

# Healthy Meal Plans<sup>1</sup>

Linda B. Bobroff<sup>2</sup>

## What is a meal plan?

A meal plan is a guide to help you plan daily meals and snacks. It allows you to eat foods you enjoy that provide a good balance of nutrients for your health. Meal plans can be used by anyone interested in healthy eating, and they are very helpful for people who want to manage their weight.

## How do meal plans work?

Each meal plan gives an example of one day's food intake using food lists that group foods based on the nutrients they contain. The meal plans provide recommended amounts of food to eat from the five food groups in MyPlate: Vegetables, Fruits, Grains, Protein Foods, and Dairy. At the end of this publication, there are 14 different meal plans based on varied calorie levels (1,200, 1,400, 1,600, 1,800, 2,000, 2,200, or 2,400 calories), each provided for a traditional or vegetarian eating style. Using one of the meal plans as a guide, you can select foods from the food lists in this document (or more complete lists in *Choose Your Foods: Food Lists for Weight Management*) to plan healthful and tasty meals and snacks.

## How do food lists work?

Foods are grouped into lists according to their carbohydrate, protein, and fat content. Foods within each list contain similar amounts of total calories, carbohydrate, protein, and fat.

The food lists are:

### Carbohydrates

- Starch
- Fruits
- Milk
  - Fat-free, low-fat (1%)
  - Reduced-fat (2%)
  - Whole
- Other carbohydrates
- Non-starchy vegetables

### Meat and Meat Substitutes

- Lean
- Medium-fat
- High-fat
- Plant-based

### Fats

## Making Healthy Choices

We recommend that you select a variety of “nutrient-rich” foods to make up your personal food plan. Nutrient-rich foods are those that provide plenty of nutrients, such as protein, vitamins, and/or minerals, along with calories (energy). Nutrient-rich foods are low in fat, especially solid fats, and added sugars.

You can check food labels to see the fat and sugar content of foods. Low nutrient-dense foods, like rich desserts, sugary drinks, and chips, provide calories with few other nutrients

1. This document is FCS8750, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date August 2002. Revised December 2017. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Linda B. Bobroff, PhD, RDN, professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.

needed for good health. We suggest you eat these foods less often.

Limit higher fat foods to stay at your target calorie level. Ounce for ounce, fat provides more than twice as many calories as protein or carbohydrates, and foods that are high in fat generally are high in calories. Check the food label since some low-fat foods are also high in calories!

## Setting Up Your Meal Plan

First, decide your daily calorie goal. This may be to maintain your weight or to lose or gain weight. If you want to lose weight, select your calorie goal to lose no more than one to two pounds per week. A calorie deficit of about 500 calories a day will result in slow weight loss for most people. The best approach is to increase your physical activity and decrease your food intake by a few hundred calories each day.

Slow weight loss is best for almost everyone trying to lose weight. For help in deciding your calorie goal, contact your county Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent, a registered dietitian (RD or RDN), or a public health nutritionist. You can find your energy (calorie) needs at <http://ChooseMyPlate.gov>.

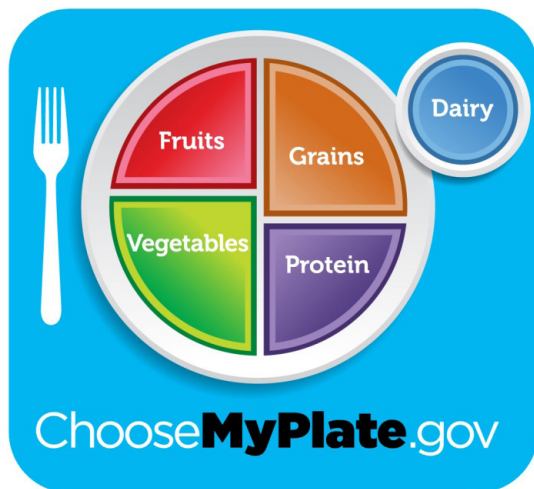


Figure 1. MyPlate can help you plan healthy meals. Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) for tips on making healthy food choices and resources to help you keep track of your food intake and physical activity.

