

# Supercharge Your Gut! The 30 Plant Foods Challenge

## Can YOU eat 30 Different Plant Foods in a week?



Have you heard of the latest gut health challenge?

We all know that eating plants is good for us. However, it seems that eating a large VARIETY of plant foods is even better. Eating many different plant foods improves our gut health by encouraging the growth of different species of bacteria that live there, especially the healthy, beneficial (good) bacteria.

### WHAT: THE CHALLENGE

It's as simple as eating up to 30 different plants in a 7-day period in July. Each food item only counts once in the week, even if you eat it lots of times. Get the family involved and stick a chart on the fridge for every family member to see who can get to 30 in a week.

If you sprinkle a few walnuts on your oatmeal that counts as two plant foods – walnuts and oatmeal – you do not have to count portions, or eat a specific amount – just write down all the different plant foods that you eat in a week. If you happen to add almond milk to your oatmeal with walnuts, you now have three different plant foods at one meal.

It's important to remember that we still recommend eating at least 2 cups of fruits and 2 ½ cups of vegetables per day, so a banana (which counts as 1 cup of fruit) a day is great - but the banana can only count as one of your 30 plant foods for the week! Portions DO NOT matter in this challenge.

### HOW TO GET STARTED



- **Choose a start date for your 7-day challenge sometime between July 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.** Commit to writing down each time you consume a new or different plant food over the course of 7 days in a row. **Use the attached chart to make this easy to do!**
- **See the chart for directions on how to fill it out, and how to submit a copy of your results for an educational tool to help you eat more plant foods.**
- Consider trying a new fruit or vegetable that you have never eaten before in the week.
- Herbs and spices are a really simple way to add variety and flavor to your cooking and they count as plant foods. Add fresh herbs to your salads and spices to your soups.
- Look for mixed beans like a 7-bean soup mix to boost your bean variety.
- Buy frozen fruit to add to yogurt, smoothies, oatmeal or your cereal bowl.

- Include a plant food at every single meal. Here are some ideas: top your yogurt with mixed berries and almond slices, add grated carrot and lettuce to your chicken sandwich or mushrooms and onion to your omelet.
- Swap out meat for a vegetarian protein option 1-2 days of the week, like dried beans, lentils, mushrooms, veggie burgers, tofu, etc.
- Vegetable or fruit salads and stir-fries are easy meal options to get lots of different colorful plants on a plate.
- Swap the ultra-processed snacks like potato chips or candy for a handful of nuts, a piece of fruit or seeded crackers with some hummus and sliced veggie sticks.



## WHAT COUNTS AS A PLANT FOOD?

If the food comes from a plant and is minimally processed, it counts! Plant foods include all fruits and vegetables, legumes (peas, lentils, tofu and canned or dried beans), grains, milks made from nuts or grains, nuts and seeds.

### Fruits and Vegetables

Strawberries,  blueberries, raspberries, tomatoes,  carrots, cucumbers, apricots, sweet potatoes, peaches, plums, melons, eggplant, lemons, lettuce, green beans, kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, spinach, corn, Swiss chard, celery, beets, onions, cauliflower, cherries, bananas, mushrooms, parsnips, turnips, oranges, apples, rhubarb, leeks, pumpkin, green peas, peppers and more!


### Legumes

Split peas,  pinto beans, chickpeas, mung beans, white beans, red beans, pinto beans,  broad beans, red lentils, green lentils, fava beans, kidney beans, cannellini beans, lima beans, soy beans, tofu, and more!

### Grains

Wild rice, dried corn and cornmeal,  barley, oats and oatmeal, quinoa, buckwheat, wheat, rye, millet, brown  or white rice and rice milk, popcorn and more!

### Nuts and Seeds

Cashews, pumpkin seeds, flax, hemp, chia, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, tahini,  almonds or almond butter or almond milk, walnuts, Brazil nuts, coconut, pine nuts, pecans, pistachios, hazelnuts and more!

### Herbs and Spices

Parsley, mint, sage, saffron, turmeric, thyme, basil, lemongrass, fennel, cumin, cinnamon, chives, pepper, cardamon, caraway, chili powder, cloves, coriander, ginger, nutmeg, paprika, rosemary, oregano, lavender, ginger, dill and more!



# 30 Different Plant Foods Challenge for July

Name:

Starting Day/Date:

Ending Day/Date:

- Pick a 7-day period to write down each different plant food that you eat.
- One chart per person, please.
- Each time you eat a different plant food during the 7 days write it down.
- Take a picture of your completed chart and email or send it to Angeline Roberts in Community Health. We will reward your efforts, even if you do not reach 30 different plant foods, with something to help you eat more plants!

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Our gut microbiome is made up of the trillions of microorganisms and their genetic material that live in our intestinal tract. A healthy gut microbiome relies on large numbers of different bacterial species (the total number of bacterial species in our gut microbiome) and diversity (the number of individual bacteria from each of the bacterial species present in our gut microbiome) of bacteria. There are the good guys and the bad guys when it comes to bacteria and eating more plant foods helps the good bacteria get stronger and makes more of them. You can change your gut microbiota in a week with the foods that you eat.

As we learn more about the gut, we are beginning to understand the crucial role it plays in our overall health and wellbeing. A more diverse gut microbiome results in a more stable and resilient microbial community that is better equipped to powerfully protect our health and immunity. This includes lowering the risk of many common conditions which affect many of us like antibiotic use, lifestyle, dietary or lifestyle stressors or infection. In fact, people with some chronic health conditions like diabetes and inflammatory bowel disease (such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis) have been shown to have a microbial profile that lacks diversity.



The American Gut Study, the largest published study to date of the human microbiome, found that people regularly eating more than 30 different types of plant foods (fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts and seeds) each week had a significantly more diverse microbiome than those eating 10 or fewer different plant foods a week.

So, the more different foods you can eat per week the better because promoting diversity in your gut is a really good move!



**This challenge is sponsored by LTBB Community Health as part of the Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country grant. Have fun, be more physically active and eat more plants!**

**Sources:**

<https://www.indi.ie/11-news/1458-the-30-different-plant-based-foods-per-week-challenge.html> - accessed June 24, 2021

<https://tghd.com.au/30-different-plants-in-7-days-challenge/> - accessed June 24, 2021

<https://rd2rd.com/downloads/30-plants-challenge/> - accessed June 24, 2021

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plant-based\\_diet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plant-based_diet) - accessed June 24, 2021

<https://cdn.aarp.net/content/dam/aarp/health/healthy-living/2020/12/1140-healthy-gut-illo.imgcache.rev.web.900.518.jpg> - accessed June 24, 2021