

# The Hearty Vegetarian

Preparing plant-based dishes and snacks that pack a protein punch.

BY BETSY NELSON

**T**he incomparable food writer Michael Pollan likes to say that everything he's learned about food and health can be summed up in seven words: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." Plenty of people, however, think that by eating primarily plants they'll be missing out on protein. This is simply not true. Vegetarians — and even vegans who eat no animal products at all — can and often do maintain particularly healthy, protein-rich diets. That's not to say that eating meat, especially when it's sustainably and naturally raised, is bad. It's just that too many people rely on meat as their main, if not sole, source of protein. In the next several pages you'll find fantastic plant-based breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks that are high in protein and relatively low in starches and other refined carbs.



## Breakfast

### Arugula and Mushroom Frittata With Chèvre

Think of a frittata as a crustless — and much less fussy — quiche. Here, spicy arugula is beautifully tempered by earthy mushrooms and creamy goat cheese.

Makes four servings

- 1 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ cups sliced mushrooms
- ⅓ cup chopped red bell peppers
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 cups arugula
- 8 large eggs, beaten
- 4 ounces crumbled chèvre

Heat the olive oil in a well-seasoned (or nonstick) 9-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Sauté the mushrooms, peppers and garlic together; season with salt and pepper. The vegetables will release liquid; cook until most of it is absorbed. Add the arugula, cooking it until it wilts, then stir in the beaten eggs. As the eggs cook, gently lift the edges of the frittata to allow the uncooked eggs to trickle underneath. When the eggs are mostly set, sprinkle with chèvre, remove from heat, cover and allow the dish to sit for about five minutes. If the eggs are not set up, or if you would like to brown the cheese, place the pan under a broiler for a couple of minutes. Cut into wedges and serve.



### Pumpkin Pie Yogurt

Most flavored yogurts are loaded with sugar. This concoction is naturally sweet and adds seeds for extra crunch and protein.

Makes one serving

- ¼ cup pumpkin purée
- ½ tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 8 ounces plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tbs. pumpkin seeds, toasted
- Drizzle of maple syrup, optional

Stir the pumpkin purée and the pumpkin pie spice into the yogurt. Sprinkle with pumpkin seeds. If you like, add a drizzle of maple syrup.

### Vegan Breakfast With Tempeh “Sausage”

A few spices transform plain tempeh into something that tastes like Italian breakfast sausage.

Makes two servings

- 1 tsp. whole fennel seeds
- 1 tsp. smoked Spanish paprika
- ¼ tsp. rubbed sage
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ tsp. Bragg Liquid Aminos or tamari
- 1 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 ounces tempeh, crumbled
- 1 cup sliced sweet bell pepper
- 1½ cups quartered mushrooms
- 4 cups baby spinach, washed

Mix the fennel seeds, paprika, sage, pepper, Bragg Aminos and 1 teaspoon of the olive oil in a bowl. Add the tempeh and marinate for about five minutes. Heat the remaining olive oil in a skillet, and sauté the tempeh with the bell peppers and mushrooms until the vegetables are softened and the “sausage” is crisped. Add the spinach and stir to wilt. Serve warm. ➔





# Lunch

## Open-Faced Tempeh Reuben

A clever vegetarian adaptation of a classic, carnivorous sandwich. You can find pre-marinated tempeh in grocery stores if you prefer to skip the homemade marinade.

Makes three sandwiches

- 1 tbs. Bragg Liquid Aminos or tamari
- ⅛ tsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 8 ounces tempeh, cut into 6 thin slices
- ⅓ cup sauerkraut
- 1 tsp. caraway seeds
- 1 tbs. Dijon mustard
- 3 tbs. good-quality mayonnaise
- ½ tsp. smoked Spanish paprika
- 1 tbs. minced roasted red peppers
- 3 thin slices of whole-grain rye bread, toasted
- 3 slices Swiss cheese

Preheat the broiler. Mix the Bragg Aminos, basil, balsamic, garlic, pepper and 1 teaspoon olive oil in a medium bowl. Marinate the tempeh slices for about five minutes. Heat the remaining olive oil in a nonstick skillet and sauté the tempeh over low heat, turning to crisp each side; set the tempeh aside. Warm the sauerkraut and the caraway seeds in the skillet. In a separate bowl, mix together the mustard, mayonnaise, paprika and roasted red peppers. Arrange the slices of bread on a sheet tray, spread with mustard mixture, and top with tempeh and sauerkraut. Add a slice of cheese to the top of each sandwich, and place the sandwiches under the broiler until the cheese is melted.