Credits: USDA

Next, look at the meal plan closest to your calorie level and plan menus for one week using the sample menu as a guide. Choose foods available on the plan that you enjoy eating.

Be sure to include healthful snacks in your meal plan. They will help keep you from getting too hungry during the day. Also, every day drink at least nine cups of water or other

non-sugary drinks, such as club soda, seltzer, unsweetened tea, or coffee.

As you begin selecting foods based on these meal plans, think of it as a lifestyle change, or beginning a new way of eating rather than a “diet” that will end when you reach your body weight goal. Enjoy your meals, and invite your family and friends to share your new way of eating.

Finally, include physical activity in your healthier lifestyle. Being active will help you maintain or achieve a healthy body weight and keep you feeling fit and strong. Regular exercise also reduces health risks. If you have not been active for a long time, check with your doctor before you start an exercise program.

## Using Food Lists

Complete food lists are available in the publication *Choose Your Foods: Food Lists for Weight Management* (<http://www.shopdiabetes.org/1589-Choose-Your-Foods-Food-Lists-for-Weight-Management-Single.aspx>). The following lists will get you started. The first five food lists are foods that provide **Carbohydrates**.



Figure 2. Be sure to choose foods you enjoy! It will help you stick with your meal plan.

Credits: Getty Images

## Carbohydrates

### STARCH

**1 starch choice provides:**

- 15 grams carbohydrate
- 0–3 grams protein
- 0–1 gram fat
- 80 calories

Starches include breads, cereals, starchy vegetables, crackers and snacks, and beans, peas, and lentils. These foods are found in the Grains, Vegetable, or Protein Foods groups of MyPlate. They provide a variety of vitamins and minerals,

and many provide fiber. Beans, peas, and lentils are also excellent protein sources.

**One starch is:**

- ½ cup of cooked cereals, grains, or starchy vegetables
- ⅓ cup of cooked rice or pasta
- 1 ounce of bread
- ¾ to 1 ounce of most snack foods (some snacks also have fat)

**A few examples of one starch choice are:**

Table 1.

Bread	1 slice (1 oz)
Bagel	¼ large (1 oz)
Cereal (ready-to-eat, unsweetened)	¾ cup
Cereal (cooked)	½ cup
Granola	¼ cup (may have extra fat)
Pasta	⅓ cup, cooked
Baked beans	⅓ cup
Rice	⅓ cup, cooked
Corn	½ cup
Potato, baked or boiled	¼ large (3 oz)
Dried beans and peas (cooked)	½ cup
Tortilla, flour	1 (6 inches across)

Some starchy foods are prepared with fat so they count as **1 starch and 1 fat**:

Table 2.

Corn bread, 1¾-inch cube	1 piece (1½ oz)
French fries	1 cup (2 oz)
Taco shell, 5 inches	2

**FRUITS**

**1 fruit choice provides:**

- 15 grams carbohydrate
- 0 grams fat and protein
- 60 calories

The Fruit list includes fresh, frozen, dried, and canned fruits. When you choose canned fruit, select fruit canned in juice or extra light syrup. Include at least one fruit high in vitamin C (oranges, grapefruits, berries, and melons) every day.

**One fruit is:**

- 1 small fresh fruit (4 oz)
- ¾ to 1¼ cup of fresh fruit
- ½ cup of canned fruit
- ½ cup of unsweetened fruit juice
- 2 tbsp of dried fruit



Figure 3. Fruits provide only 60 calories in one serving, along with vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They are naturally sweet and make great snacks or desserts.

Credits: Getty Images

**A few examples of one fruit choice are:**

Table 3. Fruits.

