



# GO PLANT-BASED WITH PISTACHIOS

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# THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE TRENDING.

It seems everywhere you turn, people are talking about reducing meat and putting plant proteins, such as pistachios, front and center on the plate. A recent survey found that 39% of consumers are trying to reduce their meat intake over the last three years, citing health concerns, cost, animal welfare, and environmental issues as motivational factors<sup>1</sup>.



## Health Benefits in Plants

Indeed, people are right about the benefits of eating more plant proteins. A number of health benefits have been linked with plant-based eating styles, including improved heart health and lower risk of high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, and obesity<sup>2</sup>. It's easy to understand why: plant-based diets tend to be higher in fiber, certain vitamins and minerals, and plant compounds with health protective properties; and lower in saturated fat and dietary cholesterol than meat-heavy diets. There lie the health benefits<sup>2</sup>.

## Green Benefits in Plants

Reducing your animal food intake also can slash your carbon footprint. Data from the Adventist Health Study 2 found that vegans had a 42% lower carbon footprint than non-vegetarians, with vegetarians 28% lower, pescatarians 24% lower, and semi-vegetarians just under 20% lower<sup>3</sup>. That's not all; you can reduce your water footprint, too. It takes a lot more water to produce a serving of animal foods than a serving of plant foods. That's because you have to grow the food to feed the animals, in addition to the water used to care for the animals. It takes about 1,800 gallons of water to produce a single pound of beef! It takes 36% less water on average to feed vegetarians than carnivores<sup>4</sup>.

## Healthy Eating Patterns

Plant-based eating may seem like a new thing, but it's actually been around since the dawn of time. Experts believe that our early ancestors' diets consisted of large amounts of plant foods that were foraged, and then later on, cultivated. In fact, you can still see remnants of healthy plant-based diets in many regions, from Asia to Central America to Africa. Diet patterns in these countries tend to focus more on plant-based foods like legumes (beans, peas, lentils), whole grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds—with animal foods consumed in smaller quantities. Local plant foods were available in abundance, while animal foods were considered precious. Whether it's lentils in India, pinto beans in Mexico, or pistachios in the Mediterranean, plant foods have always held an important place in the diets of people for centuries.

1 Thomson Reuters-NPR Health Poll Meat Consumption, March 2012.  
[http://media.npr.org/documents/2012/june/NPR\\_report\\_MeatConsumption\\_1203.pdf](http://media.npr.org/documents/2012/june/NPR_report_MeatConsumption_1203.pdf) Accessed October 8, 2015.

2 Position of the American Dietetic Association: Vegetarian Diets, J Am Diet Assoc. 2009;109:1266-1282.  
[http://www.vrg.org/nutrition/2009\\_ADA\\_position\\_paper.pdf](http://www.vrg.org/nutrition/2009_ADA_position_paper.pdf) Accessed October 8, 2015.

3 Watson, Elaine. Environmental footprint of vegan and vegetarian diets 30% lower than non-vegetarian diets, say researchers. FoodNavigator-USA.com. February 28, 2013.  
<http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/R-D/Environmental-footprint-of-vegan-and-vegetarian-diets-30-lower-than-non-vegetarian-diets-say-researchers-We-have-to-dramatically-cut-consumption-of-meat-and-dairy> Accessed October 8, 2015.

4 Hoekstra A. The hidden water resource use behind meat and dairy. Animal Frontiers. 2012(2);2:3-8.  
[https://www.animalsciencepublications.org/publications/af/abstracts/2/2/anfront\\_2\\_2\\_002?search-result=1](https://www.animalsciencepublications.org/publications/af/abstracts/2/2/anfront_2_2_002?search-result=1) Accessed October 8, 2015.

## Diet Patterns around the World



The Western style of eating (commonly followed in the United States) is becoming more prominent around the world. Sure, we've been eating the Western diet—a diet pattern focused on high amounts of animal foods, highly processed foods, added sugars, and saturated fat; and low in whole plant foods, such as legumes, whole grains, vegetables, and nuts—for awhile now, but we're also exporting this eating style to other countries as they become more industrialized. No wonder that countries, such as India and China, are beginning to fight obesity and type 2 diabetes. For example, China's meat intake has quadrupled, and their rates of obesity and diabetes have tripled.

