

Plant-Strong In College

The
ENGINE
2
DIET

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You can relax now, the hard part is over! Now that you've made the decision to eat plant-strong, you can have some fun! Experiment with cooking by creating your own recipes. Maybe try a new food that looks interesting to you at the grocery store. You can even host a dinner party for your friends. Whatever you decide to do, start your journey right here by reading this quick-start guide. It will help you shop and eat the plant-strong way.

Going Plant-Strong Is Easy!



Keep in mind, a plant-strong diet:

Focuses on whole grains, beans, vegetables, and fruits.

No animal products

No oil (including spray oil)

No coconut products

No juices or smoothies (liquid calories)

Limit high fat plant foods

2 Tablespoons per day of extracted sweetener

Sugar not listed in the first three ingredients

Sodium ratio is 1:1 for packaged food

Calories from fat 25% or less of total calories



A plant-strong diet focuses on whole grains, beans, vegetables, and fruits

Eat a variety of these in abundance! A few of the popular whole grains are brown rice (many varieties), wild rice, barley, millet, kamut, spelt, buckwheat, oats, quinoa, and amaranth. As far as beans go, try black beans, kidney beans, lima beans, pinto beans, navy beans, chickpeas, lentils, adzuki beans—there's so many more!

Now for the vegetables: artichokes, arugula, asparagus, beets, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauli-

flower, celery, cilantro, collard greens, corn, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, peppers, potatoes, radish, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, and swiss chard.

Finally, the fruit: apples, apricots, avocado, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, cucumber, dates, figs, grapefruit, grapes, kiwi, lemons, limes, mango, melons, nectarines, oranges, papaya, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums, pomegranate, raspberries, strawberries, tangerines. Most likely, if it's a vegetable or fruit, you're good to go.

No animal products

Avoid meat, dairy, eggs at all costs! Other common animal products are whey, casein, gelatin, and lactose. Be meticulous when reading labels.

No oil

Stay far away from all oils including spray oil. The truth is: you don't need oil to cook or bake!

No coconut products

This includes coconut pulp, coconut milk, coconut water, coconut oil, etc.

No juices or smoothies

Juicing removes the fiber and smoothies disrupt it. Eat your food; don't drink it through a straw.

Limit high fat plant foods such as nuts, seeds, avocado, and tofu

Keep in mind that it is very easy to get carried away with these foods. If you have heart disease, it is important to eliminate all high fat plant-based food. Use extra caution if you have diabetes, as these might be something to eliminate as well.

2 Tablespoons per day or less of extracted sweetener

Don't be fooled by marketing; the artificial sweeteners are not healthy! Stick with the regular kind.

For packaged products, **sugar should not be in the first three ingredients**

Calories from fat should be 25% or less of total calories

Sodium ratio is 1:1

Milligrams to calories. Example: 100 milligrams sodium \leq 100 calories

How Do I Start?

First thing's first: start from scratch. Go through your refrigerator, freezer, pantry etc., and donate all of the food that you will no longer be eating. If it's not in your kitchen, you won't be tempted to eat it.

Update your spice rack. If you can't remember when you bought it, it's probably too old. Try some new spices or salt-free blends, they give superb flavor to your plant-strong meals.

Go grocery shopping and stock up on everything you'll now be enjoying.

It is crucial to carefully read every label, as outrageous things can be added! Advertisements and product boxes are deceiving! Even if something looks like it would be healthy, read the ingredients! Also, never assume that you are buying the same thing twice. Companies will often change ingredients and keep the same packaging.

Fridge:

Romaine lettuce, Spinach, Kale, Cucumber, Zucchini, Carrots, Celery, Grapes, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Mushrooms, Bell pepper, Apples, Oranges, Lemons, Limes, Berries, Cilantro, Parsley, Basil, Ground flaxseed

Freezer:

Frozen bananas, Frozen berries, Frozen mixed vegetables, Frozen broccoli, Frozen cauliflower, Frozen corn, Whole grain bread, Whole grain wraps, Brown rice wraps

Counter:

Tomatoes, Bananas, Onions, Garlic, Avocado, Potatoes, Sweet potatoes, Winter squash

Pantry:

Brown rice, Wild rice, Quinoa, Whole wheat flour, Baking soda, Baking powder, Oats, Lentils, Nuts, Seeds, Nut butters, Dried fruit (no oil), Beans (no salt added), Tomatoes (no salt added), Mustard, Ketchup, Salsa, Balsamic vinegar, Apple cider vinegar, Shredded wheat, Plant-based milk, Applesauce, Low-sodium vegetable broth

Spice Rack:

Basil, Rosemary, Bay leaves, Oregano, Salt-free spice mixes, Nutritional yeast, Thyme, Black pepper, Garlic powder, Onion powder, Cinnamon, Ginger, Chili powder, Paprika, Red pepper flakes, Cumin, Parsley

Eliminate:

- Animal products (meat, eggs, dairy)
- Oil (all types including spray oil)
- Refined and processed grains (white rice, white flour)
- Coconut products (oil, pulp, milk, water)
- Fake sugars (stevia, aspartame)
- Juices and smoothies (liquid calories)

Stock up on:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Intact whole grains
- Beans
- Salt-free spices

Make Room For Plant-Strong Food

QUICK TIP: Build bowls in mason jars for a quick to-go lunch

To make delicious food, you need to have the right ingredients. Now that you know a plant-strong diet focuses on whole grains, beans, vegetables, and fruits, it's time to start making room in your kitchen. Whether you want to become a master plant-strong chef or just a really good cook, if you have these ingredients handy, you're sure to whip up a scrumptious meal in no time. This is just a basic list to get you started on your journey. While you're shopping, if you happen to run into something plant-strong that looks appealing to you, give it a try! The more you experiment, the more your taste buds will change! You might just be surprised with what kinds of foods you will come to love.

Getting Started: Eating

Using a cookbook is a wonderful way to explore the world of food. Even just the colorful pictures and lively descriptions of the dishes can bring about inspiration. Unfortunately, a lot of recipes require a good amount of time to prepare which is not exactly something we want to do after a long day of work or school. What really happens is we find ourselves gravitating towards a meal that is simple and easy to put together. Luckily, these types of meals are the basis for plant-strong eating!

