

9 TIPS

for Going Plant-Based

A Beginner's Guide



Dole

Hello, there!

I heard you're trying to incorporate more fruits and veggies into your diet. Way to go! You're already making a positive step towards a healthier and happier you.

Are you ready to make changes to the way you eat, but feeling overwhelmed by all of the advice out there and wondering where to even start? Whether you are interested in improving your nutrition for better overall health or **if your end goal is to go plant-based**, making the change can be a daunting task. But it doesn't need to be—**it's something that you can do one meal at a time!** Read on for simple and tasty strategies to start incorporating more whole foods like fruits and vegetables into meals.

- **Melanie Marcus, MA, RD**
Dole Food Company, Inc.



1



Start by looking at what foods you can add.

Which meals do you and your family already love? Are mac & cheese, meatloaf and pizza on the list? **Let's see how we can add more plants!** Try adding chopped steamed broccoli into the cheese sauce, add sautéed peppers and onions to your meatloaf, and pop open a salad kit to go along with pizza night. Voilà! Plant-forward dinners are served.

Want to learn more?

Butternut Squash Mac & Cheese

Scan the QR Code or visit [Dole.com](https://www.dole.com) for this recipe & more!



Quick Tip:

Boost the nutritional content of your mac and cheese by adding pureed butternut squash. Not only does it lend a creamy texture and vibrant orange color, but it also sneaks in an extra serving of veggies that you'll absolutely love!



2

Then pick just one vegetable.

During your first week so you **don't overwhelm yourself**, stick with just one. Think about how you could take a head of cauliflower and try incorporating it a bunch of different ways. You could roast it whole as an entrée, or you could mash it like potatoes for a tasty side dish. You'll gain a comfort level for what to do with it, so it doesn't seem foreign.

Want to learn more?

Air Fryer Buffalo Mushrooms

Scan the QR Code or visit Dole.com for this recipe & more!



Quick Tip:

While mushrooms do not offer a protein equivalent of meat, they do provide a “meaty” texture and impart a satisfying flavor known as “umami”.

With just 15 calories per cup, raw chopped or sliced mushrooms serve as a good source of selenium, an antioxidant that may help reduce the risk of chronic diseases.



3

Do a little research.



Pick three new (plant-forward) **recipes that you really get excited about**. Commit to trying them and then add them to the rotation. Going vegan or vegetarian can require different cooking skills, so **it's best to start slowly**.

Want to learn more?

Cauliflower Parmesan

Scan the QR Code or visit [Dole.com](https://www.dole.com) for this recipe & more!



Quick Tip:

Want to amp up the veggies in this dish? Slice and roast a pan of eggplant and mushrooms with olive oil to serve as a side!



4

Stick to what you know how to make.

Especially in the beginning! If you have chicken salad on repeat for a quick lunch, why not try using mashed chickpeas instead? And if sandwiches are on rotation, we've got you covered with our Banana Peel Bacon BLTs! These sandwiches, using kitchen staples including bananas, tomatoes, and arugula, couldn't be easier to make!

Want to learn more?

Banana Peel Bacon BLTs

Scan the QR Code or visit [Dole.com](https://www.dole.com) for this recipe & more!

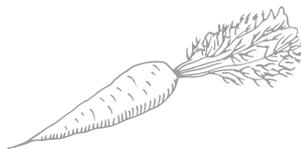


Quick Tip:

Check out our Chickpea Wraps with Carrot "Bacon" for another flavorful and vegetarian lunch option!



5



Lean on your grocery store for meal prep.

Will **buying a premade mirepoix** (chopped carrots, celery and onions) make a quick minestrone soup come to life for you? Can you sauté a bag of pre-washed baby spinach with garlic and olive oil as a simple side? Most grocery stores even offer fresh pre-spiralized zucchini that can be enjoyed alone or even served with spaghetti to sneak in another serving of produce!

Want to learn more?

Five-Star Vegan Cheese Spread

Scan the QR Code or visit [Dole.com](https://www.dole.com) for this recipe & more!



Quick Tip:

Save time cleaning and prepping vegetables by picking up a veggie tray!

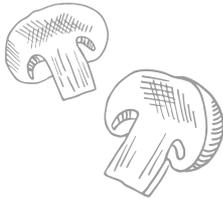
You'll get a variety of cleaned and prepped vegetables that can be eaten raw, sautéed or steamed. Instant meal prep. Enjoy! :)



6

Substitute, in full or partially!

Take a meal your family already loves like turkey meatballs or baked ziti and **substitute half of the ground meat** with diced mushrooms or lentils.



Want to learn more?

Rotini Lentil Bolognese
Scan the QR Code or visit [Dole.com](https://www.dole.com)
for this recipe & more!



Quick Tip:

Lentils are packed with protein—just one cup contains 18 grams. They're also a great source of complex carbohydrates and fiber to provide you with plenty of energy and fill you up without filling you out. They are extremely versatile and are commonly used as the main ingredient in curries, soups, and stews.



7

Jump in on the “bowl” craze.

Literally, **grab your favorite bowl, start with a base of greens, and add from there!** You could create a cold Buddha bowl with other vegetables and proteins, or add cooked brown rice and curry for a warm option.

Want to learn more?

All-American Burger Bowl
Scan the QR Code or visit [Dole.com](https://www.dole.com)
for this recipe & more!



Quick Tip:
Explore other “base” options for your bowls. Think cauliflower rice, quinoa or leftover sauteed vegetables!



8

Remember that whole grains are plants, too!

Oatmeal, quinoa, and farro are great additions to make-at-home meals, and they're particularly easy to have for breakfast!

Want to learn more?

Wake Up Oats

Scan the QR Code or visit [Dole.com](https://www.dole.com) for this recipe & more!



Quick Tip:

Rolled and quick oats are the best option to use for no-cook overnight oats. Save steel cut oats for cooking on the stovetop as they take longer to become soft and creamy.



9

Be sure to get enough protein!

When going plant-based it's easy to eliminate animal proteins and substitute them with vegetables. But, **if you don't add plant sources of protein, you will feel unsatisfied.** Turn to beans, tofu, nuts, seeds, and lentils if you're looking for plant-based options!



Want to learn more?

Tofu Katsu with Citrus-Soy Cabbage Salad

Scan the QR Code or visit [Dole.com](https://www.dole.com) for this recipe & more!



Quick Tip:

While quinoa is technically a seed, it is most often used like a grain in the kitchen. One half-cup serving has 7 to 9 grams of protein. Substitute quinoa for rice or pasta, mix it into a salad, or try it for breakfast topped with almond milk and berries.



Meal Plan

Week 1

Monday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Tuesday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Wednesday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Thursday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Friday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Saturday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Sunday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____



Meal Plan

Week 2

Monday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Tuesday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Wednesday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Thursday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Friday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Saturday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Sunday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____



Meal Plan

Week 3



Monday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Tuesday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Wednesday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____



Thursday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Friday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Saturday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Sunday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____



Meal Plan

Week 4

Monday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Tuesday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Wednesday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Thursday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Friday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Saturday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____

Sunday

- **Breakfast** _____
- **Lunch** _____
- **Dinner** _____
- **Snack** _____
- **Fruit/Veg to add** _____



sup**P**orts immunity
hea**L**thy weight
Antioxidant-rich
lo**N**gevity
hea**T** health



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Before You Go...

Remember, you don't have to have a complete overhaul of your diet all at once. Start small by adding a serving of fruits or veggies to your meals, and gradually increase over time. Mix it up with different preparation methods, too. Experiment with grilling, roasting, or blending into a smoothie.

You've got this! Let's make those meals more colorful and delicious together.

In good health,

Melanie