Banana	1 small (4 oz)
Blueberries	¾ cup
Cantaloupe	1 cup, cubed
Prunes, dried	3
Strawberries, whole	1¼ cup
100% Orange juice	½ cup

**MILK**

**1 milk choice provides:**

- 12 grams carbohydrate
- 8 grams protein
- 0–8 grams fat
- 100–160 calories

Milk and yogurt are excellent sources of calcium and protein as well as several vitamins and other minerals. Select fat-free or low-fat (1%) dairy and have 2–3 servings a day. Fortified soy milk is also a good source of calcium and protein; count 1 cup as a milk exchange and 1 fat exchange (light versions count as ½ fat exchange).

**One milk is:**

- 1 cup of fat-free or 1% milk (see chart)
- ⅔ cup of plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt

Table 4.

Type of Milk or Yogurt	Fat (grams)	Calories
Fat-Free or Low-Fat (1%)	0–3	100
Reduced-Fat (2%)	5	120
Whole	8	160

If you want to decrease your calorie intake, choose fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt.

## SWEETS, DESSERTS, AND OTHER CARBOHYDRATES

**1 choice from this list provides:**

- 15 grams carbohydrate
- Protein, fat, and calorie content varies

Foods on this list include foods that contain added fat and/or sugar. You may substitute foods on this list for a starch, fruit, or milk exchange. Choose the foods on this list less often because they are less nutrient-rich than foods on the other lists.

**Count as 1 carbohydrate (either a Starch, Fruit, or Milk on your meal plan):**

Table 5.

Gingersnaps	3
Pudding, sugar-free, fat-free	½ cup
Salad dressing, fat-free	3 tbsp
Frozen yogurt, fat-free	⅓ cup

**Count as 1 carbohydrate (either a Starch, Fruit, or Milk on your meal plan) + 1 fat:**

Table 6.

Brownie, small, unfrosted	1¼-inch square (about 1 oz)
Cookie with crème filling	2 small
Trail mix (dried fruit)	1 oz
Hot chocolate, regular	1 envelope in 8 ounces water
Ice cream, light	1/2 cup

## NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES

**1 non-starchy vegetable choice provides:**

- 5 grams carbohydrate
- 2 grams protein
- 0 grams fat
- 25 calories

Non-starchy vegetables include fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables. Canned vegetables often contain added salt; you can rinse and drain them to remove some salt or choose low-sodium varieties. Deep green and orange vegetables provide vitamin A and other nutrients important for health. Several vegetables, including peppers, broccoli, and tomatoes, are rich sources of vitamin C. Starchy vegetables like corn, peas, and potatoes are not included here; they are on the starch list. Have at least 2–3 servings a day of non-starchy vegetables.

**One non-starchy vegetable is:**

- ½ cup of cooked vegetables
- ½ cup of vegetable juice
- 1 cup of raw vegetables (Raw salad greens are “Free Foods,” which are explained in a later section of this document.)

## MEAT AND MEAT SUBSTITUTES

**1 meat or meat substitute choice provides:**

- 7 grams protein
- 0–8 or more grams fat
- 0 grams carbohydrate
- 45–100 calories

Meat and meat substitutes are divided into four lists, depending on their fat content and source (animal or plant). Select lean meats and meat substitutes most of the time. Use low-fat cooking methods like broiling, roasting, baking, and grilling to limit added fat.

**One meat is:**

- 1 ounce cooked meat, fish, poultry
- 1 ounce cheese
- ½ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils (count as 1 Meat + 1 Starch)
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp peanut butter/nut spreads

A typical portion of meat often is three or more ounces since one ounce is a very small serving. For example, 3 ounces of meat is about the size of a deck of playing cards.

**Lean** meat and meat substitutes include lean cuts of beef, pork, and other meats, chicken or turkey (no skin), game meats, fresh or frozen fish, canned salmon or tuna, egg whites or substitutes, and cheeses with 3 grams or less of fat per ounce.

**Medium-fat** meat and meat substitutes include ground beef, meat loaf, short ribs, chicken with skin, fried chicken or fish, pork cutlet or shoulder roast, cheese with 4–7 grams of fat per ounce, and eggs.

**High-fat** meat and meat substitutes are high in saturated fat and cholesterol. Examples are regular cheeses like cheddar, Swiss, and American, as well as bacon, hot dogs, sausage, spare ribs, and processed sandwich meat like bologna and salami.

