



Plant-Forward Eating Styles

Plant-forward eating styles and plant-based diets focus more on foods that come from plants and less on foods of animal origin. In general, plant-forward meal patterns typically include larger amounts of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seeds, nuts, and legumes (beans).

The American Heart Association describes plant-forward eating as a style that “emphasizes plant-based foods but is not strictly limited to them.”¹ Unlike vegan diets, which exclude all animal foods, plant-forward diets often include small portions of meat, poultry, seafood, and dairy.

A number of health benefits have been tied to eating more plants. For one, plants contain a wide variety of antioxidants and phytonutrients that support healthy immune function and protect against illness. In addition, research suggests that plant-forward eating styles may promote weight loss and help maintain those losses.² Eating less meat has been linked to lower risks of developing conditions like heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer.¹

Examples of plant-forward diets include:

- **Lacto-Vegetarian:** includes milk
- **Ovo-Vegetarian:** includes eggs
- **Pesco-Vegetarian:** includes fish
- **Pollo-Vegetarian:** includes chicken
- **Vegetarian:** a generic term that usually excludes some or all animal-based foods
- **Flexitarian:** includes some meat, but in fewer quantities

Shifting to a plant-forward eating style requires a shift in mindset. An easy place to start is to relabel meat as a side dish rather than the main course.³ Try limiting animal-based foods to just 25% of your plate, or planning a meatless meal one or more days each week.

It is important to remember that when you restrict certain foods or food groups, it may be more challenging to meet your nutritional needs. As you make small adjustments to become more plant forward, be sure to include a variety of foods that contain essential vitamins, minerals, and protein.

Keeping a food journal or meeting with a registered dietitian can help you identify and fill nutrient gaps.

Plants contain a wide variety of antioxidants and phytonutrients that support healthy immune function and protect against illness.

1. American Heart Association. [How does Plant-Forward \(Plant-Based\) Eating Benefit your Health?](#) Accessed Aug 31, 2023.
2. Healthline. [Whole-Foods, Plant-Based Diet: A Detailed Beginner's Guide.](#) Accessed Aug 31, 2023.
3. Harvard Health. [What is a plant-based diet and why should you try it?](#) Nov 16, 2021. Accessed Sept 5, 2023.



Intuitive Eating: An Overview

Soon after birth, infants are skilled at eating when they are hungry and stopping when they are full. But somewhere along the path to adulthood many of us lose the ability to manage our internal hunger cues. Instead, we get triggered to eat by emotions and environmental circumstances, and the result is often a pattern of overeating and weight gain.

Intuitive eating (IE) is an anti-diet approach that was created in 1995 by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch.^{1,2} In their book, *Intuitive Eating*, the authors outlined 10 key principles of intuitive eating:

1. Reject the diet mentality
2. Honor your hunger
3. Make peace with food
4. Challenge the food police
5. Respect your fullness
6. Discover the satisfaction factor
7. Honor your feelings without using food
8. Respect your body
9. Exercise—feel the difference
10. Honor your health with gentle nutrition

At its core, IE is the process of learning how to honor your body by listening to, trusting, and responding to its messages. Proponents of IE criticize diet culture, which commonly encourages behaviors like counting calories, points, or other nutritional metrics. Rather than allowing your body's innate hunger signals to drive your eating choices, dieting relies on rules and external cues that disconnect you from your internal ones.



While intuitive eating shares some similarities with mindful eating, it is distinctly different. Learning to eat intuitively is about reconnecting with your natural hunger and fullness signals. In contrast, mindful eating is a more general approach that encourages building stronger awareness around your eating behaviors.

Intuitive eating may be especially helpful for people who have a history of disordered eating. Some research suggests that IE may improve mental health and reduce disordered eating behaviors like binge eating.³

Learning to eat more intuitively is a process that looks different for everyone. To get started, begin experimenting with the 10 principles listed above.

1. Tribole, E. and Resch, E. (1995) *Intuitive Eating: A Revolutionary Program That Works*. Saint Martin's Paperbacks, New York.

2. CNN. [Intuitive eating: The anti-diet, or how pleasure from food is the answer, say its creators](#). Jan 31, 2020. Aug 30, 2023.

3. Hazzard VM, Telke SE, Simone M, Anderson LM, Larson NI, Neumark-Sztainer D. Intuitive eating longitudinally predicts better psychological health and lower use of disordered eating behaviors: findings from EAT 2010-2018. *Eat Weight Disord.* 2021 Feb;26(1):287-294. doi: 10.1007/s40519-020-00852-4. Epub 2020 Jan 31. PMID: 32006391; PMCID: PMC7392799.



What Are Functional Foods?

Recently, the term “functional foods” has become more popular, especially among marketing professionals in the food industry.

There is no legal definition of the term, but functional foods generally contain ingredients that are beneficial to human health beyond basic nutrition.¹ For example, foods that contain phytonutrients, dietary fiber, prebiotics, and probiotics are all considered functional.² The two most common categories of functional foods are enriched and fortified.

Enriched foods have had nutrients added back to them because of losses during processing. For example, B vitamins and iron are frequently added back to cereal and bread because they are lost when grains are milled into flour.

Fortified foods have had nutrients added to them that were never present to begin with. Typically, these foods focus on nutrients that many people struggle to get enough of in their diet. Examples of fortified foods include the following:²

- Orange juice with added calcium
- Butter with added plant sterols
- Water with added vitamins
- Milk with added vitamin D
- Salt with added iodine

Prebiotics and probiotics are also considered functional foods. Prebiotics provide nourishment for the bacteria that live in your gut. Foods that are rich in prebiotics include Jerusalem artichoke, onions, garlic, bananas, and asparagus. Probiotics are live bacteria commonly found in fermented and cultured foods like sauerkraut, kombucha, and yogurt.

Technically, all foods are functional, even if they only provide energy. Many whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, yogurt, beans (legumes), nuts, fatty fish, and others contain nutrient-rich compounds that are naturally functional.

In summary, functional foods are widely used as marketing tools within the food industry.³ Pay close attention to food labels and ingredient lists to understand the health claims. Whether you choose to include functional foods from whole foods or value-added foods, focus on those that are nutrient-dense, minimally processed, and have ingredients that support good health.

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1. Ellis, E. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. [Functional Foods](#). Last reviewed Dec 21, 2021. Accessed Aug 23, 2023.

2. Temple NJ. A rational definition for functional foods: A perspective. *Front Nutr*. 2022 Sep 29;9:957516. doi: 10.3389/fnut.2022.957516. PMID: 36245478; PMCID: PMC9559824.

3. Healthline. [What Are Functional Foods? All You Need to Know](#). Jan 17, 2020. Accessed Sept 1, 2023.

HEALTHY GREEN GODDESS DRESSING WITH AVOCADO AND GREEK YOGURT

Prep Time | **Serving Size**
5 minutes | 1 cup

Ingredients

- 1 clove garlic
- 2 green onions, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves (loosely packed)
- ¼ cup fresh parsley leaves (loosely packed)
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ large avocado (or 1 whole small avocado)
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- ¼ to ½ cup water

Instructions

1. Add all ingredients except for water to a food processor.
2. Blend until smooth, adding water a little at a time as needed to reach your desired consistency.
3. Store dressing in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 week.



Nutrition Facts

Calories	308
Total Fat	20g
Sodium	664mg
Carbohydrate	18g
Dietary Fiber	9g
Protein	16g