

# eat your veggies

**TURBOCHARGE YOUR HEALTH  
AND HELP THE PLANET JUST BY EATING  
MORE VEGETARIAN MEALS**

BY **TIMOTHY MAHER**  
RECIPES BY **CAROLINE WRIGHT**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CON POULOS**

**WHAT IF THERE WERE A SIMPLE** way to drastically cut your saturated-fat intake, lower the odds of getting many chronic diseases, and help save the planet in the process? There is, and it's as easy as eating more vegetarian meals.

The health perks are undeniable. According to the American Dietetic Association, vegetarians have a lower incidence of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and several types of cancer. They also fare much better than meat eaters when it comes to obesity and cardiovascular disease. In fact, researchers have found a direct correlation between reducing meat consumption and a lower risk of obesity.

Reaping these benefits is simpler than you think. To start, forget about giving up meat cold turkey. Instead, take a flexitarian (also known as a part-time vegetarian) approach. Introduce a few meatless dinners a week and see how it goes. Keep it easy, too. If you like burritos, have a burrito. Just substitute black beans for the beef. When you feel like a burger, look in the produce aisle. A grilled portobello mushroom can be just as filling.

As for the concern that vegetarians come up short on protein, don't fret. An average adult woman needs about 65 grams of protein a day. But Americans tend to consume

way more than they need (a skinless chicken breast alone contains 43 grams), and eating too much protein over a long period can stress your kidneys and lead to osteoporosis. To reach your target, you don't need meat—plenty of other foods rank high on the protein scale. Lentils, kidney beans, walnuts, eggs, and quinoa all make great sources. Even asparagus and broccoli contain protein.

As an added bonus, you'll help the planet as you boost your health. According to a 2006 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization report, meat and dairy production creates more carbon emissions than all those cars and trucks on the road. "The American diet is absolutely warming the planet," says Kate Geagan, R.D., author of the new book *Go Green, Get Lean*. "It's the SUV of eating styles." The reason? Cows emit methane, which traps 21 times more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide does. And their solid waste gives off nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 300 times more powerful than CO<sub>2</sub>.

The facts say it all. Give up meat once, twice, or even four or more times a week, and you can make a big environmental impact. To help you out, we offer these four tasty vegetarian meals guaranteed to hit the spot.



**WHOLE-WHEAT GREEK PIZZA**

Vitamin-C- and beta-carotene-packed arugula perks up this whole-wheat pizza.

## WHOLE-WHEAT GREEK PIZZA

SERVES 4

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES

There's no need to buy a special pizza pan; an upside-down baking sheet works just as well. If you like, you can add a little cornmeal to the baking sheet before cooking.

**2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for baking sheet**

**1 cup cherry tomatoes**

**1 clove garlic, coarsely chopped**

**Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**

**Whole-wheat flour, for work surface**

**1 pound whole-wheat pizza dough, thawed if frozen**

**1 cup (4 ounces) grated haloumi cheese**

**2 tablespoons pine nuts**

**2 cups baby arugula**

**1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar**

**¼ cup pitted kalamata olives, coarsely chopped**

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Turn a large baking sheet upside down; rub with oil. Place tomatoes, garlic, and 1 tablespoon oil in a food processor; season with salt and pepper. Pulse 3 to 4 times until ingredients are incorporated but chunky.
2. On a lightly floured work surface, use a rolling pin and your hands to roll and stretch dough until large enough to cover the surface of the baking sheet. (If dough becomes too elastic, let it rest a few minutes.) Transfer to prepared baking sheet.
3. Spread tomato sauce evenly over dough, leaving a 1-inch border all around. Top with cheese and pine nuts; season with salt and pepper.
4. Bake until crust is golden, 15 to 20 minutes. Toss arugula with vinegar and 1 tablespoon oil; season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle arugula and olives over pizza.

PER SERVING: 460 calories; 16 g protein; 22 g fat; 54 g carb; 6 g fiber. 