Bowls

When you want a great meal without a ton of effort, try creating a bowl. Simple and delicious, a bowl is exactly what it sounds like—a mixture of all things plant-strong. Bowls are especially helpful when you're first getting the hang of eating plant-strong. They can be served hot or cold, for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Begin by selecting a base of either some sort of grain or green leafy vegetables or a combination of both. Choose your bowl wisely—salads require startlingly huge bowls!



Grains:

brown rice, wild rice, barley, millet, kamut, spelt, buckwheat, oats, quinoa, amaranth, whole wheat pasta and more...

Green Leafy Vegetables:

romaine, arugula, spinach, swiss chard, kale, and more...

Beans:

black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans, navy beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), adzuki beans, lima beans, lentils.

Next, fill up your bowl with vegetables and or fruit. Whether they're raw, steamed, grilled, broiled, or even last night's leftovers, pile those veggies on!

The most important part is last: the flavor. The entire bowl can change just by adding spices or a dressing. There are some excellent no-salt added spice mixes that you can buy or you can create your own combination. Try adding hummus, salsa or fresh herbs too!

Potatoes

Something as simple as the humble potato can make the best meal. Baking a potato in the oven can take about an hour which is why it is important to bake more than what you're going to eat. If you find yourself eating potatoes for nearly every meal, don't hesitate to bake the entire bag! Baked potatoes that aren't used can be stored in the refrigerator and are very convenient. If

you're absolutely starving and an hour is simply too long to wait, potatoes can be made in a flash in the microwave!

It's easy to make a potato a meal! In fact, you can use potatoes instead of a grain (or in addition) when you make a bowl. Soups and chilis taste even better when served over a baked potato. Salads are extra satisfying with cubed potatoes on top. You can even build your own loaded potato! Slice some up and make fries, cubes, or rounds in the oven. Mashed potatoes are an added bonus for nearly everything. Try some of these ideas using any potato, regular or sweet!

It's crazy how many types of potatoes you can find today! Of course, you have your usual suspects, the sweet potato and the regular potato. There are also golden potatoes, red potatoes, purple potatoes, fingerling potatoes, baby potatoes, etc. A few of the different types of sweet potatoes are Japanese sweet potatoes, purple sweet potatoes, white sweet potatoes, and several kinds of orange sweet potatoes.

Burgers

Burgers are another super simple meal that can be thrown together in a flash. They're quick but so very satisfying.

Start by making your favorite veggie burger recipe. You can find some great oil-free recipes on the internet. If you're completely new to veggie burgers, Jeff Novick has a DVD called Fast Food: Burgers and Fries in which he shows you how to make several different varieties of delicious veggie burgers.

Feeling adventurous? Creating your very own veggie burger recipe is not hard at all. Start with a bean, any bean! It can be your favorite bean or even a mix of beans if you like and then mash them up but be sure not to cream them. Then, experiment to find the right combination of vegetables and grains. Before you go any further, check the consistency of your burgers. If they are too crumbly, add something that has liquid in it like tomatoes or maybe a splash of low-sodium vegetable broth. On the other hand, if your burgers are too wet, add in more grains. Stick your veggie burger mix in the fridge for a bit to chill out. Most of the time they tend to cook better after they've been refrigerated. Finally, you choose how to cook them. Bake them, cook them on the stove, or even stick some on the grill, whatever way you choose, they're going to taste great!

A really neat way to make veggie burgers involves your nonstick muffin pan. It's incredibly fast and so simple it's silly. Just squish your veggie burger mix into each of the muffin tins and bake in the oven to your desired crispness. You can even make mini burgers with a mini muffin pan!

Soups

Who doesn't love a big bowl of comforting soup? Homemade soup is the best and can be made to suit anyone's tastes. It's also super quick to make, especially if you have frozen vegetables!

Start out with a liquid, such as low-sodium vegetable broth or some type of tomato product. Add in fresh chopped vegetables, frozen vegetables, or even a combination of both. Throw in a can of beans, drop in some spices, and you're good to go. Bring

it to a boil and reduce to a simmer until the vegetables are tender. Don't forget to make a little extra, soup tastes even better the next day!

Salads

Skip the tiny bowls! Plant-strong salads should be big enough to fill an entire mixing bowl. Load your bowl with vibrant greens like romaine, arugula, spinach, or even kale. To save time, you can purchase prewashed lettuce in a box or bag. Next, add plenty of vegetables; raw, sautéed, steamed, just whatever you have. The more veggies you can pile on, the better! Branch out from the norm and try adding some fruit to your salad. Beans and grains are a fantastic addition and give a bit more staying power to keep you fueled throughout the day. Either enjoy it plain or top it off with your favorite oil-free dressing.



Now that you know where to begin, it's time to start cooking! Become a chef for the day and you just might create something delicious and totally unexpected. Sometimes the simplest meals are the best.

Kitchen Appliances For Busy People

When you're busy and in a hurry, kitchen appliances are absolute lifesavers! They are especially helpful if you are the kind of person who likes to "set it and forget it." Standing around the stove all day, or at least what seems like all day, just isn't in the cards for most college students. These 3 appliances will assist you in preparing ingredients or entire meals.

Slow cookers are a great way to have a hot meal ready at the end of a busy day. It is quite the user-friendly appliance; no manual reading required. All you need to do is combine everything into the pot and turn it on. Several hours later, when you return home, you'll have a meal ready to go. You can cook just about anything in a slow cooker: potatoes, beans, oats, soups, chilis...

It may seem like just another appliance, but a rice cooker is incredibly useful. The box does not lie; it does cook perfect rice every time! Simply rinse the rice, place it in the bowl, and cover it with the recommended amount of water or low-sodium vegetable broth. Add in some herbs or spices for a bit of extra flavor or keep it plain, it's completely up to you. Many rice cookers have a special setting for brown rice; this makes the task even easier if you can believe it! But don't make the mistake of thinking rice

cookers are just for making rice. In addition to rice, you can cook just about any grain in the rice cooker. It's also an excellent steamer! Cut up apples with cinnamon and a little bit of water and you have yourself an addictive dessert.