## French Lentil Salad With Feta on Arugula

A classic, protein-rich French salad. Top with chopped, toasted nuts for added crunch.

Makes four servings

- 2 cups cooked French lentils
- ½ cup thinly sliced celery
- ¼ cup diced red bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
- Vinaigrette (see Web Extra!)
- 6 cups baby arugula
- 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

In a large bowl, mix together the lentils, celery, peppers and parsley, and toss with the vinaigrette. Arrange arugula on four salad plates. Top with the lentil salad and some crumbled feta.



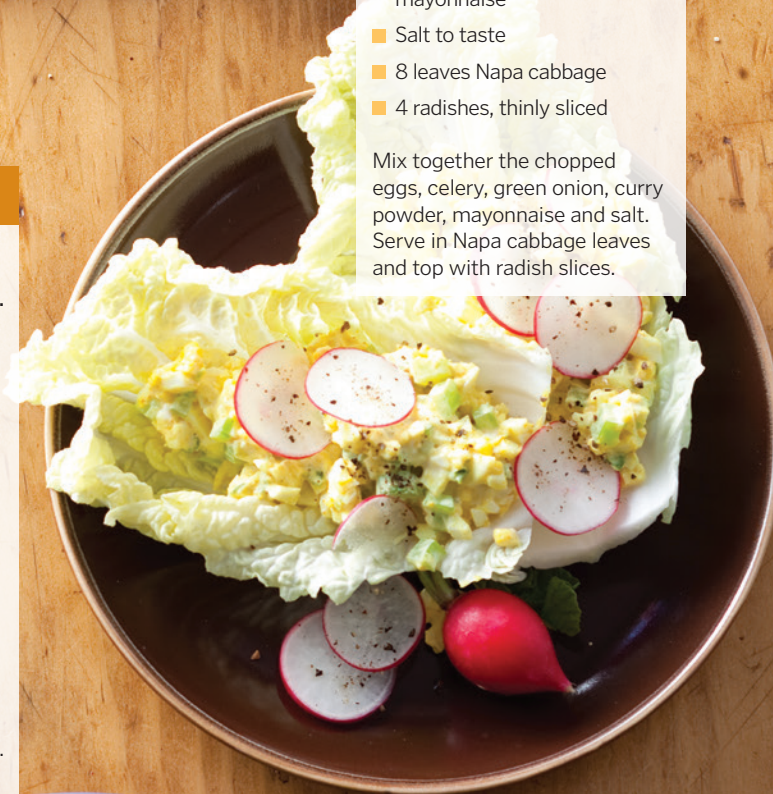
## Curried Egg Salad Lettuce Wraps

Traditional egg salad gets jazzed up with curry powder. Try using romaine lettuce, leaf lettuce, or even raw kale instead of Napa cabbage.

Makes four servings

- 6 large eggs, hard cooked and chopped
- ½ cup diced celery
- 1 green onion, minced
- ½ tsp. curry powder
- 4 tbs. good-quality mayonnaise
- Salt to taste
- 8 leaves Napa cabbage
- 4 radishes, thinly sliced

Mix together the chopped eggs, celery, green onion, curry powder, mayonnaise and salt. Serve in Napa cabbage leaves and top with radish slices.





# Dinner

## Black Bean and Squash Chili With Tempeh

Nothing beats vegetarian chili for a protein-packed dinner. This colorful version includes lots of veggies to round out the beans.