**Plant-based proteins** include imitation bacon, burgers, and sausage; cooked beans, peas, and lentils; hummus; tempeh; tofu; and peanut and nut butters.



Figure 4. Vary your protein sources! Eat legumes or fish several times each week in place of meat or poultry. This vegetarian dish has red beans, rice, and avocado, a great source of healthy fat. Credits: Getty Images

### FATS

**1 fat choice provides:**

- 5 grams fat
- 0 grams carbohydrate
- 0 grams protein
- 45 calories

Current dietary guidance suggests that 20–35% of our calories should come from fat (Otten, Hellwig, & Meyers, 2006). The meal plans included in this publication provide about 20–25% of calories from fat.

Whether solid or liquid, all fats are more concentrated in calories than proteins and carbohydrates. For this reason, they need to be measured carefully. One tablespoon of oil, margarine, butter, or mayonnaise contains 100 calories. However, different fats have different health impacts. It is important to limit foods that contain saturated and *trans* fat. Solid fats, like butter, vegetable shortening, and lard, are high in saturated fat. Foods made with hydrogenated oils including stick margarine and many snack foods contain *trans* fat. Use these fats sparingly, if at all.

Use oils like olive, canola, and peanut oil in cooking and for salads. Get some of your daily fat from nuts, seeds, avocado, and fatty fish like albacore tuna, herring, salmon, and sardines. Read food labels to avoid foods with more than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving and foods that contain any *trans* fat.

**One fat is:**

- 1 teaspoon of margarine, butter, oil, or regular mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon of regular salad dressing

**A few examples of one fat choice are:**

Table 7.

Avocado	2 tbsp (1 oz)
Almonds or cashews	6 nuts
Peanut butter	½ tbsp (1½ tsp)
Salad dressing, reduced-fat	2 tbsp
Cream cheese, reduced-fat*	1½ tbsp
Bacon, cooked*	1 slice
Seeds (flaxseed, pumpkin, sesame)	1 tbsp
*Contains saturated fat.	

### FREE FOODS

Foods on this list contain less than 20 calories and 5 grams or less of carbohydrate per serving. When no serving size is given, you can eat the food as often as you desire. However, eat bouillon, pickles, and other high-sodium foods in moderation.

**Free foods are divided into 5 groups:**

Table 8.

Low-Carbohydrate Foods	
Hard candy, sugar-free	1 pc
Gum, sugar-free	1 pc
Sliced cucumber	½ cup
Jam or jelly, no sugar added	2 teaspoons
Modified Fat Foods with Carbohydrate	
Salad dressing, fat-free or low-fat	1 tbsp
Margarine, reduced-fat	1 tsp
Condiments	
Ketchup	1 tbsp
Lemon or lime juice	
Mustard	
Salsa	¼ cup
Vinegar	
Drinks/Mixes	
Bouillon (broth)	
Club soda	
Coffee	
Unsweetened tea	
Seasonings*	
Herbs and spices	
Wine, used in cooking	
Worcestershire sauce	
*Limit seasonings that contain salt.	

## COMBINATION FOODS AND FAST FOODS

Many foods we eat cannot be classified into just one of the food lists. For instance, casseroles, pasta dishes, stews, and salads contain a variety of ingredients that provide different nutrients. You can estimate the calories and nutrients in a home recipe by classifying each ingredient, but it can be challenging when a recipe has many ingredients or when you are eating out. The *Choose Your Foods: Food Lists for Weight Management* booklet provides examples of mixed dishes and fast foods and ways to count them for your meal plan.

For example, one cup of stew may count as 1 carbohydrate + 1 medium-fat meat + 0–3 fats, depending on the type of meat and vegetables in the stew. Cheese pizza ( $\frac{1}{4}$  of a 12-inch pie) would be 2 carbohydrates + 2 medium-fat meats; adding pepperoni or sausage to the pizza will add 2 fats to the exchanges.

