

Tips about Eating Meatless Featuring Plant Alternatives

Legumes are healthy for humans.

One group of plant alternatives to meat is legumes, also known as pulse crops. On your meatless day, consider substituting with legumes—dry peas, dry beans, lentils, and/or chickpeas. (Chickpeas are used to make hummus—yum!) These pulse crops are an important part of healthy diets here and in countries around the world.



The Food Network lists [benefits](#) of eating high-protein, high-fiber pulse crops. Here is one source of [Meatless Recipes](#) from the Food Network, and there are many more meatless recipes online and in cookbooks. Have some fun trying a new dish each week.

Legumes are healthy for the soil.

There are several ways legumes can help improve soil used to grow our food. Legumes

- use soil moisture efficiently
- need little (if any) nitrogen fertilizer; Instead they transfer nitrogen from the air into the soil
- can improve yields of other crops, like wheat or barley, when pulse crops are grown in the same fields earlier
- In dry growing conditions, pulse crops can be harvested, grazed upon, or even stopped in order to conserve soil moisture



Legumes are healthy for supporting local communities.

Legumes are an important Montana crop. “In 2011, Montana took the lead in U.S. pulse crop acreage. As of today, Montana retains its leadership position in pulse production, selling markets through the nation and in India, Japan, and many other countries around the world. Potential exists for substantial growth of the pulse industry in Montana in the coming years.” (<https://agr.mt.gov/Pulse-Crop-Programs>)

Other plant alternatives-Tofu, Tempeh, and Seitan

Pulse crops are not the only alternatives for meat. Products made of soy, such as tofu or tempeh, provide protein. Just be sure to flavor them. Basic tofu or tempeh comes with little flavor on its own, but both do a great job of picking up the flavors they are cooked with. So, add the vegetables, bouillon, herbs, and spices you really enjoy to your tofu or tempeh dish. There are so many delicious combinations you can try. Another meat alternative to try is seitan, a wheat product that has the look and texture of meat. Look for tofu, tempeh, and seitan in the refrigerated section of the grocery. Some options come with flavorings already added. Check out the plant-based meat alternatives in the frozen foods section, too.

