



A vegetarian or vegan diet that is well-planned can meet calorie, macronutrient and micronutrient requirements necessary to fuel performance and optimize recovery.

## Nutritional Considerations for Vegan/Vegetarians Athletes:

- **Protein:** Consume a variety of plant proteins to meet daily protein needs. See examples on the right column.
- **Iron:** Vegetarian/vegan athletes may be at increased risk for iron deficiency given that animal based proteins typically contain a more bioavailable form of iron. Add a variety of iron rich foods to meet daily iron needs. These include legumes, soy products, nuts, seeds, fortified grains, dark leafy greens, and dried fruits.
- **Calcium and Vitamin D:** Include a variety of calcium and Vitamin D rich foods to support bone health and reduce risk of injury. Calcium rich foods include dairy, dark leafy green veggies, calcium fortified foods including soy, almond milk, and orange juice. Vitamin D rich foods include wild caught salmon, cod liver oil, sun dried mushrooms, fortified foods including milk, soy milk, orange juice, and egg yolks.
- **Zinc:** Include foods rich in zinc for optimal health and performance. These foods include legumes, soy, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.
- **Vitamin B12:** Athletes following a strict vegan diet can become deficient in B12, which is necessary vitamin needed for red blood cell production. One sign indicating a possible deficiency is fatigue. Consider supplementing with a third party tested (ex: NSF certified for Sport) B12 supplement. Foods rich in Vitamin B12 include dairy, whey protein, nutritional yeast, fortified foods including soy milk, cereal, tofu and tempeh.

## Plant Protein Sources:

- Seitan (Vital Wheat Gluten): 25 g Pro/3.5 oz.
- Tofu/tempeh, edamame: 10-19 g Pro/3.5 oz.
- Lentils: 18 g Pro/1 cup cooked
- Chickpeas/beans: 15 g Pro/1 cup cooked
- Nutritional Yeast: 12 g Pro/oz
- Spelt and teff (ancient grains): 10-11 g Pro/1 cup cooked
- Green peas: 9 g Pro/1 cup cooked
- Amaranth and quinoa: 8-9 g Pro/1 cup cooked
- Sprouted breads: 8 g Pro/2 slices
- Soy Milk: 7 g Pro/1 cup
- NSF Third Party Certified Plant Based Protein Powder: 15-25 g Pro/serving

Vegetarians can also have:

- Fish/seafood
- Dairy: Milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese
- Eggs

