**WHAT IT IS**
Choosing a plant-based diet is a great way to honor the planet, animal rights, and to reduce your risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and some cancers.

**WHAT IT IS NOT**
A vegetarian diet is not a way to lose weight or disguise eating restrictively and it is not automatically a healthy diet; it takes planning!

**DEFINITIONS**
Lacto-ovo vegetarians consume milk and eggs but no animal flesh proteins.

Pesco-vegetarians consume fish.

Vegans consume no animal products of any kind.

Whether you choose to eat plant-based sometimes or all the time, there are health benefits to a well-planned vegetarian diet.

**MYTH: “A vegetarian diet doesn’t have enough...”**
Protein: beans, dairy and dairy alternatives, nuts, seeds, and a variety of grains and vegetables can meet protein requirements over the whole day. The body’s priority is for calories first, so be sure to meet overall fuel needs or the protein in the diet will be used for energy instead of a building block.

**Iron**
There are lots of iron sources in a plant-based diet as long as there is variety, especially with protein foods. Relying solely on dairy protein leads to an iron-poor diet. Having a vitamin C source at the meal boosts iron absorption!

**Calcium and Vitamin D**
Between dairy sources, fortified dairy alternatives, leafy greens, among other sources, vegetarians can meet calcium needs each day. Without consistent sun exposure or regular intake of vitamin D-fortified foods, a vitamin D supplement may be needed.

**B12**
If eggs or cow’s milk are in the diet, so is vitamin B-12. Vegans can find B-12 in fortified versions of breakfast cereals and milk alternatives – just check the label.

**NUTRIENTS IN A NUTCHEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Example Foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy*</td>
<td>Milk, Yogurt, Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iron</strong></td>
<td>Beans and lentils, Fortified cereal and oatmeal**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calcium</strong></td>
<td>Cow’s milk, Fortified milk alternatives**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vitamin D</strong></td>
<td>Made in the skin when exposed to 15 minutes sunlight during warm weather. Careful with safe sun exposure.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B12</strong></td>
<td>Dairy, and milk alternatives (excluding eggs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B6</strong></td>
<td>Not found significantly in the diet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*.* Rice and almond milks contain much less protein than cow’s or soy milk. Hemp milk is in-betwixt.

**BC DINING IDEAS**
Vegetarian and vegan entrées are denoted by icons on the on-line menu, but don’t just limit yourself to those choices!

Look for new ways to combine a protein with a grain/starch and some fruit or vegetable (or both!).

**NOTE:**
- Milks and milk alternatives are available in the dining hall refrigerators and at coffee bars.
- Check out the Farmer’s Market in the Fall; you can use your meal plan there.
- Visit Astle’s on Lower campus, Green in the Nest, Bn Green in Mac for more plant-based eating.
- Grab’n Go fridges have vegetarian and vegan options for a quick fix.

- Try one new protein dish a week to be sure you are getting a variety of sources. If you consume dairy, be sure to try some plant proteins, too.
- Made-to-order lines such as noodle bars, stir-fry, grill lines and wraps have popular plant protein choices.
- Watch for lentil soups and chilli on the menu.
- Black beans are especially good iron sources. Grab a small container from the salad bar and add them to soup, pasta, grain salads or make a stuffed baked potato and add salsa. Try other beans this way, too!
- Be your own chef: Mix and match sides and salad bar ingredients. Take a side of brown rice and vegetables + a salad bar container of tofu and more vegetables, add your favorite condiment and heat. Mix and match any grain, vegetables and protein for a meal.

- Start your day with oatmeal, stir in peanut butter and add raisins for iron and vitamin C. Find raisins on the fruit and yogurt bar.
- Make your own trail mix – combine raisins, a few types of cold cereals, add in nuts or seeds found in the mini-mart.
- Snack wisely – fill in nutrient gaps with snacks that have some nutrition mileage. Short on protein? Make a snack pack from the salad bar with hummus and vegetables or grab a lentil soup to-go. Lackings calcium? Have some tofu, milk, and fruit for Late Night. A whole grain bagel with peanut butter and raisins is a twist on the old antis-on-a-log.