

# eat your veggies

**TURBOCHARGE YOUR HEALTH  
AND HELP THE PLANET JUST BY EATING  
MORE VEGETARIAN MEALS**

BY **TIMOTHY MAHER**  
RECIPES BY **CAROLINE WRIGHT**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CON POULOS**

WHAT IF THERE WERE A SIMPLE way to drastically cut your saturated-fat intake, lower the odds of getting many chronic diseases, and help save the planet in the process? There is, and it's as easy as eating more vegetarian meals.

The health perks are undeniable. According to the American Dietetic Association, vegetarians have a lower incidence of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and several types of cancer. They also fare much better than meat eaters when it comes to obesity and cardiovascular disease. In fact, researchers have found a direct correlation between reducing meat consumption and a lower risk of obesity.


Reaping these benefits is simpler than you think. To start, forget about giving up meat cold turkey. Instead, take a flexitarian (also known as a part-time vegetarian) approach. Introduce a few meatless dinners a week and see how it goes. Keep it easy, too. If you like burritos, have a burrito. Just substitute black beans for the beef. When you feel like a burger, look in the produce aisle. A grilled portobello mushroom can be just as filling.

As for the concern that vegetarians come up short on protein, don't fret. An average adult woman needs about 65 grams of protein a day. But Americans tend to consume

way more than they need (a skinless chicken breast alone contains 43 grams), and eating too much protein over a long period can stress your kidneys and lead to osteoporosis. To reach your target, you don't need meat—plenty of other foods rank high on the protein scale. Lentils, kidney beans, walnuts, eggs, and quinoa all make great sources. Even asparagus and broccoli contain protein.

As an added bonus, you'll help the planet as you boost your health. According to a 2006 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization report, meat and dairy production creates more carbon emissions than all those cars and trucks on the road. "The American diet is absolutely warming the planet," says Kate Geagan, R.D., author of the new book *Go Green, Get Lean*. "It's the SUV of eating styles." The reason? Cows emit methane, which traps 21 times more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide does. And their solid waste gives off nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 300 times more powerful than CO<sub>2</sub>.

The facts say it all. Give up meat once, twice, or even four or more times a week, and you can make a big environmental impact. To help you out, we offer these four tasty vegetarian meals guaranteed to hit the spot.



**WHOLE-WHEAT GREEK PIZZA**

Vitamin-C- and beta-carotene-packed arugula perks up this whole-wheat pizza.

## SPRING BARLEY RISOTTO

SERVES 4

PREP TIME: 40 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES

A healthier alternative to the more traditional arborio risotto rice, barley adds iron and fiber to this dish.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup pearled barley
- 2 leeks, white and light-green parts only, thinly sliced
- ½ cup dry white wine or water
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

14½ ounces vegetable broth

- 1 bunch asparagus (about 1 pound), trimmed and cut on bias into 2-inch pieces
- 1 box (10 ounces) frozen peas, defrosted
- ½ cup fresh grated Parmesan
- ¼ cup thinly sliced mint leaves, plus small leaves for garnish

1. In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium. Add barley and leeks; cook until beginning to soften, 5 to 7 minutes. Add wine; cook until evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add 2 cups water; bring to a boil and season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat; simmer until liquid absorbs, about 10 minutes.
2. Add broth and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until barley is tender and creamy, about 10 minutes. Add asparagus; cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in peas until heated through. Add Parmesan and mint; season with salt and pepper. Garnish with mint leaves.

PER SERVING: 402 calories; 15 g protein; 11 g fat; 59 g carb; 13 g fiber. **V**



### SPRING BARLEY RISOTTO

One cup of the green peas found in this dish offers more protein than a large egg.

## STUFFED POBLANO PEPPERS IN A CHIPOTLE SAUCE

SERVES 4

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR

As far as chiles go, poblano peppers rank among the more mild varieties, though they still offer a nice zing. To counter the spice, serve with a mixed-greens salad.

- 4 large poblano peppers
- 2 teaspoons plus 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped chipotle chile in adobo
- 1 garlic clove
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, roughly chopped, plus more for garnish
- ⅓ cup quinoa
- 8 ounces small mushrooms, such as white button or cremini, trimmed and quartered
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 1 can (15 ounces) black soy beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup crumbled fresh goat cheese (4 ounces)

1. Preheat oven to 475°. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, rub peppers with 2 teaspoons oil. Roast until slightly blackened and softened, 15 to 20 minutes, turning once. When cool enough to handle, remove skins. Make a small slit in each pepper and carefully remove seeds, keeping stem end intact.
2. In a blender, combine chipotle, garlic, and ¾ cup water; season with salt and pepper and blend until smooth. Add cilantro and pulse once to combine.
3. In a small saucepan, bring ½ cup water to a boil. Add quinoa, cover, and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand 5 minutes; fluff with a fork.
4. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high. Add mushrooms; season with salt and pepper. Cook until mushrooms are tender, about 5 minutes; add corn and beans and cook until heated, about 2 minutes. Stir in ½ cup cheese and quinoa.
5. Pour sauce in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Stuff peppers with filling and arrange in dish; dot with ½ cup cheese. Bake until golden, 15 to 20 minutes. Cool in pan 10 minutes.

PER SERVING: 376 calories; 21 g protein; 21 g fat; 32 g carb; 10 g fiber. **V**

**V vegetarian:** no meat products

**V vegan:** no animal derivatives

**S special diet:** no dairy, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, eggs, peanuts, or tree nuts

FOOD STYLING BY LIZA JERNOW, APOSTROPHE  
PROP STYLING BY MICHELLE WONG