## The Meal Plans

We developed two sets of healthy meal plans to help you plan your daily food intake, each at seven calorie levels. The **Traditional Meal Plans** include foods from all food groups. The **Vegetarian Meal Plans** omit meat, poultry, and fish. These meal plans include meat substitutes and dairy products, so they are appropriate for lacto-ovo vegetarians (those who eat milk products and eggs). The meal plans range from 1,200 to 2,400 calories. Even when trying to lose weight, women need at least 1,200 calories a day and men need at least 1,600 calories a day to get all of the essential nutrients. The number of calories you actually eat will depend on several things:

- the exact foods you choose (for example, the cut of meat or type of bread)
- the way you prepare the foods
- the exact amount of each food you eat

In these meal plans, the higher calorie menus build on the foods in the 1,200-calorie meal plan. This way you can see which foods were added to increase the calorie level. The first time a food is added to the plan it is marked with an asterisk (\*). If the serving size of a food increases, it is also marked with an asterisk.

Work with your county Extension Family and Consumer Sciences educator, a registered dietitian, or public health nutritionist to find the meal plan that will work for you.

## Reference

Otten, J. J., Hellwig, J. P., & Meyers, L. D., ed. (2006). *Dietary Reference Intakes. The Essential Guide to Nutrient Requirements*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.

## For More Information

American Diabetes Association and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. (2014). *Choose Your Foods: Food Lists for Weight Management*. <http://www.shopdiabetes.org/1589-Choose-Your-Foods-Food-Lists-for-Weight-Management-Single.aspx>

Contact your local county Extension office for information and resources. The Family and Consumer Sciences agent may offer classes in nutrition or other topics. The Extension office is listed in the phone book under county government. In Florida, find your county Extension office at <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/find-your-local-office/>.

Information is also available from the following websites:

<http://ChooseMyPlate.gov>

<http://www.nutrition.gov>

<http://fyics.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html>

## Traditional Meal Plans

Table 9. Traditional Meal Plan: 1,200 Calories

5 Starch		3 Non-Starchy Vegetable
3 Fruit		5 Meat
2½ Milk		3 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	1 small whole-wheat bagel (or ½ large)
	Free Food	2 teaspoons sugar-free jam
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Fruit	1 small orange
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	1 Starch	1 slice whole-wheat bread
	2 Fat	2 teaspoons tub margarine
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	½ Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Meat	2 ounces sliced turkey breast
	Free Food	2 tbsp fat-free salad dressing
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	¾ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	1 Fruit	½ large banana
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	3 Meat	3 ounces broiled fish
	2 Starch	¾ cup cooked brown rice
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked summer squash
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	½ Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup cut-up raw vegetables
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
Late Night	1 Fruit	½ cup canned (in juice) peaches
	½ Milk	½ cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage

Table 10. Traditional Meal Plan: 1,400 Calories

6 Starch		3 Non-Starchy Vegetable
4 Fruit		5 Meat
2½ Milk		4 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	1 small whole-wheat bagel (or ½ large)
	Free Food	2 teaspoons sugar-free jam
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Fruit	1 small orange
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Starch	2 slices whole-wheat bread*
	2 Fat	2 tsp tub margarine
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	½ Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Meat	2 ounces sliced turkey breast
	Free Food	2 tbsp fat-free salad dressing
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	⅔ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	2 Fruit	1 large banana*
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	3 Meat	3 ounces broiled fish
	2 Starch	⅔ cup cooked brown rice
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked summer squash
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	½ Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil*
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
Late Night	1 Fruit	½ cup canned (in juice) peaches
	½ Milk	½ cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.		

Table 11. Traditional Meal Plan: 1,600 Calories

6 Starch		4 Non-Starchy Vegetable
4 Fruit		6 Meat
3 Milk		5 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	1 small whole-wheat bagel (or ½ large)
	Free Food	2 tsp sugar-free jam
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Fruit	1 small orange
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Starch	2 slices whole-wheat bread
	2 Fat	2 tsp tub margarine
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables*
	2 Meat	2 ounces sliced turkey breast
	Free Food	2 tbsp fat-free salad dressing
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	⅔ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	4 Meat	4 ounces broiled fish*
	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine*
	2 Starch	⅔ cup cooked brown rice
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked summer squash
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables*
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
Late Night	1 Fruit	½ cup canned (in juice) peaches
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk*
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.		