## SOBA AND TOFU IN GINGER BROTH

SERVES 4

PREP TIME: 35 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 35 MINUTES

A little broth goes a long way in this Asian noodle dish. Store black sesame seeds, available in most supermarkets and Asian grocery stores, in the refrigerator. They have a high oil content and could go rancid if stored improperly.

**1 bunch scallions (6 scallions), whites and greens separated, greens cut into 2-inch lengths and thinly sliced lengthwise**

**1 ounce ginger, peeled and sliced**

**2 garlic cloves, smashed**

**Canola oil, for grill pan**

**1 package (14 ounces) extra-firm tofu, drained and pressed**

**Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**

**2 teaspoons reduced-sodium soy sauce, plus more for seasoning**

**6 ounces soba noodles**



**1 head baby bok choy (4 ounces), trimmed, thinly sliced on bias**

**4 ounces snow peas, trimmed, halved on the bias**

**1 red serrano chile, thinly sliced crosswise**

**1 teaspoon black sesame seeds, for garnish**

1. In a medium saucepan, combine scallion whites, ginger, garlic, and 8 cups water; bring to a boil. Cover and reduce to a simmer. Cook until flavorful, about 25 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat a grill pan over medium-high; lightly oil. Slice tofu in half; season with salt and pepper. Add tofu pieces to hot pan and cook, turning to grill all sides, about 15 minutes total. Remove from pan; once cool enough to handle, cut into small cubes.
3. Strain aromatics from broth with a slotted spoon; discard solids. Bring broth to a boil; add soy sauce and soba. Cook soba until 1 minute before al dente. Add bok choy, snow peas, and chile. Cook until veggies are tender-crisp. Add more soy sauce, if desired. To serve, place noodles in bowl with broth; top with tofu, scallion greens, and sesame seeds.

PER SERVING: 269 calories; 18 g protein; 7 g fat; 40 g carb; 4 g fiber.  

## SPRING BARLEY RISOTTO

SERVES 4

PREP TIME: 40 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES

A healthier alternative to the more traditional arborio risotto rice, barley adds iron and fiber to this dish.

**2 tablespoons olive oil**

**1 cup pearled barley**

**2 leeks, white and light-green parts only, thinly sliced**

**½ cup dry white wine or water**

**Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper**

**14½ ounces vegetable broth**

**1 bunch asparagus (about 1 pound), trimmed and cut on bias into 2-inch pieces**

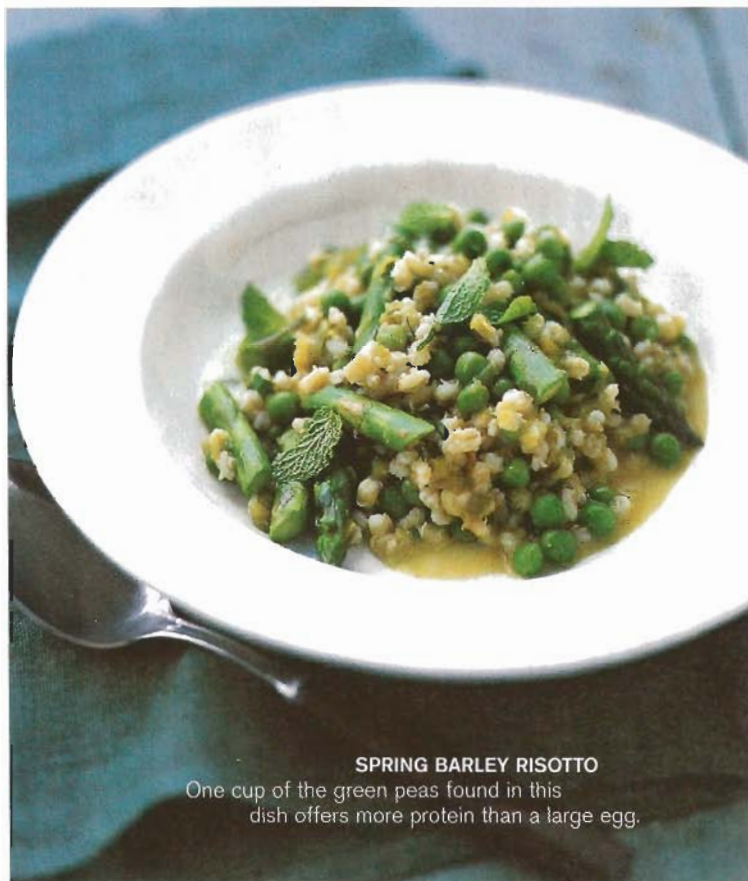
**1 box (10 ounces) frozen peas, defrosted**

