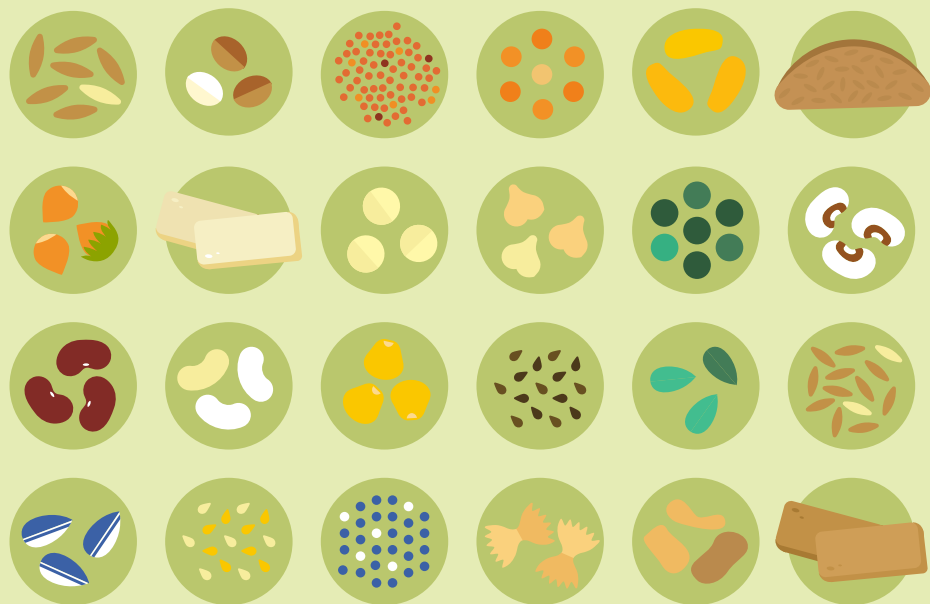




Cooking plant-based: how to get enough protein



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Good for you & good for the planet!

Reducing meat consumption to include more plant foods **can benefit both our health and the planet.**

Plant-based diets based on whole plant foods such as pulses, fruit and vegetables, nuts and seeds tend to be **lower in saturated fat and salt, and richer in fibre.** They also have a lower impact on the environment due to their **low greenhouse gas emissions.**

Whether you wish to transition to a fully plant-based diet or simply incorporate more plant foods in your day-to-day, this factsheet will be a **useful guide to get you started on your journey.**

Can you get enough protein from plant foods?

Getting enough quality protein from plants is possible and there are many options you can opt for: from pulses and whole grains to meat substitutes. The key is to make sure to **combine and vary different sources** throughout the day.

How much do we need?

The general recommendation for healthy adults is to eat **at least 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of weight.** However, requirements vary for everyone.

What can a day look like?*

*to reach 52 g of protein, based on the average protein requirements for a 65 kg adult.



oatmeal (40 g of oats) with soy drink (200 ml) & 1 tbsp of flax seeds



2 bean burgers (80 g), 4 tbsp of rice, varied veggies





lentil soup (200 ml), 2 slices of whole grain bread, 2 tbsp of hummus & 1 mandarin





soy yoghurt, a handful of walnuts & 1 banana


How much protein is in soy products

 tempeh (cooked)
50 g ≈ 3 thin slices
10.3 g of protein

 edamame beans (frozen)
80 g ≈ 6-7 tbsp
9.8 g of protein

 tofu (steamed)
100 g ≈ 2 slices
8.1 g of protein

 soy yoghurt (plain)
125 ml ≈ 1 small/5 tbsp
5 g of protein

 soy drink
(unsweetened & fortified)
200 ml ≈ 1 glass
4.8 g of protein


Soy is a **high-quality plant protein** as it contains a good balance of essential amino acids & tends to be well digested by our body.





When choosing soy-based alternatives to dairy, opt for those that are **fortified with no added sugars**.

How much protein is in pulses

 blackeye beans
80 g ≈ 5-6 tbsp
7 g of protein


 red kidney beans
80 g ≈ 5-6 tbsp
6.9 g of protein

 white beans
80 g ≈ 5-6 tbsp
6.9 g of protein

 lupine
40 g ≈ 4 tbsp
6.6 g of protein

 lentils
80 g ≈ 5-6 tbsp
6.4 g of protein

 chickpeas
80 g ≈ 4 tbsp
6.2 g of protein

 green peas (frozen)
80 g ≈ 8 tbsp
4.4 g of protein

*all values refer to pulses boiled from dried

Soaking dry pulses prior to cooking helps to improve their digestibility.