Table 12. Traditional Meal Plan: 1,800 Calories

7 Starch		5 Non-Starchy Vegetable
5 Fruit		6 Meat
3 Milk		6 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	1 small whole-wheat bagel (or ½ large)
	Free Food	2 tsp sugar-free jam
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	2 Fruit	1 large orange*
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Starch	2 slices whole-wheat bread
	2 Fat	2 tsp tub margarine
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Meat	2 ounces sliced turkey breast
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil*
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
	1 Milk	¾ cup low-fat plain yogurt
Afternoon	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
	4 Meat	4 ounces broiled fish
Evening	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine
	3 Starch	1 cup cooked brown rice*
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked summer squash
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	1 Fruit	½ cup canned (in juice) peaches
Late Night	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 large carrot*
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.		

Table 13. Traditional Meal Plan: 2,000 Calories

8 Starch		5 Non-Starchy Vegetable
5½ Fruit		5½ Meat
3 Milk		6 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	3 Starch	¾ cup low-fat granola*
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	2 Fruit	1 large orange
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Starch	2 slices whole-wheat bread
	2 Fat	2 tsp tub margarine
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Meat	2 ounces sliced turkey breast
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	⅔ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	3½ Meat (medium-fat)	3½ ounces meat loaf*
	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine
	3 Starch	1 cup cooked brown rice
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked summer squash
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
Late Night	1½ Fruit	¾ cup canned (in juice) peaches*
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 large carrot
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage

\*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.

Table 14. Traditional Meal Plan: 2,200 Calories

9 Starch		5 Non-Starchy Vegetable
6 Fruit		7 Meat
3 Milk		6 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	4 Starch	1 cup low-fat granola*
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	2 Fruit	1 large orange
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Starch	2 slices whole-wheat bread
	2 Fat	2 tsp tub margarine
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	3 Meat	3 ounces sliced turkey breast*
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	4 Meat (medium-fat)	4 ounces meat loaf*
	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine
	3 Starch	1 cup cooked brown rice
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked summer squash
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
Late Night	1 Fruit	1 cup honeydew melon*
	1 Fruit	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned (in juice) peaches*
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 large carrot
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or changed amounts from previous meal plan.		

Table 15. Traditional Meal Plan: 2,400 Calories

9 Starch		6 Non-Starchy Vegetable
7 Fruit		7 Meat
3 Milk		½ Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	4 Starch	1 cup low-fat granola
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	2 Fruit	1 large orange
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Starch	2 slices whole-wheat bread
	2 Fat	2 tsp tub margarine
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1½ Non-Starchy Vegetable	1½ cup cut-up raw vegetables*
	3 Meat	3 ounces sliced turkey breast
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	⅔ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	4 Meat (medium-fat)	4 ounces meat loaf
	3 Starch	9 ounces baked potato (about ¾ of a large potato)*
	2 Fat	2 tsp tub margarine*
	½ Fat	1½ tbsp reduced-fat sour cream*
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked summer squash
	Free Food	1 cup mixed salad greens
	1½ Non-Starchy Vegetable	1½ cup cut-up raw vegetables*
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	1 Fruit	1 cup honeydew melon
Late Night	2 Fruit	1 cup canned (in juice) peaches*
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 large carrot
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage

\*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.