**½ cup fresh grated Parmesan**

**¼ cup thinly sliced mint leaves, plus small leaves for garnish**

1. In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium. Add barley and leeks; cook until beginning to soften, 5 to 7 minutes. Add wine; cook until evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add 2 cups water; bring to a boil and season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat; simmer until liquid absorbs, about 10 minutes.
2. Add broth and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until barley is tender and creamy, about 10 minutes. Add asparagus; cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in peas until heated through. Add Parmesan and mint; season with salt and pepper. Garnish with mint leaves.

PER SERVING: 402 calories; 15 g protein; 11 g fat; 59 g carb; 13 g fiber. **V**



### SPRING BARLEY RISOTTO

One cup of the green peas found in this dish offers more protein than a large egg.

## STUFFED POBLANO PEPPERS IN A CHIPOTLE SAUCE

SERVES 4

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR

As far as chiles go, poblano peppers rank among the more mild varieties, though they still offer a nice zing. To counter the spice, serve with a mixed greens salad.

**4 large poblano peppers**

**2 teaspoons plus 1 tablespoon vegetable oil**

**1 tablespoon chopped chipotle chile in adobo**

**1 garlic clove**

**Coarse salt and ground pepper**

**½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, roughly chopped, plus more for garnish**

**⅓ cup quinoa**

**8 ounces small mushrooms, such as white button or cremini, trimmed and quartered**

**1 cup frozen corn kernels**

**1 can (15 ounces) black soy beans, drained and rinsed**

**1 cup crumbled fresh goat cheese (4 ounces)**

1. Preheat oven to 475°. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, rub peppers with 2 teaspoons oil. Roast until slightly blackened and softened, 15 to 20 minutes, turning once. When cool enough to handle, remove skins. Make a small slit in each pepper and carefully remove seeds, keeping stem end intact.
2. In a blender, combine chipotle, garlic, and ¾ cup water; season with salt and pepper and blend until smooth. Add cilantro and pulse once to combine.
3. In a small saucepan, bring ¾ cup water to a boil. Add quinoa, cover, and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand 5 minutes; fluff with a fork.
4. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high. Add mushrooms; season with salt and pepper. Cook until mushrooms are tender, about 5 minutes; add corn and beans and cook until heated, about 2 minutes. Stir in ½ cup cheese and quinoa.
5. Pour sauce in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Stuff peppers with filling and arrange in dish; dot with ½ cup cheese. Bake until golden, 15 to 20 minutes. Cool in pan 10 minutes.

PER SERVING: 376 calories; 21 g protein; 21 g fat; 32 g carb; 10 g fiber. **V**

**V vegetarian:** no meat products

**V vegan:** no animal derivatives

**S special diet:** no dairy, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, eggs, peanuts, or tree nuts

FOOD STYLING BY LIZA JERNOW, APOSTROPHE  
PROP STYLING BY MICHELLE WONG

A top-down view of a bowl of soba and tofu in ginger broth. The bowl is filled with buckwheat soba noodles, topped with pieces of pan-fried tofu, green onions, red chili peppers, and other vegetables. A metal spoon with a wooden handle is placed in the bowl. In the background, another bowl of the same dish is visible. To the right, a pair of wooden chopsticks rests on a dark wooden chopstick rest. The entire scene is set against a green background.

**SOBA AND TOFU IN GINGER BROTH**

Both tofu and buckwheat soba noodles make this dish a protein powerhouse.

**STUFFED POBLANO PEPPERS IN A CHIPOTLE SAUCE**  
Quinoa not only brings calcium to the table,  
but also provides a hefty dose of protein.