Do not be afraid of the pressure cooker! Today's models are no longer like the loud, scary, steamy contraption on your grandmother's stove. In fact, they are perfectly safe and so very versatile! It's really amazing what kinds of food you can cook in one. Cooking dried beans on the stove is not an easy or quick task. It's a process that seems to take days—and it kind of does! Soaking the beans for a few hours or overnight is recommended. Once you get to the actual cooking part, some beans can take up to 2 hours to cook. Plus, you have to monitor the water level at all times to make sure the beans stay covered. If you have a pressure cooker, you can say goodbye to pretty much all of those steps. With a pressure cooker, you have the choice to skip the soaking part all together and have perfectly cooked beans in as little as 20 minutes. But if you do decide to soak your beans for a few hours or overnight, they will cook much faster—in as little as 7 minutes! Keep in mind; different types of beans will have different cooking times. Cooking beans from scratch is just one of many things a pressure cooker can do for you. Potatoes cook incredibly fast (and taste wonderful mashed), as do other vegetables in the pressure cooker. Soups, stews, chilis, and even rice can be made in no time at all.

If it's in your budget, give one of these appliances a go and learn how to use it to your advantage. Soon, you will find that you have more time on your hands and maybe even better tasting meals!

All About Beans

A healthy plant-strong diet is not complete without beans! As you probably already know, beans have a ton of benefits because they are a plant-based whole food. I'm sure at some point in your plant-strong journey, someone has asked you how you're getting your protein. Protein is the first and most recognized benefit of beans. In fact, 1 cup of black beans contains 14g of protein. These nutritional powerhouses are known to help prevent heart disease, cancer, and assist in controlling diabetes. Beans are 100% free of cholesterol, low in fat, and high in fiber.

If you enjoy variety in your meals, then you're going to love beans. There are so many types of beans available, it's crazy! You're probably very familiar with black beans, pinto beans, garbanzo beans, and kidney beans. But don't limit yourself to just these common ones. If your grocery store has a bulk section with dry beans, buy a cup or so of a few varieties that catch your eye. This way, you'll get to try different types of beans without a huge commitment or price tag.

The biggest dilemma for most people is whether to buy dried or canned beans. There are several differences between dried and canned beans. For convenience purposes, canned beans are the clear winner. If you're constantly short on time, then canned beans may be for you. They work in a pinch if you're putting together a quick recipe. All you need to do is simply open the can and give them a good rinse. You can still enjoy dried beans even if you don't always have a lot of time; it just takes a little planning.

Dried beans are usually significantly less expensive than canned. They also tend to be a better deal because, like grains, dried beans expand as they cook. On average, dried beans expand 2-3 times their initial size after cooking. For example, a typical 15-oz can of beans contains 1.5 cups of cooked beans. This is the equivalent of ½ cup of dried beans.

Some people may argue that there is a flavor difference between dried and canned beans but I don't really find that to be true. Although, the upside to dried beans is that you can flavor them to your liking. While canned beans are usually cooked in plain water without any spices, you can add absolutely anything to dried beans prepared at home.

Appliances like pressure cookers and slow cookers simplify the process of cooking dried beans. Of course, you always have the option to cook beans on the stove. You're guaranteed a healthy meal however you make them.

Resources:

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyCooking/Bean-Benefits_UCM_430105_Article.jsp

http://www.aicr.org/foods-that-fight-cancer/foodsthatfightcancer_beans.html

<http://www.usdrybeans.com/nutrition/health-benefits-of-beans/>



Cooking For The Week

We tend to gravitate towards pre-packaged foods and fast food restaurants because they are exactly that—fast! If it's been a long day, the absolute last thing the average person would want to do is cook. Plus, if you haven't eaten for a few hours and you're starving, it makes cooking especially difficult!

As college students, we are constantly busy and in a hurry. Between classes and studying, it's not always easy to find time to prepare a meal. Despite all the chaos, it is vitally important to stay healthy! One way to make you stay on track is to have the majority of your meals already made. **Preparation is key.**

Have you ever wondered why salad bars are so enticing? Everything's already cut up and ready to go! Using the salad bar concept to prepare your food is an easy way to save valuable time. It also helps you be more productive throughout the week because you don't have to think about what you are going to eat or when you're going to have the time to prepare it.

Here's what you need to do: First, set aside a few hours one day a week. During this time, you will wash, chop, boil, steam, sauté, and bake your heart out. Eventually, you will become excellent at multi-tasking!

Grains, especially rice, take a pretty decent amount of time to cook. Because of this, it is a good idea to prepare a big batch so you have it for the entire week. Store what you're going to use in the fridge and stick the rest in the freezer for another day. Don't

be afraid to make a really big batch! You'll be glad you did when you discover a bag of frozen rice in your freezer.

If you like to cook your beans from scratch, you know how long it takes. Just like grains, beans can be stored in the fridge and even the freezer.

Fruits and vegetables can be made into fast food. You're more likely to reach for a healthy snack of fruits and vegetables if they are already washed. Take a tip from the salad bar and cut up a bunch of veggies for salads.

Even though potatoes can be made in a few minutes in the microwave, they never seem to taste the same as when they are baked in the oven. Instead of baking just one or two potatoes, bake seven. Maybe even bake the whole bag! Cooked potatoes and sweet potatoes can be stored in the fridge and reheated whenever you need one.

Breakfast foods can also be made ahead of time. Baked oatmeal is wonderful prepared in advance. If you're a fan of overnight oats, those work great too.

These are just a few, but there are many more ingredients that can be prepared ahead of time. Many of your favorite recipes can be made in a big batch for the week. Get creative and come up with something new. Who knows, once all of your ingredients are prepped, you might just make something surprisingly delicious!

In just a few hours, you are left with completely prepped ingredients or even entire meals! So when it's time to eat, all you have to do is grab it from the fridge! This is something everyone can do to save time, not just busy students. The best part? Your food is ready when you are!

Packing Lunch

Packing a plant-strong lunch can be super simple; all it takes is a little planning and some creativity.