Makes four servings

- 1 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup chopped yellow onion
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- ½ cup diced red bell pepper
- 1 cup diced butternut squash
- 1 cup crumbled tempeh
- 1 tbs. smoked Spanish paprika
- 1 tsp. whole cumin seeds
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- Pepper jack cheese and cilantro, optional

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan and sauté the onion, celery, bell pepper, squash and tempeh crumbles together until the vegetables start to get tender. Add the spices and sauté for another two to three minutes. Add the broth and beans and simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Top with grated pepper jack cheese and chopped fresh cilantro, if desired.



## Black Bean Pasta With Pesto and Roasted Cauliflower

Traditional pasta can be used in this recipe, but now there's a particularly tasty bean-based, gluten-free pasta on the market that's lower in carbs and higher in protein.

Makes four servings

- 6 cups cauliflower florets
  - 1 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
  - Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Basil Hemp Seed Pesto:
- 3 ounces fresh basil leaves, about 1½ cups
  - 2 ounces raw spinach, about 1 cup
  - 2 cloves garlic
  - 6 tbs. hemp seeds
  - 2 tbs. pine nuts
  - ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
  - ½ tsp. salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
  - 4 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 (7-ounce) package Explore Asian organic black bean spaghetti, cooked and drained

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Toss the cauliflower with the olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and roast until golden and caramelized. Meanwhile, using a food processor, blend the pesto ingredients until smooth. Serve the warm cooked pasta with pesto and with the roasted cauliflower scattered over it. ➔

## Pizza Margherita Frittata

Have a craving for pizza but trying to avoid gluten? Get creative and try using a frittata as your "crust."

Makes four servings

- 1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 large eggs, beaten
- 8 tbs. good-quality jarred pesto
- 8 thin tomato slices
- 3 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced

Preheat the broiler. Heat olive oil in a well-seasoned (or nonstick) 9-inch skillet. Pour the beaten eggs into the hot skillet and allow the eggs to set up on the bottom. Carefully lift the cooked eggs with a spatula to allow the uncooked eggs to trickle underneath. Cook over low heat until most of the eggs are set up. Remove from heat and top the frittata with pesto and tomato and mozzarella slices. Broil the "pizza" until the cheese is melted and bubbly. Cut into wedges and serve.





# Snacks

## Spinach Yogurt Dip

This dip is a great alternative to the traditional mayo-heavy versions.

Makes 12 servings

- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed
- 8 ounces plain Greek yogurt
- 1 green onion, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. tamari
- Freshly ground black pepper or cayenne pepper to taste

Press the excess moisture out of the drained spinach and mix with remaining ingredients until smooth. Serve with fresh veggies or flaxseed crackers.

## Almond-Butter Protein Balls

These no-bake bites are great to have on hand when you want a treat. We replaced the traditional powdered milk with a high-quality whey protein powder.

Makes 30 small balls

- 1½ cup Tera's Whey protein powder\*
- 1 tsp. honey (or more to taste)
- ¾ cup raw unsweetened almond butter
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- ¼ cup cocoa powder
- ½ cup unsweetened shredded coconut

Mix the protein powder, honey, almond butter and almond extract together to form stiff dough. Chill the dough for at least an hour. Then scoop the dough into small balls, about 1½ teaspoons each, and roll in either cocoa powder or shredded coconut or both. Refrigerate in an airtight container.

\* You may need to adjust the quantity of protein powder depending on how creamy the almond butter is.

## Avocado Cocoa Shake

Commercial protein drinks and shakes usually contain a lot of questionable ingredients. Why not whip up your own instead?

Makes two servings

- ½ cup cubed avocado (about 1 small avocado)
- ¼ cup hemp powder or whey powder
- 2 cups hemp milk or almond milk
- 1 tbs. cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 4 ice cubes
- Honey, optional

Blend all ingredients together in a blender until smooth. Add a little honey if you'd like it sweeter. ☪

All recipes were created by **Betsy Nelson** (a.k.a. "That Food Girl"), a Minneapolis-based food stylist and recipe developer.



## WEB EXTRA!

For the vinaigrette recipe that goes with the French Lentil Salad, see the online version of this article at [ELmag.com/heartyvegetarian](http://ELmag.com/heartyvegetarian).