimmed
- 2 tsp curry paste
- 1/2 cup coconut milk (or sub other milk and coconut oil)
- 2 Tbsp fresh lime juice
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1/2 cup peanut butter

**Serves: 4 Servings**



## Directions:

- 1 •** Cut the tofu block into two slabs, then cover on all sides with lots of paper towels and set some plates or a skillet on top to weigh it down and remove water. Let sit for 15-20 minutes, then cube the tofu.
- 2 •** Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Lightly salt and add snow peas for 30 seconds; remove and set aside. Cook the noodles according to the package directions; when they're done, drain and rinse them in cold water to stop the cooking and set them aside.
- 3 •** In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat the oil. Add the tofu cubes, turning after about two minutes and repeating until each side is lightly browned. Lightly sprinkle with salt and remove from heat, but you'll be adding the sauce to the pan with the tofu.
- 4 •** While you're searing the tofu, whisk together the peanut butter and coconut milk in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the curry paste (you may want more or less, to taste), soy sauce, lime juice, and sugar and whisk to combine.
- 5 •** Dump the sauce into the tofu pan and add the noodles and snap peas. Let the flavors combine over medium heat for a minute or two before serving.

**So here's the recipe I've used, just in case you still have some semblance of an appetite. I really liked the peanut butter sauce; substituting almond milk and coconut oil seemed to work just fine in it.**



## Tip:

**Peanut butter** can be a great addition to any healthy diet. It's rich in macronutrients like protein and health fats, and contains a variety of beneficial vitamins and minerals. If possible when selecting a peanut butter, choose a natural peanut butter with minimal ingredients and no added oil.







# Simple, ugly, vegan curry.



## Ingredients:

- 1 large sweet or yellow onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 6-8 white or brown mushrooms, sliced
- 1-2 jars of red or green curry paste (112 gram jars)
- 1 small can coconut milk (200mL)
- 1 veggie boullion cube
- 1/4 cup **Complement Protein**
- 2 medium-large sweet potatoes, chopped
- 1 large eggplant, chopped
- 1 cauliflower, chopped
- 2 leave kale or 2 handfuls spinach, thinly sliced
- 1-2 tbsp peanuts (for topping)
- 3-4 sprigs fresh cilantro (for garnish)



### Directions:

- 1 •** Bring pot to medium heat, then add onions, mushrooms and garlic. Let sauté, and add a bit of water to de-glaze the bottom of the pot.
- 2 •** After 5 minutes, add the curry paste, coconut milk, bouillon cube and a cup of water. Stir until mixed evenly.
- 3 •** Add the sweet potatoes, eggplant, and Complement Protein. Add water until the veggies are just covered.
- 4 •** Bring to a boil, and then turn down to simmer for 30 minutes.
- 5 •** Add in the cauliflower and greens. Let simmer another 5 minutes.
- 6 •** To serve, lay down some pre-cooked brown rice or any other grain (or not), add curry, and top with peanuts and cilantro!

**It only takes about 10 minutes to prep!**



### Tip:

While it may not look like the rainbow, this quick curry recipe is packed with an array of healthy, nutrient-rich ingredients.

It even calls for a 1/4 cup of unflavored **Complement Protein** to thicken the curry and add an extra boost of complete protein.







## 5-Minute Protein Hummus



### Ingredients:

- 1 (15 oz) can of chickpeas (or 2 cups of cooked chickpeas), save the liquid
- 1 tbsp tahini and/or miso paste
- 1 or 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 lemon, or 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup of chickpea liquid
- 1 tbsp of **Complement Protein**
- 1-2 tbsp of olive oil (optional)
- Salt to taste
- Optional: 1 tsp smoked paprika or dill



### Directions:

Throw all ingredients into your food processor. Pulse a few times, then let it run. Turning off to scrape down the sides a few times.



# Sardinian White Bean Dip



## Ingredients:

- 1 medium clove of garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cans (or 3 cups cooked) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed (almost any bean will work, so feel free to try others)
- Juice of one medium lemon (about 3 tablespoons)
- 1-2 teaspoons dried herbs (any you like -- I usually use an Italian blend plus fennel seeds)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (If you don't mind oil, you can use up to a quarter-cup for a richer spread. If you want to it to be totally oil-free, substitute liquid from the beans or water.)



