

November 2019 – Plant-Based Protein Foods

Canada's food guide recommends that we fill ¼ of our plate with protein foods, and choose plant-based protein foods more often. Plant-based protein foods tend to be higher in fiber and lower in saturated fat than protein foods that come from animals. Eating less saturated fat and more fiber is good for heart health. On top of that, plant-based protein foods can be less costly, and are easy to prepare!

Beans, lentils, tofu, nuts and seeds are a few protein foods that come from plants. Of these, there are quite a few varieties and endless preparation ideas! Most of the time, you can add these foods to the dishes you already make for your family.

Here are some easy ways to include plant-based protein foods in your favourite meals:

- Add beans or lentils to soups and stews instead of meat.
- Top salads with chickpeas.
- Add tofu to your favourite stir fry.
- Spread hummus on a wrap or pita and fill with vegetables like lettuce, tomato and cucumber.
- Use beans in burritos.
- Blend soft tofu into soups to make them thicker and creamier.

Or, try this lentil recipe:

Curried Vegetable Lentil Stew

Makes: 6 servings

Get creative and substitute whatever vegetables you have on hand, fresh or frozen, in this recipe. Try replacing the potatoes with cauliflower, squash or sweet potato, or use spinach instead of green beans.

Ingredients:

2 tsp	canola oil	2 Tbsp	whole wheat flour
1 whole	red onion, chopped	2 ½ cups	low sodium vegetable broth
4 whole	garlic cloves, minced	2 whole	potatoes, diced
1 Tbsp	ginger, minced (or 1 tsp ground)	1 whole	bell pepper, chopped
2 Tbsp	curry paste or curry powder	6 oz	green beans, chopped
1 tsp	garam masala*	1 (540 mL) can	low sodium lentils
¼ cup	cilantro, chopped		

Directions:

1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, ginger, curry paste, garam masala and half of the cilantro. Cook for 3 minutes, or until onions begin to soften.
2. Stir in flour until absorbed, then slowly pour in the broth. Stir until combined.
3. Add potatoes, bell pepper, green beans and lentils and bring to a simmer. Cover and cook, stirring often, for 20 minutes until the potatoes are tender.
4. Serve with remaining cilantro.

*Garam masala is a spice mixture made of cumin, coriander, cardamom, black pepper, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg.

Adapted from food-guide.canada.ca. Visit food-guide.canada.ca and unlockfood.ca for more information and recipes for protein foods that come from plants.

Brought to you by Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services.