Start by thinking of meals that travel well. Come lunchtime, there is nothing worse than reaching into your bag only to find out that your salad is warm and has wilted. Lovely. Having the right container means not having to deal with mushy sandwiches or gooey salads. From bento boxes to thermoses, there are so many neat lunch boxes and bags available today.

The Main Meal

A bean salad, a grain salad, or even last night's lasagna, your options are endless. Don't forget about the lunchtime staple—sandwiches! Make a sandwich on Ezekiel bread (or another oil-free bread). Slather it with a generous amount of hummus and throw a ton of fresh veggies on top. Grilled or sautéed vegetables work equally as well. Wraps are another fantastic way to pack in the veggies. You can even use a collard green to make a wrap! Add in some brown rice and beans and you've got yourself a burrito.

Here are a few ideas to get you thinking:

Chickpea salad-chickpeas, celery, bell pepper, tomatoes

Veggie burger

Kale salad

Collard wrap

Plant-strong sushi rolls

Tomato sandwich

Gigantic salad

Quinoa salad-quinoa, corn, bell pepper, onion, and mushrooms

Portabello burger

Steamed vegetables with brown rice

Veggie filled burrito

Mexican chili

Lentil soup

Oatmeal

Loaded sweet or regular potato

Veggie sandwich/roll up

Nut butter and fruit sandwich

The Sides

Fruit and cut up veggies are always a delicious compliment to any meal.

Bananas

Engine 2 crackers

Fresh berries

Oranges

Grapes

Pears

Apples

Peaches, plums, or nectarines

Cherry tomatoes

Carrot, celery, bell pepper, and zucchini sticks

Potato wedges (regular or sweet)

Nut butter banana bites

Popcorn with nutritional yeast

Dates

Mango

Homemade granola or trail mix

Dips and Dressings

Were you once addicted to mayo? Try hummus; you'll love it. Plus, if you make your own, you can flavor it any way you like. Pack a tablespoon of a nut butter to give your lunch a little extra staying power. Instead of using ketchup, try tomato paste with a few spices; it's surprisingly tasty! As for salad dressings, keep it simple with a splash of plain or flavored balsamic vinegar. A squeeze of lime, lemon, or orange juice is another great option. Of course, you can always whip open your copy of *Engine 2 Diet* or *My Beef With Meat* for some excellent ideas.

No microwave or refrigerator? No problem! If you're not in a cafeteria or a break room, these appliances might not be available. Thermos containers do an excellent job of keeping your food warm. To keep cold food cold, pack a cooler. Just throw in a few ice packs and you're good to go. Thermoses and coolers come in all different shapes and sizes so you won't have a problem finding one that works for you.



Easy Treats

We can all agree that very once in a while, it's nice to have a sweet treat. Don't think that just because you're eating plant-strong that you can't have dessert! It's a common misconception to think eating healthy completely avoids treats. While it's not really a good idea to indulge all the time, something every once in a while is perfectly fine—as long as it is plant-strong! No idea where to start? Try some of these easy treats, they're super quick to put together and, of course, they taste insanely good.

Ice cream. There's nothing like it on a hot summer day, or really any day for that matter! This ice cream will make you forget the real stuff that's packed with dairy, eggs, and a crazy amount of other things that shouldn't go into your body. This delectable creamy treat contains only one ingredient, frozen bananas. If you're not a fan of bananas, don't worry; absolutely any frozen fruit will do the trick! All you need to make the ice cream is either a food processor, blender, or Yonanas machine. Let the fruit thaw for a few minutes so it's not rock hard, you want it to give a little bit when you touch it. If you're using a Yonanas machine, you can just pop the fruit right in without adding any liquid. On the other hand, if you're using a blender or food processor, you may need to add a teeny tiny amount of non-dairy milk to get the machine going. This ice cream is delicious made with just bananas, but if you want to take it over the top, add a sprinkle of cocoa powder. Mix other frozen fruit with bananas to create even more flavors and don't forget about the toppings!

Baked apples. If you've ever enjoyed any baked good with apples like apple pie, apple crisp, apple muffins, then you're going to love these. Baked apples are really so simple to make, it's crazy! Start by preheating the oven to 350°. While you're waiting on the oven to heat, cut apples into 1 inch cubes. Toss with cinnamon and place into an oven-safe dish. Add a bit of water. Bake until tender. You can also cook these in a rice cooker or slow cooker. For a little extra something, add a sprinkle of toasted oats on top.

Fresh fruit with mint. At the end of a meal, sometimes a piece of fresh fruit really hits the spot. But there are always days when that's just not satisfying enough. Choose a variety of fresh fruits, and don't just stick with the familiar ones. Branch out a bit and try something new like a combo of papaya, kiwi, and blueberries. Toss in some fresh mint and possibly a squeeze or two of some sort of citrus.

Hungry for more? Pick up a cookbook that follows plant-strong guidelines. There are so many recipes available online.



Avoid The Lure of “Healthy” Junk Food

Beware of “healthy” junk food. Walk into any grocery store in America and you will soon find yourself face to face with advertisements. So many products today are promoted to be good for you. The manufacturers of these foods are smart and do their jobs well. They know exactly what words to put on the front of a package to get you to buy it. Even the design of the packaging is intended to pull you in. These manufacturers want you to pick their product up and drop it in your shopping cart.

Why do we want something unhealthy to be good for us? Dr. John McDougall said it best, “people love to hear good news about their bad habits.” So very true. Today, it doesn't take much for a person to consider something healthy. The idea may come from a commercial on TV, word of mouth, or an advertisement in a health magazine. Words like organic, GMO-free, natural, healthy, raw, or superfood tend to make us think that a certain product promotes health. In reality, grocery stores carry organic ice cream and natural potato chips. Before you set the product in your cart, ask yourself if it is plant-strong approved.

Not all packaged food is unhealthy! The freezer section contains packages of fruits, vegetables, and brown rice, which are all perfectly acceptable. Canned beans and tomato products are also safe packaged foods. Dr. McDougall also has a line of packaged foods. And don't forget about the entire Engine 2 food line available at Whole Foods! As always, be sure to check the ingredients just in case!

Bottom line? Stick to foods that are plant-based and whole. Take a copy of the Quick Start Guide with you when you shop. It will make shopping so much easier!