# Vegetarian Meal Plans

Table 16. Vegetarian Meal Plan: 1,200 Calories

5½ Starch		4 Non-Starchy Vegetable
2 Fruit		2½ Meat
2½ Milk		2 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	½ cup low-fat granola
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup tomato juice, low-sodium
	Free Food	coffee or tea
	1 Meat (high-fat) <sup>1</sup>	1 tbsp natural peanut butter
Noon	Free Food	2 tsp sugar-free jam
	1 Starch	1 slice whole-wheat bread
	1 Fruit	1 small banana
	Free Food	1 cup mixed green salad
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
	1 Milk	¾ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	1 Fruit	1¼ cup whole strawberries, sliced
Afternoon	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
	1½ Meat + 1½ Starch	¾ cup black beans, no salt added
	1 Starch	⅓ cup cooked brown rice
Evening	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked broccoli
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup baby carrots, raw
	½ Milk	½ cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
<sup>1</sup> Note: If you choose a lean-meat choice instead of a high-fat meat exchange, you can increase your fat intake from other foods.		

Table 17. Vegetarian Meal Plan: 1,400 Calories

5½ Starch		4 Non-Starchy Vegetable
3 Fruit		3½ Meat
3 Milk		2 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	½ cup low-fat granola
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup tomato juice, low-sodium
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Meat (high-fat) <sup>1</sup>	2 tbsp natural peanut butter*
	Free Food	2 tsp sugar-free jam
	1 Starch	1 slice whole-wheat bread
	2 Fruit	1 large banana*
	Free Food	1 cup mixed green salad
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	⅔ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	1 Fruit	1¼ cup whole strawberries, sliced
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	1½ Meat + 1½ Starch	¾ cup black beans, no salt added
	1 Starch	½ cup cooked brown rice
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked broccoli
Late Night	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup baby carrots, raw
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk*
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.		
<sup>1</sup> Note: If you choose a lean-meat choice instead of a high-fat meat exchange, you can increase your fat intake from other foods.		

Table 18. Vegetarian Meal Plan: 1,600 Calories

6½ Starch		4 ½ Non-Starchy Vegetable
4 Fruit		3½ Meat
3 Milk		4 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	½ cup low-fat granola
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Starch	1 slice rye bread*
	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine*
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup tomato juice, low-sodium
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Meat (high-fat) <sup>1</sup>	2 tbsp natural peanut butter
	Free Food	2 tsp sugar-free jam
	1 Starch	1 slice whole-wheat bread
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	1 cup mixed green salad
	½ Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup cut-up raw vegetables*
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil*
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	⅔ cup fat-free plain yogurt
	1 Fruit	1¼ cup whole strawberries, sliced
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	1½ Meat + 1½ Starch	¾ cup black beans, no salt added
	1 Starch	⅓ cup cooked brown rice
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked broccoli
	1 Fruit	1 cup cubed cantaloupe*
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup baby carrots, raw
Late Night	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.		
<sup>1</sup> Note: If you choose a lean-meat choice instead of a high-fat meat exchange, you can increase your fat intake from other foods.		

Table 19. Vegetarian Meal Plan: 1,800 Calories

8 Starch		5 Non-Starchy Vegetable
4 Fruit		4 Meat
3 Milk		4 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	½ cup low-fat granola
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Starch	1 slice rye bread
	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup tomato juice, low-sodium
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Meat (high-fat) <sup>1</sup>	2 tbsp natural peanut butter
	Free Food	2 tsp sugar-free jam
	1 Starch	1 slice whole-wheat bread
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	1 cup mixed green salad
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables*
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
Afternoon	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
	1 Milk	¾ cup fat-free plain yogurt
	1 Fruit	1¼ cup whole strawberries, sliced
Evening	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
	2 Meat + 2 Starch	1 cup black beans, no salt added*
	2 Starch	¾ cup cooked brown rice*
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked broccoli
	1 Fruit	1 cup cubed cantaloupe
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup baby carrots, raw
Late Night	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.		
<sup>1</sup> Note: If you choose a lean-meat choice instead of a high-fat meat exchange, you can increase your fat intake from other foods.		

