

HOW TO GO GREEN

Ultrarunner Scott Jurek shares his tried-and-true ways to eat more plants so you can run strong.

I WAS A MEAT-AND-POTATOES kid from Minnesota who hated vegetables. But 18 years ago I had a bowl of veggie chili that changed my life (and my running) when it sent me down the path of plant-based eating. Since then, I've fueled my ultrarunning with plants. But it didn't happen all at once. I slowly started swapping out animal foods for plant-based ones: Meat and potatoes became tempeh and yams. My "salad" of iceberg lettuce and carrots became large bowls of dark leafy greens topped with chickpeas or kidney beans. Before I knew it, I had ditched animal products completely, and successfully ramped up my mileage, without injury or undue fatigue.

Whether you want to forgo steak and eggs is up to you, but even runners who eat animal products can benefit from adding more plants to their plates. These small changes can help you try new foods, lose weight, and fuel your runs.

MAP IT OUT

You don't need to come up with an entirely new diet when transitioning to a more plant-based life-style. Instead, determine the nutritional makeup of the foods you're already eating: What are their macronutrients (carbs, protein, and fat) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals)? Sub out animal products for plant-based ones that have similar nutritional profiles, paying close attention to micronutrients that are most commonly found in animal foods, such as vitamin B₁₂, iron, zinc, and calcium (see "No Animals Here," opposite).

EXPLORE THE STORE

Challenge yourself to experiment with one new fruit, vegetable, bean, or other plant-based food every week. This will force you out of your comfort zone (in a good way!) and allow you to try new recipes.

MIX IT UP

"But what about protein?" There's a reason vegetarians and vegans get this question all the time: Animal products contain all nine essential amino acids needed to build protein. Plant-based foods? Only quinoa and soy can make that claim. In order to get enough complete proteins in your diet, combine a variety of foods: Mix and match beans and rice, lentils and chickpeas, and meat substitutes, like tofu or seitan.

HOLD THE MEAT, PLEASE!

I didn't become vegan overnight. Take baby steps. Pick one meal a week to go plant-based or vegetarian—or a full day if you're feeling adventurous, like a Meatless Monday. If you don't trust your veggie cooking skills (yet), turn to the pros. Order the veggie or vegan option at a restaurant to expand your palate and come up with new ideas for your own menus.

Pair plant-based foods with each other (like rice and beans) for a complete protein.

No Animals Here

These key nutrients can be found in plant-based foods.

ZINC
Legumes, nuts, seeds, oatmeal

VITAMIN B₁₂
Fortified foods (plant sources have negligible amounts)

CALCIUM
Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, whole-wheat flour, dried figs, collard greens, molasses

IRON
Fortified cereals, beans, sesame seeds, quinoa, tofu

PREP AHEAD

When you're crunched for time or tired, it's easy to revert back to normal eating habits. Carve out an hour over the weekend to make a large veggie salad or plant-based bowl (see "Let's Go Bowling," right) and save portions for lunch and dinner later in the week.

BE SNEAKY

If you're not a greens lover, I get it: I despised veggies. Add dark leafy greens like spinach, kale, or arugula to your morning smoothies. You'll get a dose of fiber, calcium, and folate, and the fruit will mask the flavor.

SEEK ADVENTURE

Thanks to the ethnic dishes I found in vegetarian cookbooks, I uncovered a world of new flavors—literally. The wide range of spices and different ways of preparing foods keep things creative and fresh.



Scott Jurek—who won the Western States 100-Mile Endurance Run a record seven consecutive times, among other notable achievements—is the author of *Eat & Run: My Unlikely Journey to Ultramarathon Greatness*.



LET'S GO BOWLING

Mix together items from each category for a nutrient-packed, plant-based meal.



CARB LOAD

Grains, rice, **pasta**, wheat berries, barley, millet, quinoa, buckwheat, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, rice pasta



CARB BOOST

Squash, **sweet potatoes**, yams, potatoes, plantains, dried fruit (raisins, dates, apricots)



PROTEIN POWER

Garbanzo beans, black beans, pinto beans, cannellini beans, lentils, tofu, tempeh, edamame, seitan



VEGGIE KICK

Fresh or steamed greens (romaine lettuce, arugula, kale, collards, chard), **broccoli**, cauliflower, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, bok choy



FAT FIX

Avocado, olives, coconut, nuts (almonds, walnuts), seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, hemp, sesame), nut butter, olive oil, flax oil, sesame oil