

"Paleo" for Vegetarians and Vegans

If you choose to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet for ethical or religious reasons, but you still want to benefit from the Paleo approach, follow the guidelines listed below to ensure adequate intake of essential nutrients.

Vegetarians

Vitamin B12

- Eat egg yolks, cheese, yogurt, or milk daily
- Optional: supplement with 1,000 mcg (1 mg) of sublingual methylcobalamin

Calcium

- Eat two to three cups of leafy green vegetables daily, such as collards, turnip greens, kale, broccoli, or bok choy (300 to 500 mg)
- Add in one to two tablespoons of blackstrap molasses daily (135 to 270 mg)
- Snack on figs (1/2 cup contains 120 mg of calcium)
- Consider eating bone-in canned fish like sardines and salmon (pescetarian)

Iron

- Eat iron-rich plant foods
 - Chard, collard greens, spinach, pumpkin, squash, pine nuts, pistachios, sunflower seeds, cashews, unhulled sesame seeds, white potatoes, chocolate
- Consume vitamin C-rich foods paired with non-heme iron-rich plant foods
 - Spinach & lemon juice, lentils & tomatoes, kale & sweet potato, for example
- Consume one to two cups of legumes daily (especially lentils)
- Add in one to two tablespoons of blackstrap molasses daily
- Premenopausal women may need a supplement

Omega-3 Fats (EPA/DHA)

- Consider eating bone-in canned fish like sardines and salmon (pescetarian)
- Supplement with a vegan omega-3 supplement

Vitamin A

- Consider supplementing with vitamin A from cod liver oil (pescetarian)
- Eat plenty of red, orange, yellow, and green plant foods
- Do not supplement with beta-carotene

Vitamin D

- Get 30 minutes of sun exposure daily

- Supplement in winter with 2,000 IU vitamin D3

Zinc

- Eat sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, lentils, chickpeas, and cashews
- Consider supplementing with 15 mg daily

Vegans

Vitamin B12

- Supplement with 1,000 mcg (1 mg) of sublingual methylcobalamin

Calcium

- Eat two to three cups of leafy green vegetables daily, such as collards, turnip greens, kale, broccoli, or bok choy (300 to 500 mg)
- Add in one to two tablespoons of blackstrap molasses daily (135 to 270 mg)
- Snack on figs (1/2 cup contains 120 mg calcium)

Iron

- Eat iron-rich plant foods
 - Chard, collard greens, spinach, pumpkin, squash, pine nuts, pistachios, sunflower seeds, cashews, unhulled sesame seeds, white potatoes, chocolate
- Consume vitamin C-rich foods paired with non-heme iron-rich plant foods
 - Spinach & lemon juice, lentils & tomatoes, kale & sweet potato, for example
- Consume one to two cups of legumes daily (especially lentils)
- Add in one to two tablespoons of blackstrap molasses daily
- Premenopausal women may need a supplement

Omega-3 Fats (EPA/DHA)

- Supplement with a vegan omega-3 supplement

Vitamin A

- Eat plenty of red, orange, yellow, and green plant foods
- Do not supplement with beta-carotene

Vitamin D

- Get 30 minutes of sun exposure daily
- Supplement in winter with 2,000 IU vitamin D3

Zinc

- Eat sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, lentils, chickpeas, and cashews
- Consider supplementing with 15 mg daily