## Directions:

- 1 •** Use a food processor or blender to first mince the garlic, then add all remaining ingredients except for oil (or your substitute liquid) and pulse to form a very rough paste.
- 2 •** Then, with the motor running, stream in the oil or other liquid with the motor running. Do it quickly so that the spread retains a bit of texture.
- 3 •** Serve with veggies or pita wedges, or spread on pizza crust, bagels, or just about anything else where you want to add some heft and nutrition.





## White Bean and Green Dip



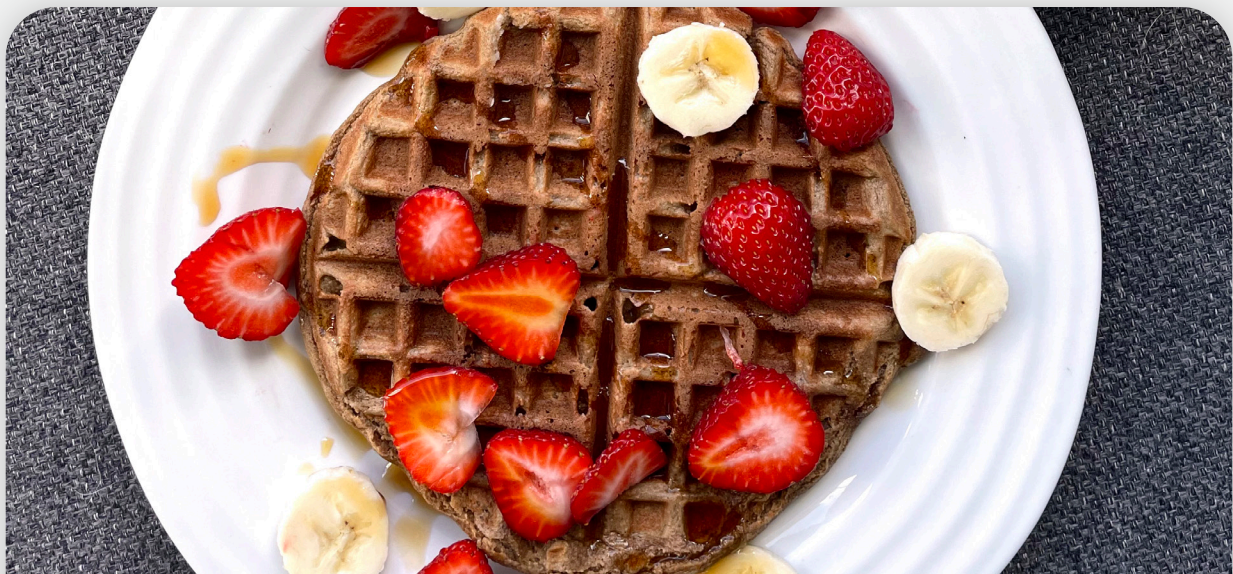
### Ingredients:

- 2 cups white beans, rinsed
- 3/4 cup nutritional yeast
- 1/4 cup **Complement Protein**
- 2 cloves garlic
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp onion powder
- 3 cups spinach
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp balsamic reduction (or maple syrup)
- 1/2 cup or more of water or unflavored/unsweetened plant milk (depending on how thick or runny you want it)



### Directions:

- 1** • Blend all ingredients until smooth (in your blender or food processor)
- 2** • Dip with your fave crackers, spread, or thin it out a bit more with veggie stalk and use as a pasta sauce!



# Vegan Banana Oat Pumpkin Waffles (or Pancakes!)



## Ingredients:

### 5-6 waffles:

- 3 cups oats (blend to a flour first)
- 2 bananas
- 3/4 cup pumpkin purée
- 1 tbsp of cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 cup **Complement Protein**
- Oat milk to blend



## Directions:

- 1 • Blend oats to a flour.
- 2 • Add all other ingredients and mix.
- 3 • Heat up your non stick waffle maker.
- 4 • Add 1/2 cup for each waffle.
- 5 • Top with maple syrup and fruit!





# Pumpkin Spice Smoothie



## Ingredients:

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 serving **Complement Protein**
- 1 tbsp ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 2 cups unsweetened nondairy milk



## Directions:

Add all the ingredients to a high-speed blender and blend until totally smooth. Feel free to add a few dates or some date syrup if you'd like a bit more sweetness, pour into a jar, and enjoy immediately!

# Let's connect.

Want more resources and information about how to optimize your plant-based diet? **Let's connect through the links below.**

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