

# 10 Vegan-Friendly Sources Of Protein

As a long-term vegetarian, I've certainly heard enough comments and opinions regarding my diet to last a lifetime. "How do you get any protein?" "You must be low on iron." "But what do you eat?" "Don't you miss bacon?"

The list goes on.

I'm a health and fitness enthusiast, so I feel confident in the fact that my diet is strong. I work in fitness for a living, so I'm pretty clued in! But let me assure you, that doesn't stop the questions. So to address this and to help any fellow vegetarians or vegans or those who are contemplating a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle, here is a list of veggie-friendly foods that are packed with protein – no steaks included!

## Peas

An unlikely contender, but peas are a fabulous source of protein for vegetarians. Just one cup of peas contains around 8 grams of it! If you're not the biggest fan of peas then think outside of the box with your recipes. A fresh pea hummus, for example, is a delicious snack, especially when accompanied with pitta bread or ryvita.

## Chia Seeds

You probably wouldn't assume that seeds could be such useful sources of protein, but chia seeds should be in every vegetarian's kitchen cupboards. Two tablespoons of chia seeds contain roughly 4.7 grams of protein. There are lots of different ways to use chia seeds. I personally sprinkle mine into my morning smoothie, but you can also use them in salads

or even in yoghurt.

## Quinoa

Admittedly, I've only become accustomed to quinoa in the past few years, but it's not only a great source of protein, it's a great substitute for rice. Although it looks like a carbohydrate, quinoa is technically a seed. If you stick to a low or no carb diet, then you need to give quinoa a try. I use it with my veggie chillies, but also with green vegetables on its own. Some people even eat it as porridge.

## Chickpeas

I **love** chickpeas. They're a fantastic snack as they can be fried or you can mush them up and make hummus! There are lots of different options, and not only are they high in protein, they're extremely low in calories. On a Friday night, I like to create a mezze board with veggies, hummus, and pitta bread.

## Black Beans

Beans are generally high in protein and a great source of antioxidants, but my favourite are black beans as they taste delicious in a chilli or a burrito. There's a whopping 8 grams of protein in just half a cup, so for a protein boost they're a great option.

## Spinach

Spinach is a brilliant source of protein **and** iron. I tend to pack a load of spinach into a smoothie. It's a great base for my Nutribullet juices. It's also a great addition to a curry. I tend to pop a handful into my homemade veggie curries. It does drain down to a small amount though, so add plenty.

# Peanut Butter

I'm a self-confessed peanut butter addict. I could eat it out of the jar quite happily, but we'll keep that between you and me. You only need two tablespoons for 8 grams of protein. Spread it on toast, or eat it with some chopped up banana.

# Lentils

If you're a vegetarian and you're not eating lentils, you might want to start as they are packed with protein and super easy to add to meals (not to mention cheap!). As well as being rich in protein they're also full of fibre, magnesium, iron, and minerals! They're extremely versatile, too. I usually add them to stews, soups, curries, and chillies.

# Almonds

As well as being protein packed, these little nuts are also a source of magnesium, vitamin E, and copper! And they're a pretty good snack, too. I usually take a small handful to work for when I need a mid-afternoon munch!

# Soy

Soy gets a bad rap, and it's well deserved when it's genetically modified soy, or when it's not properly fermented. Tempeh, tamari, and some other soy products are fermented so that the dangerous enzyme inhibitors are removed and hormone disruption does not occur. When soy is done right, it's a perfect protein.

## Editor's note:

I love peanut butter. But peanut butter is problematic for many people, and it's not the healthiest nut (nor is it an actual nut, but that's another article). Some other nut

butters are a better choice for those with health issues. It's best to buy nuts that you can sprout at home, and then make your own nut butters to ensure the enzyme inhibitors have been removed.

### **Further Reading:**

- *Animal Vs. Plant Protein, Which is Better*
- *Enzymes and Health*