



# THE POWER OF PLANTS:

## Adventures in Plant-Based Nutrition



By Emma Levez Larocque, RHN

## Getting Started Tips for Plant-Based Newbies

So you've decided to try a plant-based lifestyle change – congratulations! But sometimes, when reality sets in, and people start to actually **TACKLE** the lifestyle, they start feeling overwhelmed, and no wonder. For many people this can be a huge shift in lifestyle, and it really helps to have some coping strategies to fall back on in these early days. Have faith that it will get easier! In the meantime, here are some tips to help you on your way.



**1. Make sure you are eating a variety.** All plants have different nutrients to offer – and that includes fruit, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. So try not to get stuck in a rut of eating the same grains, the same type of beans or the same vegetables over and over again. Focus on eating foods that represent all the different colors of the rainbow to ensure you are getting what you need.

**2. Remember, simple is good.** Need a fast snack? An apple and some nut butter or some hummus and veggies are a great option. Unsalted, unroasted nuts and unsweetened dried fruits made into a homemade trail mix are another easy, nutrient-packed option. Keep your fridge and pantry stocked with simple fruits and vegetables that you love. Plant-based eating can be refreshingly simple; take those basic ingredients, and love them just as they are!

**3. Make sure you are getting servings of vegetables, fruit, grains, legumes, nut and seeds, every day.** All of these food groups provide the body with different (all important) nutrients, so don't leave any of them out (\*if you have an allergy or a specific health condition that means you can't have one of them – for example, nuts, be aware of what you are missing and ensure you are getting those nutrients elsewhere). Dr. Michael Greger has a great app called *The Daily Dozen*, which is an accompaniment to his book *How Not To Die* – it's a great tool to help keep you on track – whether you are a plant-based newbie or a lifer!

**4 Know that you shouldn't feel hungry.** You will likely notice a positive difference in the way your body feels quickly; however, it may take your system some time to adjust if this is a whole new way of eating for you. But remember one thing – this is NOT a diet, and you should not feel hungry. One of the beautiful things about a healthy, whole-foods plant-based lifestyle is that you should be able to eat as much as you need to feel satisfied, without worrying about weight gain. Plant foods are naturally high in nutrients and low in calories – that's why they're called

nutrient-dense. If you are finding that you're feeling hungry, examine what you're eating, and whether you are consuming enough foods that are rich in starch and complex carbohydrates, such as sweet potatoes, potatoes, rice and other grains, beans and corn. These are foods that can help you to feel full and satisfied.

**5. Don't feel like you have to be a gourmet chef to eat healthy.** Lots of people who go vegan get really excited about food and cooking, even people who didn't previously enjoy cooking. And sure it helps, but loving to cook is not a pre-requisite to living a healthy, plant-based lifestyle. For example, a healthy meal can be as simple as:

- A whole grain base (brown rice/quinoa/barley etc.)
- Some steamed leafy greens (spinach/chard/kale)
- Some fresh or lightly steamed veg (peppers/peas/carrots etc)
- A can of rinsed, then warmed beans (chickpeas/black-eyed peas)
- A simple sauce (teriyaki, peanut, tahini, etc)

If you have the rice and sauce made ahead of time, you can throw this meal together in the few minutes it takes to heat it all up together. If you want to get fancier, and make a marinated tofu/tempeh instead of beans, or roast the chickpeas, that will take the meal to the next level – but it's all about the baby steps, and sometimes keeping things really simple is where you're at, and it's good to know that that's a good option too.

One final word: when you are getting started on your plant-based journey it's SO helpful to find other people who are on the same road, so if you are feeling lonely, be SURE to get involved in a local meet-up or potluck group. If there is nothing in your immediate area, get involved in one of the many online communities. There has never been a better time to go plant-based! Information about all the different reasons to do so is reaching the mainstream, and more people than ever before are trying it out. Have fun on your journey!



## Whole Grain Toast with Avocado, Lime and Chickpeas

This is one of the easiest breakfasts ever! One of my recent favorites:

### Ingredients:

- 2 slices whole grain bread, toasted
- ½ an avocado, mashed
- ¼ cup chickpeas, mashed
- Dash of fresh lime juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Toast bread
2. Mash chickpeas and avocado, mix with a dash of lime and salt and pepper
3. Spread on toast.



Emma Levez Larocque is a Registered Holistic Nutritionist and a Certified Plant-Based Chef. She has been vegan for 7 years, and veg for more than 20. She is passionate about sharing the benefits of plant-based eating and living with others, and working to make the planet a kinder, more compassionate place for all who share it.

[www.plantbasedrhn.com](http://www.plantbasedrhn.com)