

Plant-Based Protein

Protein is made up of components called **amino acids**. During digestion, your body will break down the protein into these amino acids and use them for a wide variety of functions. Some of these functions include creating hormones, supporting brain health, and building bone, muscle, and other body tissues.

There are 22 amino acids, nine of which your body can't make, so they need to come from your diet. These nine are commonly called **essential amino acids** because it's essential you consume them in your diet. Many plant-based protein sources contain some, but not all of the essential amino acids. This makes it important to eat a variety of these plant-based foods throughout the day, especially if you are following a strict vegetarian or vegan diet.

Protein complementation involves combining two plant-based sources of protein to ensure you are getting all nine essential amino acids.

Some examples include:

- **Beans + Grains, Nuts, or Seeds**
- **Grains + Legumes**
- **Nuts or Seeds + Legumes**
- **Vegetables + Grains, Nuts, or Seeds**



Below is a list of plant-based protein options and approximate protein content.

Plant-Based Food	Approx. Protein Content per 100 g
Beans & Legumes	
Lentils, boiled	9 g
Mung beans, boiled	7 g
Chickpeas, boiled	9 g
Navy beans, boiled	8 g
Soybeans (edamame), cooked	11 g
Tofu	8 g
Tempeh	19 g
Peanuts	26 g
Kidney beans, boiled	9 g
Pinto beans, boiled	1.9 g
Vegetables	
Green peas	5 g
Broccoli	2.8 g
Kale	4.3 g
Brussel sprouts	3.4 g
Potato, baked	2.5 g
Sweet potato, baked	2 g

Plant-Based Food	Approx. Protein Content per 100 g
Nuts & Seeds	
Almonds	21 g
Cashews	18 g
Walnuts	15 g
Pistachios	20 g
Pine nuts	14 g
Pumpkin Seeds	19 g
Sunflower Seeds	21 g
Flaxseeds	18 g
Chia seeds	17 g
Sesame seeds	18 g
Hemp seeds, hulled	32 g
Grains & Pseudograins	
Buckwheat groats, roasted	3.4 g
Brown rice, long-grain, cooked	2.6 g
Barley, cooked	2.3 g
Seitan	75 g
Amaranth, cooked	3.8 g
Quinoa	4.4 g
Wild rice, cooked	4 g
Millet	3.51 g