The secrets to tastier tofu

- 1** select the right texture
firm or soft, depending on the kind of recipe
- 2** press it (15 min) or freeze it to get rid of moisture & allow it to absorb flavours
- 3** marinate it
in a water-based marinade, between 1 hour & 1 day
- 4** bake it, fry it or cook it in a sauce
it is extremely versatile!



Tofu is also a **source of calcium**, which is important for those who exclude dairy from their diets.

3 ways of cooking dry pulses*

*cooking times vary for each type of pulses & cooking method



soak in water overnight then drain, rinse & cook in fresh water

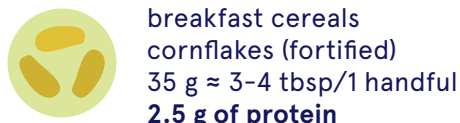
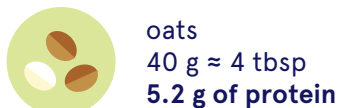
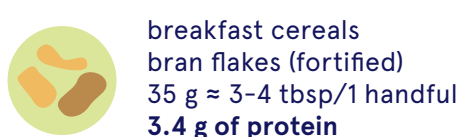
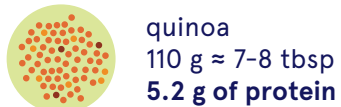
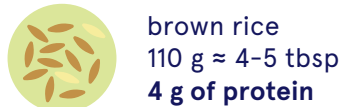
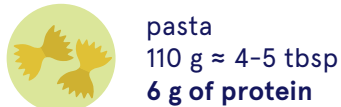
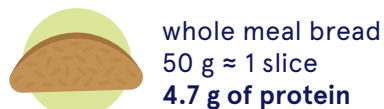
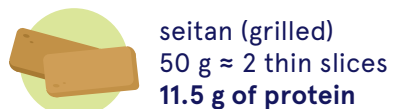


boil, cool & drain then boil again in fresh water



cook them in a pressure cooker

How much protein is in cereals & whole grains



*all values refer to boiled cereals & whole grains

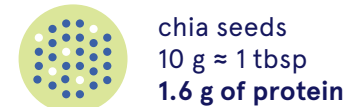
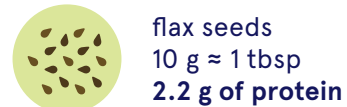
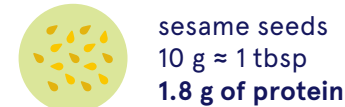
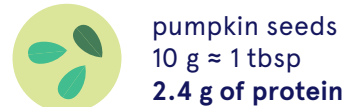
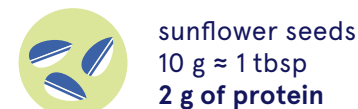
Look for **fortified cereal-based products** to help increase your intake of B-vitamins, iron, vitamin B12 & calcium.

Pair your plant-based meals with vitamin-C rich foods. It will help increase your iron absorption from pulses, whole grains & other vegetable sources!



Cereals & legumes are a great match: include them both to optimise your intake of essential amino acids!

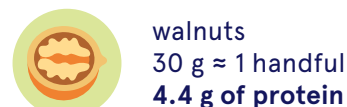
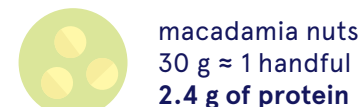
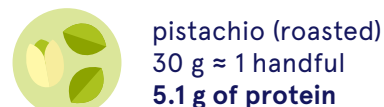
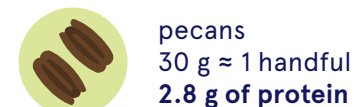
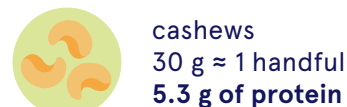
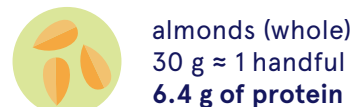
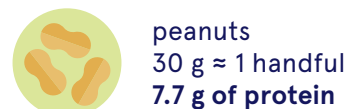
How much protein is in seeds



Nuts & seeds contain protein, but due to their high content in fats & energy, they should be **eaten in moderation.**



How much protein is in nuts



Values used in this factsheet were adapted from: McCance and Widdowson's Composition of Foods Integrated Dataset & EuroFIR food composition database.