Table 20. Vegetarian Meal Plan: 2,000 Calories

9 Starch		5 Non-Starchy Vegetable
5 Fruit		5 Meat
3 Milk		4 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	2 Starch	½ cup low-fat granola
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Starch	1 slice rye bread
	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup tomato juice, low-sodium
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Meat (high-fat) <sup>1</sup>	2 tbsp natural peanut butter
	Free Food	2 tsp sugar-free jam
	1 Starch	1 slice whole-wheat bread
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	1 cup mixed green salad
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
Afternoon	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
	1 Milk	⅔ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	1 Fruit	1¼ cup whole strawberries, sliced
Evening	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
	2 Meat + 2 Starch	1 cup black beans, no salt added
	2 Starch	⅔ cup cooked brown rice
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked broccoli
	2 Fruit	2 cups cubed cantaloupe*
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup baby carrots, raw
Late Night	1 Starch + 1 Meat (high-fat)	½ cup hummus*
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or increased amounts from previous meal plan.		
<sup>1</sup> Note: If you choose a lean-meat choice instead of a high-fat meat exchange, you can increase your fat intake from other foods.		

Table 21. Vegetarian Meal Plan: 2,200 Calories

10 Starch		5 Non-Starchy Vegetable
5 Fruit		6 Meat
3 Milk		5 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	3 Starch	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-fat granola*
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1 Fruit	2 tbsp raisins*
	1 Starch	1 slice rye bread
	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup tomato juice, low-sodium
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Meat (high-fat) <sup>1</sup>	2 tbsp natural peanut butter
	Free Food	2 tsp sugar-free jam
	1 Starch	1 slice whole-wheat bread
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	1 cup mixed green salad
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	1 Fruit	$1\frac{1}{4}$ cup whole strawberries, sliced
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	2 Meat + 2 Starch	1 cup black beans, no salt added
	1 Meat (medium-fat)	4 ounces ( $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) tofu*
	2 Starch	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup cooked brown rice
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil*
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked broccoli
	1 Fruit	1 cup cubed cantaloupe*
Late Night	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup baby carrots, raw
	1 Starch + 1 Meat (high-fat)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup hummus
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or changed amounts from previous meal plan.		
<sup>1</sup> Note: If you choose a lean-meat choice instead of a high-fat meat exchange, you can increase your fat intake from other foods.		

Table 22. Vegetarian Meal Plan: 2,400 Calories

11 Starch		5 Non-Starchy Vegetable
6½ Fruit		6½ Meat
3 Milk		5 Fat
Meal	Meal Plan	Sample Menu for One Day
Morning	3 Starch	¾ cup low-fat granola
	1 Milk	1 cup low-fat (1%) milk
	1½ Fruit	3 tbsp raisins*
	1 Starch	1 slice rye bread
	1 Fat	1 tsp tub margarine
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	½ cup tomato juice, low-sodium
	Free Food	coffee or tea
Noon	2 Meat (high-fat) <sup>1</sup>	2 tbsp natural peanut butter
	Free Food	2 tsp low-sugar jam
	2 Starch	2 slices whole-wheat bread*
	2 Fruit	1 large banana
	Free Food	1 cup mixed green salad
	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cut-up raw vegetables
	2 Fat	2 tsp olive oil
	Free Food	balsamic vinegar to taste
	Free Food	iced tea, unsweetened
Afternoon	1 Milk	⅔ cup low-fat plain yogurt
	1 Fruit	1¼ cup whole strawberries, sliced
	Free Food	sugar substitute and vanilla extract, if desired
Evening	2 Meat + 2 Starch	1 cup black beans, no salt added
	1½ Meat (medium-fat)	6 ounces (¾ cup) tofu*
	2 Starch	⅔ cup cooked brown rice
	1 Fat	1 tsp olive oil*
	2 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup cooked broccoli
	2 Fruit	2 cups cubed cantaloupe*
Late Night	1 Non-Starchy Vegetable	1 cup baby carrots, raw
	1 Starch + 1 Meat (high-fat)	½ cup hummus
	1 Milk + 1 Fat	½ cup light ice cream*
	Free Food	non-sugary, non-caloric beverage
*Added food items or changed amounts from previous meal plan.		
<sup>1</sup> Note: If you choose a lean-meat choice instead of a high-fat meat exchange, you can increase your fat intake from other foods.		