



Building a Better Menu

Building a better menu will build a better brain, a better body, and a better you! Plant-based nutrition gives you more of what you need to help your mental engine purr instead of ping.

Get more fiber and complex carbohydrates: Choose whole grain breads and cereals, beans, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. They give you more of the good things you need to get through each day.

Plant foods give you more:

Nutrition: more vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytochemicals.

Quantity: more food to eat with fewer calories.

Fiber and Satiety: a fuller and more satisfied feeling.

Color: beauty and phytochemicals.

Flavor: tantalizing tastes from fresh, succulent fruits and crunchy veggies.

Variety: abundance of variety in the produce department.

Balance: a balance of nutrients that are naturally low in calories.

Energy: complex carbohydrates for optimal energy.

Productivity: a brain that works more efficiently.

Beauty: clear skin, bright eyes, and a slowdown of the aging process.

Confidence: to know you are doing the right thing.

Choose healthful fats: Eat nuts, seeds, olives, olive oil, and avocados for the best fats. Omega-3 fats are especially beneficial. They are found in flax seed, walnuts, and soy. Use non-hydrogenated spreads instead of butter or trans-fat-filled margarines.

Drink water: Water is the best thirst quencher and brain energizer compared to other drinks. Choose water instead of high-sugar, caffeinated beverages or alcohol.

Build a Better Breakfast

A good breakfast is one of the most important strategies for a successful day. It will power up your brain, body, and mood and give you energy to meet the challenges of the day.

A high-fiber breakfast will keep you satisfied so you will be less likely to crave unhealthy snacks and stimulating drinks. You will have more nutrition and less unwanted weight gain. You will have calmer nerves, better blood sugar control, and better ability to cope with stress when you power up your day with a good breakfast.

Easy breakfasts

You can enjoy a healthful breakfast in three easy steps:

1. **Get your grains:** You can enjoy a bowl of high-fiber cereal. Make sure each serving is at least three or more grams of fiber. Or heat up some oatmeal or other whole grain cereal. Enjoy cereals with B₁₂-fortified soy or rice milk. Treat yourself to some whole grain toast or a bagel with a natural peanut butter or non-hydrogenated spread. Make sure each slice of bread has two or more grams of fiber.
2. **Grab that fruit:** Add two or three choices of fresh fruit. Enjoy a variety of fruits. Treat yourself to fresh kiwi, pineapple, cantaloupe, plums, berries, apricots, peaches, and pears as well as the more familiar favorites such as apples and bananas.
3. **Go for the nuts:** Enjoy brain-boosting fats in the form of walnuts, pecans, Brazil nuts, and almonds. You may eat them raw or lightly roast them at 200 degrees for about 30 minutes to bring out their tantalizing taste. Enjoy ground flax seed on your cereal. Grind flax seed in a blender or coffee grinder. Store nuts and seeds in the freezer.

Build a Better Lunch

Taking time for a healthful lunch keeps your mental engine purring, your blood sugar balanced, and your energy levels high. It helps keep your mood elevated, and it reduces tension and fatigue.

Taking time for lunch punctuates your day with pleasure and can connect you with friends, coworkers, and family. It also gives your body the nutrient and energy boost it needs to keep you balanced and your spirits buoyed the rest of the day.

A good midday meal will help you deal with stress better and keep you from craving those unhealthy drinks and foods that make you bounce off the walls and increase tension and fatigue.

Easy lunches

You can enjoy a healthful lunch in three easy steps:

- 1. Enjoy your raw foods:** Begin your midday meal with a nice helping of fresh mixed-greens salad, raw veggie sticks, or fresh fruit.
- 2. Energize with fiber-rich fare:** Tickle your taste buds with bean or vegetable soups, whole grain breads, brown rice and tofu dishes, wholesome pastas, vegetarian patties on whole grain buns, baked or steamed potatoes with creative toppings such as tofu sour cream or olive oil and dill.
- 3. Be veggie smart:** Color up your cuisine by including plenty of freshly steamed greens. Enjoy a variety of greens such as collards, kale, and spinach. Experiment with lightly steamed broccoli, cauliflower, squash, purple cabbage, and the scores of other delicious veggies that provide essential stress-lowering nutrients.

Build a Better Supper

If you have enjoyed a fiber-rich breakfast and lunch, you can eat an early supper and keep it light. This will help you sleep better and avoid indigestion.

Easy suppers

You can enjoy a healthful supper in three easy steps:

- 1. Keep it simple:** Supper can be simple but elegant. It can be nutritious, easy, and attractive. If supper is the only time your family eats together, use the suggestions for lunch for your evening meal. Otherwise, these simple supper ideas will give you plenty of what you need.
- 2. Keep it colorful:** Enjoy a light mixed-greens salad with split pea or vegetable soup. Spread some hummus (a garbanzo spread*) on whole grain crackers. Warm up some leftovers. Enjoy a fruit plate with soy yogurt and popcorn. Enjoy a few baked nuts with some fresh fruit or a bowl of granola and soy milk. Make yourself a sandwich with some steamed or raw veggies on the side. Have a fruit smoothie and popcorn. Whip up a burrito with refried beans, salad greens, and salsa.
- 3. Keep it light:** If you are sedentary in your job and eat an appropriate amount of nutrient-rich food for breakfast and lunch, you will feel better with a light supper, or you may decide you do not need supper at all. In that case, enjoy a tasty herb tea or a little V-8 juice to fill that “spot” as you relax and enjoy the evening.

* **To make your own hummus.** Blend one can drained garbanzos, 1 T lemon juice, 2 cloves garlic, 1 tsp salt, and 1 T sesame tahini until smooth. Add a little water to blend, if needed. May add chopped parsley.