Can I Be Plant-Strong and Gluten-Free?

Absolutely! If you are gluten-free be sure to avoid wheat, barley, and rye. Eating plant-strong means eating whole grains, not just whole wheat. Although whole wheat is a very popular grain, there are tons of other whole grains that are gluten-free.

Amaranth, Millet, Quinoa, Brown rice, Wild rice, Sorghum, Buckwheat, and corn.

Oats Due to cross contamination it is important to buy oats that are certified gluten-free if you have a celiac disease or are sensitive to gluten.

Becoming gluten-free exposes you to grains that you've probably never heard of before. Try one or try them all! You'll never know unless you dive right on in.

Stray away from safety, and begin to use grains in an unconventional way! There seems to be an emerging trend with switching up breakfast grains. Search anywhere on the internet and you're sure to encounter a recipe that calls for quinoa, amaranth, or even brown rice to be prepared like oatmeal. It produces a different taste and texture that you might actually come to love for breakfast. But don't forget about lunch and dinner! While it's always delicious, brown rice can get a little boring after a bit. Go crazy and have oats for dinner! Preparing oats with water instead of milk turns them into a savory grain. Pair oats with steamed veggies and guaranteed one delicious meal.

Being gluten-free does have its limitations. Whole wheat has become so popular over the past few years that it seems to be popping up in everything. It's a breeze to go to the store and buy a loaf of oil-free whole grain bread. An oil-free gluten-free whole grain bread on the other hand? Not so easy. If you're avoiding gluten, homemade bread is your best bet. It requires extra effort, but you avoid any cross contamination. This is incredibly important for those with celiac disease. Plus, it is so satisfying to make bread from scratch. In all seriousness, who doesn't love the smell of homemade bread?

When you're at the grocery store, avoid the temptation of the so-called "healthy" gluten-free products! Nearly every time I go to the grocery store I spot a new gluten-free product. I'm pretty sure they are multiplying by the dozen. Regardless, do not be fooled by the packaging! The manufacturers may make the product look healthy, but that doesn't mean that it's good for you. Anything in a package is most likely processed in one way or another. Do your best to stick to whole foods, as minimally processed and as close to nature as possible. Brown rice flour to use in recipes is fine, but forget about the pre-packaged brown rice flour cookie.

Speaking of cookies, when altering a recipe just use a whole grain gluten-free flour. Brown rice flour works well for many things. There are so many great gluten-free recipes available on the internet, be sure to check them out.

Resources:

<http://wholegrainscouncil.org>

What's The Deal With Caffeine?

Caffeine is a highly addictive drug. It is commonly found in coffee beans, certain types of tea leaves, chocolate, soft drinks, and some medications. Companies put it in so many things today that it's difficult to find something that doesn't contain caffeine.

Caffeine is actually a product made by plants. But don't be fooled, just because it is made by plants doesn't mean that it is harmless! In fact, caffeine has many serious side effects. Your heart is greatly affected by the power of caffeine. An increased heartbeat, uneven rhythm, and high blood pressure are all common. Caffeine can also produce headaches, shakiness, nervousness, dizziness, dehydration, and sleep interference. Dr. Esselstyn advises to avoid caffeine because of its effect on endothelial cell function. With continued use, your body craves more and before you know it, you become addicted. It really makes you question why companies opt to put this in products that we consume.

Part of being plant-strong means kicking the caffeine habit. Saying goodbye to caffeine isn't easy, but you can do it! Think of it this way; everything that initially seems hard to do is worth it in the end. Start by making simple switches.

If you love the taste of coffee and simply don't think you could ever part with it, don't worry! You don't have to give up coffee, just make the switch to decaf. It might taste different at first, but after a while, you shouldn't notice the difference.

Pop is a staple for most Americans but it is wildly unhealthy. Besides containing caffeine, pop is filled to the brim with sugar. But wait, diet pops aren't any better! While they might not have real sugar, they pack quite a dose of the fake stuff along with a bunch of other things you shouldn't be drinking.

A plant-strong alternative to this sugary drink is sparkling water. I know what you're thinking, sparkling water, really? So maybe it doesn't taste exactly like the pop you once loved, but it's a fairly tasty option. Because it's carbonated water, the fizzy bubbles will remind you of pop. It's actually amazing how many different varieties of sparkling water you can find at the grocery store. Check out your store to see what they have! I've seen lime, peach, blackberry, lemon, grapefruit, berry, and peach-pear. If none of these sound appealing to you, there is always an option to grab plain sparkling water and add your own flavorings. Try some fruit and herbs or maybe even cucumber for a spa-like experience.

Flavored water is another great idea for a caffeine free drink. These simple drinks have recently seen an increase in popularity; they just keep popping up on grocery shelves! It's probably because they're shockingly delicious. Blackberry, watermelon, strawberry-kiwi, pear, lavender mint, and cloves cardamom cinnamon are just a few I've spotted. As always, you can combine your favorite flavors to make your own.

Herbal and decaf teas also receive the plant-strong seal of approval! Enjoyed hot or cold, these drinks are so versatile. There

are incredible amounts of flavored herbal and decaf teas that you'll have no problem finding one you like.

Our bodies have no need for caffeine, none at all. It is not essential to our health and as you can see it can have pretty bad effects. So go ahead, make the change and remove caffeine once and for all from your diet. Your body will thank you for it.

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/UnderstandingOver-the-CounterMedicines/UCM205286.pdf>



Tips For Holidays and Celebrations

Holidays and celebrations come always come at the same time every year. Besides spending time with loved ones, the next thing that's on everyone's mind is the food. To most people, a holiday is not a holiday without meat in some way, shape or form.

While it is often the centerpiece of most American's tables, it doesn't have to be yours. Remember, going against the norm is not easy! Many people, family included, may be intrigued and question your eating choices. So be prepared and keep these tips in mind the next time you attend a celebration.