In regions of the world where plant-based diets are more common, the national rates for chronic diseases are much lower, compared to regions where animal-based diets are more prevalent<sup>5</sup>. Researchers have identified that many cultures, including those from India, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East have lower risks of chronic disease when they eat their traditional, plant-based diets. Once their traditional way of eating is swapped for the Western diet, their disease risk rises.

For example, the Tarahumara Indians from Mexico are geographically isolated from the modern world, and eat a very unprocessed, plant-based diet, including foods like beans, corn and squash. They enjoy very low rates of heart disease and diabetes. However, their blood relatives, the Pima Indians of Arizona, who eat a typical Western diet, have the highest reported prevalence of obesity and type 2 diabetes<sup>6</sup>.

## The Goal: Healthy Plant-based Eating Patterns

Interestingly, government experts also agree that we should all be following a plant-based eating pattern. The recently released Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Report<sup>7</sup> suggests eating a more plant-based diet. The report recommends that you adopt such eating patterns as a US healthy eating pattern (similar to the DASH diet), a Mediterranean diet, or a Vegetarian diet. What do these diets have in common? They all include a focus on more whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds.

## Plant-Based Solutions with Pistachios

So, go ahead and join the plant-based movement! It's easy. All you have to do is replace meat at the center of your plate more often with plant proteins: beans, lentils, peas, nuts and seeds. *Pistachios are a wonderful plant-based protein option to help you cut back on meat.* A one-ounce serving of pistachios provides you with **6 grams of protein** (the same amount of protein found in 1 large egg!), along with good amounts of heart-healthy fats, potassium, fiber, vitamin B6, thiamin, copper, and plant compounds with health protective properties. Plus, each pistachio kernel is a filling combination of protein with fiber and good-for-you fats, which provides a wonderful formula to help keep you satisfied until your next meal.

5 Plant-based Diets May Prevent Chronic Diseases. Medical News Today. October 20, 2012. <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/251689.php> Accessed October 22, 2015.

6 Navarro JC, Prado SMC, Cardenas PA, Santos RD, Caramelli B. Pre-historic eating patterns in Latin American and protective effects of plant-based diets on cardiovascular risk factors. Clinics. 2010;65(10):1049-54. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2972603/> Accessed October 22, 2015.

7 USDA, Department of Health and Human Services. Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. February 2015. <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/pdfs/scientific-report-of-the-2015-dietary-guidelines-advisory-committee.pdf> Accessed October 8, 2015.



# CHECK OUT MY FAVORITE TIPS TO POWER YOUR PLATE

with plants and the help of pistachios.



Fuel your breakfast with plant-based protein by adding pistachios to [oatmeal](#), spreading [pistachio butter](#) on whole grain breads, or sprinkling pistachios into [muffins](#), pancakes, or [waffles](#).



Grab a handful of pistachios as the perfect plant protein-filled snack, which provides a combination of protein, carbs, and healthy fats all in one.



For lunch, sprinkle pistachios over a veggie-rich salad for flavor, crunch and protein. Try out this [Olive, Pistachio and Pomegranate Salad](#) for inspiration.



Pack up a nutritious lunch by filling whole grain pita bread with greens, cucumbers, tomatoes, olives, and [pistachio hummus](#).



Whether it's for a post- or pre- workout or an afternoon snack, toss pistachios into a healthy [smoothie](#) for a dose of protein.



Get creative with your dinner meal, thanks to pistachios. Toss them into [pasta dishes](#), [grain dishes](#), [vegetable dishes](#), and beyond.



You can satisfy your sweet tooth every once in awhile without the guilt, when you turn to pistachios. Stir a handful of pistachios into [biscotti](#), [cakes](#), and [cookies](#) to add a touch of flavor—and plant protein—to your day.