- Make sure you have something to eat. If you're not the host, bring a dish that you think others will enjoy and that you can eat too. It can be a simple vegetable tray with hummus or even an entire casserole. And don't forget dessert, everyone loves a good plant-strong treat! Not only will you be helping the host out, you're also guaranteed to have something to eat.
- Remember your goals. Don't get too caught up in the holiday spirit. Temptations lie everywhere but don't give in! You've come too far in your journey to health so don't let one moment take that away from you! It's simply not worth it.
- Don't get defensive. It's hard when someone, especially a family member, does not approve of the way that you choose to eat. As difficult as it is to just accept it and move on, this is your best option. Not everyone is willing to understand

the in's and out's of plant-based nutrition during the holidays or at family functions.

- Be prepared for questions. Whether this is your first year being plant-strong, or you've been plant-strong for a few years, people will be curious—It's only natural! Respond happily even though you may answer the same question ten times.
- Avoid talking about what you eat. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, just change the conversation. There are so many other things to talk about during a celebration besides food.
- Understand that that you're probably not going to change someone's mind with one conversation about plant-based nutrition.
- If someone seems truly interested in this way of eating, recommend the movie *Forks Over Knives*. It is a great way to introduce someone to a plant-based whole food diet. If they're willing to read a few books, write down your favorites including *Engine 2* and *My Beef With Meat*.
- Try not to focus on what's missing from the table. No turkey this year? Embrace the change. The company is what's important, not the food.
- Host a plant-strong meal. Pick a few of your favorite recipes and let the food speak for itself. Wow your guests with the many flavors and colors of plant-strong dishes.

The most important thing to remember is to keep the focus on your family. Spending time with family and loved ones is invaluable. There are very few times throughout the year when families can come together. Just forget about the food and soak up all the magic of the holidays, the joy of birthdays, and the delight of celebrations. Before you know it, you'll be creating new memories.



Falling Off The Bandwagon

In all honesty, there may be times in your life when you fall off the plant-strong bandwagon. Too much pressure from your boss, your parents, or your teachers can often throw a person into a state of distress. Certain uncontrollable circumstances may arise and turn your entire world upside down. Whatever the reason, just know that it happens. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Life is a journey, not a destination.”

Not one person is perfect. We all make mistakes and in turn, we learn valuable lessons from them. The same thing goes for eating plant-strong. Maybe you've become less strict about oil and let it slip back into your life. Or maybe you're treating yourself to “healthy” junk food a little too often.

Try not beat yourself up over it and above all, do not be discouraged. If you're able to recognize these tendencies, chances are, you're going to be able to stop them! Whether you feel yourself slipping or you've completely gone back to your old eating habits, the most important part is that you keep trying.

Now, the question is, how exactly do you get back on track?

Set new goals. Not just any new goals, SMART goals. SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Make your goal as specific as possible, an example would be throwing out the spray oil or adding in 1 cup of green vegetables with dinner. Stay away from goals that are vague such as trying

to eat healthier because they often have loopholes. Your goal is measurable if its progress can be measured. To be a really good goal, you must be able to see if you're making progress. One of the biggest mistakes people make is choosing a goal that is difficult to achieve or even completely unattainable. Attainable and realistic go hand-in-hand. You're not going to set a goal to complete a marathon if the farthest distance you've covered is five miles. Goals should be able to be completed in a certain amount of time. A goal you set for next year should be different from the goal you set for next week. Remember the SMART acronym, you'll be surprised how often you end up using it!

Remember what you're ultimately working towards—being healthy! Although this might be something that is achieved in the long run, it is still important to keep in your mind. Knowing that you can feel happier and be healthier gives you motivation to continue.

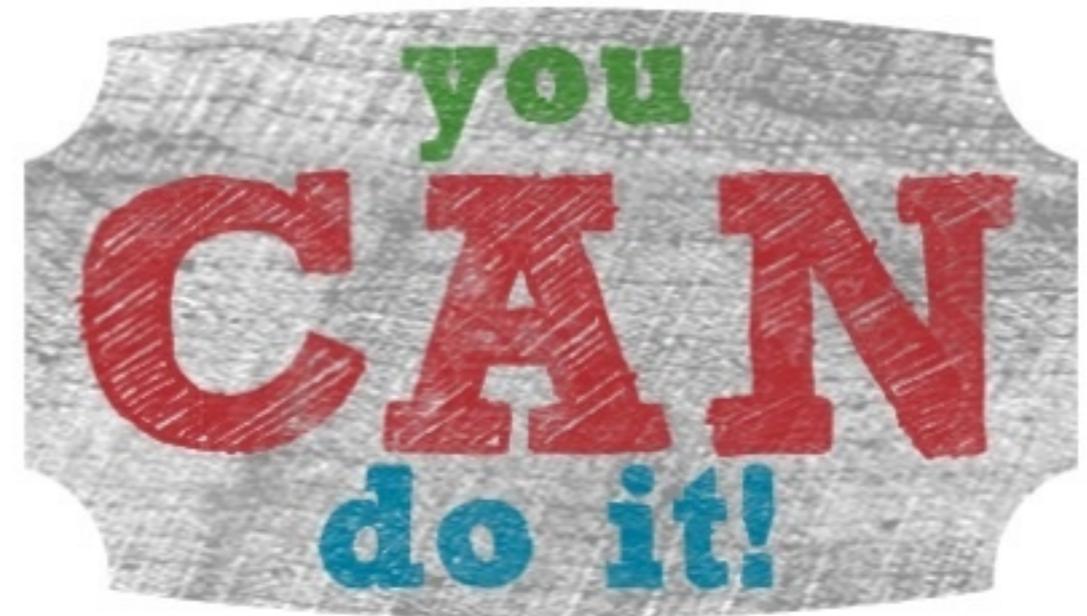
Procrastinating does not work. Start right now, not tomorrow. Before you know it tomorrow will become the next day and the next day will become next week. Consider it a challenge and attack it.

Journal it out. Start a food journal and write down everything you eat in a day. Make it a fun task, add some inspirational quotes, jot down your feelings and just let it go. You may be surprised with the results.

Join **Engine 2 Extra**. Interact with the plant-strong community. Start a blog, strike up a conversation, browse the photo gallery, and you'll be inspired in no time. Plus, the Engine 2 Extra coaches are always available!

Smile. I know it sounds silly, but I promise it works! The best accessory a person can wear is a smile; it's an instant mood booster.

Stay positive and remember, you can do this!



The Money Factor

Everyone knows that going to college and starting out on your own isn't cheap. Honestly, it's pretty pricey and this can really limit your spending money. Lots of people say that eating healthy is too expensive. They say it simply can't be done without spending your entire paycheck and it certainly can't be done on a budget. Guess what? They're wrong!

Frozen foods are lifesavers. Unless a particular fruit or vegetable happens to be in season or on sale, you can count on the bags of frozen fruits and vegetables to be cheaper than their fresh counterparts. Besides saving you money, frozen foods also save you time! The prep-work like washing and chopping has already been done for you. As we all know, sometimes time is money! Plus, if it's the middle of winter and you're just dying for a fruit or vegetable that is out of season, forget about buying it fresh, as it tends to be pricier and tasteless out of season. Instead, head to the freezer section! Because frozen foods are picked when ripe and quickly frozen, they often taste just as good or even better than fresh.

You know the weather's starting to get nicer when farmers markets open for the season. If you're lucky enough to live by one, be sure to take full advantage! Prices at farmers markets are significantly lower than grocery stores because they don't have to deal with all the packaging and shipping. It's always a real treat to be able to ask a farmer how something was grown. They tend to be extremely friendly too, often times allowing you to sample

their product! Because the food is super fresh, sometimes even picked that morning, it always tastes amazing. If you've never been to a farmers market, it's definitely something to check out. Just be sure to have cash on hand when you attend, farmers rarely take credit cards!

Don't ignore the bulk food section of your grocery store. No packaging plus no waste equals cheaper prices. It's also a great way to try out new foods! If you're not too sure about something, you don't have to commit to a huge bag and then end up wasting the rest. In the bulk foods section, you can easily purchase the exact amount needed to make one meal.

Keep an open mind and shop at other stores. Just because you eat a healthy diet, doesn't mean you have to shop at a health food store. Plenty of grocery stores carry a wonderful selection of produce and plant-strong foods. Depending on the store, they might even be less expensive. Always keep your eyes open for plant-strong food everywhere you go. Odds are, you'll be surprised with what you find.

Although this one seems obvious, be on the lookout for sales. Even if you don't subscribe to a newspaper, most ads can be found online. Some stores may even run specials on certain days of the week. If you do find a good sale, be sure to stock up! Canned and boxed products like tomatoes, beans, and vegetable broth tend to have a decent expiration date and most foods will freeze well.

Don't forget about coupons! Always check your local papers because you never know what you're going to find. Lately, lots of stores are offering printable online coupons. Like your favorite brands on Facebook, sometimes they provide coupons.

No doubt, healthy food can be expensive but it certainly doesn't have to be! Most of the time, the food people think is healthy comes in a package. By eating plant-strong, you generally avoid packaged foods and focus mainly on whole foods. Whole grains, starchy vegetables (like squash and potatoes), beans, fruits and vegetables tend to be much less expensive, and much healthier, than anything that comes in a package. So, now that you know that eating plant-strong can be done on a budget, get out there and start shopping!



The Instant Solution to Stress

You know the feeling. Like an approaching deadline, your heart begins to beat faster, the muscles in your upper back tense up, your breathing becomes strained, and maybe you even break a sweat. This is a lovely little thing called stress.

Everyone experiences stress, but college students are particularly susceptible. Professors constantly throw out new assignments and in return, expect quality work. Due dates that at one point seemed far away begin to creep closer and when it comes time for finals, everyone is in a tizzy.

Whether your stress stems from work, school, family, or friends, it can take a toll on your mind and body. Some common symptoms of stress include headaches, muscle pains, fatigue, anxiety, and depression.

Often times, it may feel as though stress is controlling your life. The thing that you need to remember is that you are in control. YOU, not the stress! This means that you have the power to control your stress.

Some stress can be relieved instantly if you just begin paying attention to one simple thing. It's free, the effects are immediate, and you already have everything you need to begin. Although it might sound too good to be true, it's not. So what's the instant solution to stress? It's your breath.

Just Breathe. Sounds simple, right? Our entire body depends on our constant inhalations and exhalations. Without this rhythmic movement, we would cease to exist! Besides being a fantastic stress-reliever, breath has several other benefits including greater energy, better mental clarity, improved circulation, and it's also a natural detoxifier.

Breathing is so second nature to us, we often times don't even realize we're doing it. In really stressful situations, it is natural for our breath to become quick and shallow and for our body to tense up. The next time you're stressed, take a moment and concentrate on your breath. Notice your inhales and exhales. If they are rapid and short begin to slow them down. Try to deepen your breath and relax your body. Do not think about what you have to do, where you have to go, or who you have to meet, just breathe and remember that everything is ok.

Resource:

<http://www.breathing.com/articles/benefits.htm>

Staying Active

An important part of being healthy is staying active. Getting physical activity doesn't always mean going to the gym and sweating it out on a cardio machine for an hour. As working professionals or busy students, sometimes we don't even have the time to spare to drive to the gym. The great thing about exercise is that any amount of time is beneficial. "Quality not quantity" comes into play here.

As always, please check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Feeling overworked or stressed? Working out is a great way to melt the stress away. When you workout, you focus completely on yourself, your goals, and what your body needs. Your mind begins to clear and you feel rejuvenated.

Before you do anything, start by getting in the right frame of mind. Don't think about the time that you don't have, how tired you feel, or how you really hate working out. Instead, focus your attention on the end goal: feeling good! That state of bliss you feel after working out is completely real. Exercise releases endorphins commonly known as "feel good endorphins." Keep this in mind when you have a rough start to the day.

Go outside for a walk/run or hop on a treadmill. Don't think about the distance or the time, just walk. If you want to break a sweat, challenge yourself by speeding it up a bit. Intervals are a

great way to increase your heart rate and accomplish a lot more in a shorter period of time. They also provide a distraction from the same old workouts. For example, if you're on the treadmill, walk one minute at one incline, and then walk another minutes at a higher incline. If you're outside, make a point to walk at different speeds for one minute each. Experiment with various speeds and times to find something you enjoy. Don't limit yourself to just walking, intervals are a fantastic way to begin to run and to make running more exciting.

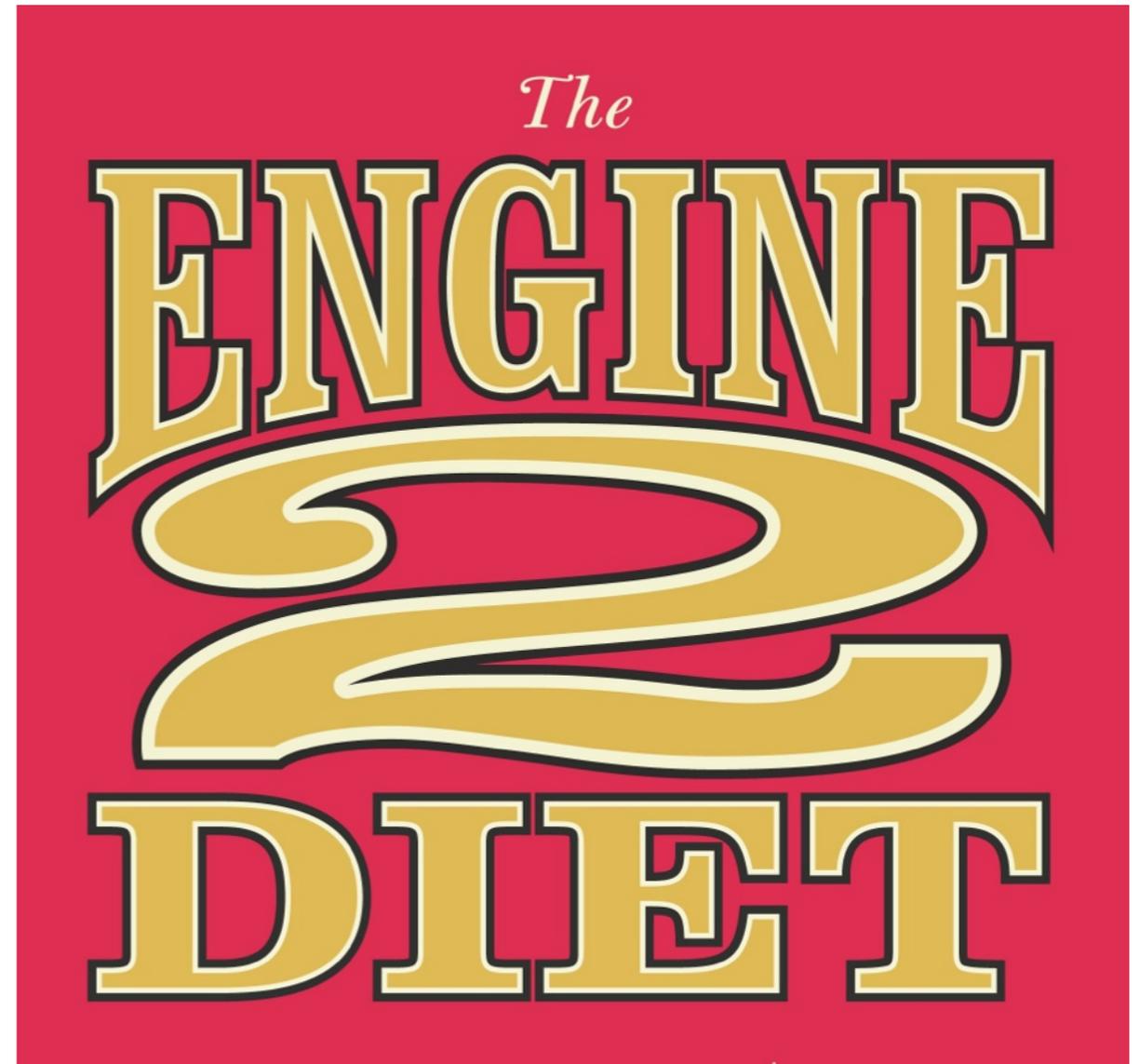
Practice yoga. Besides being a terrific way to melt away stress, practicing yoga greatly increases your strength. Most people think yoga is either a class where you chant and touch your toes or an intense workout in a sauna-like room. Keep in mind; a yoga practice or studio can be different depending on where you live and what is popular. While there are some styles of yoga that match these descriptions, the most popular type of yoga in America is Hatha yoga, which mainly focuses on the physical part of the practice. If you're completely new to yoga, don't worry, there are so many styles of yoga, you're sure to find one you enjoy. Typically, yoga classes are about an hour long, but if you don't have that kind of time, check out some videos online. If you search the internet, you will find tons of free yoga videos, most of which are less than an hour. There are also some great subscription based services that offer yoga classes, which you can take comfortably from your own home.

Hop on your bike. Riding your bike is a great way to get out of your head. It is also an excellent lower body workout! Take a ride through the neighborhood and take full advantage of those hills. By the time you return home, your legs will be burning and your heart will be pumping indicating a successful workout.

Create a circuit. Circuits consist of several sets of different cardio and strength exercises. By moving quickly from one exercise to the next, your heart rate increases along with some sweat. Besides providing a quick burn, the best thing about circuits is that you can tailor them to suit whatever you're looking for that day. It's completely up to you whether you want to focus specific area, or maybe you're willing to work your entire body. You can do circuits anywhere and without the use of any special equipment. Of course, they can also be done at the gym. Most exercises just require your own body weight but in some cases, it might be helpful to have a few weights, nothing fancy. Start by hopping on the internet or picking up a book of exercises and selecting exercises you would enjoy doing. This is all you need to create your own circuit, be sure to give it a try!

Exercise during commercials. Television is a fantastic invention but does nothing for our health. Instead of sitting for the entire show, pick a few exercises to do during commercials. The average commercial break is 2 minutes, so use this small amount of time to your advantage! Try this: pick 4 different types of exercises and do each for 30 seconds. Keep it up for every commercial break and before you know it, you will have completed a mini-workout!

Take some time for yourself, it doesn't have to be much, and just move. There are many ways to incorporate physical activity in everyday life even if your schedule is chaotic. Making the time to workout is easier than it seems, and it is always beneficial. Remember, no one regrets a workout.



<http://engine2diet.com>

<http://engine2extra.com>