

Menu plan for final week four

You're on the final stretch – only one week left, but we hope you'll keep going well beyond that. Here is a final menu plan and recipe ideas to get you through to the end – congratulations!

We have included a full weeks of recipes, Feel free to adjust the days and recipes to suite your schedule and tastes.

Once again, some of this week's recipes are a little more time consuming. But you can reuse any favourite recipes from the previous weeks of the Veggie Challenge.

For menu items written in *italics* we have included recipes. Other items are very simple and don't require a recipe.

For recipes indicated as *from week 1*, *week 2* or *from week 3* see the previous menu plans.

– Nimisha Raja

Monday

Breakfast: *Green Smoothie* [from week 2]. Whole grain toast with nut butter or tahini (for optimal digestion eat the toast 20 minutes or more after eating the fruit smoothie)

Lunch: Leftovers from week 3 menu plan: *Red Lentil Ratatouille*. Or make a veggie sandwich.

Optional snack: Fresh cut veggies with hummus (store bought).

Dinner: *Chickpea Sandwiches* and *Quick Tomato Soup* (make extra for lunch the next day).

Chickpea Sandwiches

Serves 4

This is a mock tuna type sandwich filling – very easy to make, and extremely nutritious.

- 1 (19 oz/541 g) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 stalks celery, finely diced
- 2 green onions, finely sliced (optional)
- 3 Tbsp mayo (vegan brands such as Nayonnaise available at health food stores)
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp powdered prepared mustard (or a quality bottled mustard)
- 1 Tbsp dill pickle, finely diced, or use 1 Tbsp relish
- 2 Tbsp fresh dill or 1 tsp dried

In a large bowl, mash chickpeas with a potato masher or pastry blender (the latter is easier). Add all other ingredients and mix until

well combined. Make a sandwich with whole grain bread, lettuce and tomato.

Quick Tomato Soup

Serves 4 – 6

Using crushed canned tomatoes will make this quicker; using fresh tomatoes in season (August field tomatoes) make it exquisite.

- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1 (28-oz) can crushed tomatoes or 6 medium-sized fresh tomatoes, diced
- 1 cup water
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, crushed
- 2 Tbsp fresh basil or 2 tsp dried
- 1 tsp salt (omit if using canned tomatoes)
- Fresh ground pepper to taste

In a medium pot, heat about ¼ cup of water. When it's hot, add the onions and celery and steam fry until onions are soft (about 3 – 5 minutes). Add the rest of the ingredients and bring to boil. Puree with an immersion hand blender if using fresh tomatoes.

Variation: To make cream of tomato soup, add 1 cup of non-dairy milk (soy or almond) or a dollop of plain soy yogurt.

Tuesday

Breakfast: Oatmeal with raisins, cinnamon and pecans and maple syrup, banana

Lunch: Leftovers from previous night: *Chickpea sandwiches* and *Tomato soup*.

Optional snack: *Pecan Date Balls*

Dinner: *Sesame Tofu or Tempeh, Rice or Noodle Bowl* [from week 1] or pasta

Pecan Date Balls

Makes about 15 truffle sized bites

Only two ingredients and 10 minutes of your time! This recipe provides fibre and will satisfy your sweet tooth. Easy and tasty!

- 6 Medjool dates, pitted (they're expensive, but worth it)
- ½ cup pecan pieces
- 1 tsp cocoa powder (optional for dusting)

Place pecan pieces in a food processor and pulse until chopped to crumbs (don't overdo it into a powder – some texture is good). Add the dates and process at a slow speed until well combined with the pecans. (I did this with my mini chopper attachment that came with my Braun immersion blender).

With clean hands, form into truffle sized balls. Roll in cocoa powder if using.

Will keep in the fridge for months (if they last that long)

Variations: Try with almonds or walnuts. Use plump raisins instead of dates. Mix in some carob powder.

Sesame Tofu or Tempeh

Serves 4

- 2–3 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1 block (225 g/8 oz) extra firm tofu or tempeh
- 4 Tbsp soy sauce or tamari
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp dried herb of choice (oregano, thyme, basil, etc)
- 1 Tbsp arrowroot or cornstarch
- 1–2 Tbsp oil for pan frying

Lightly toast seeds in a dry skillet – careful not to burn.

Cut tofu or tempeh into triangle pieces about half inch thick. Thinner if using tempeh. (You should have 12 triangles altogether).

In a small bowl, mix soy sauce or tamari, lemon juice and herb. Whisk in arrowroot or cornstarch until well combined.

Heat oil in a non-stick skillet. Dip tofu triangles in the soy sauce mixture and carefully place in hot skillet. (Careful – it may splatter a bit). When tofu starts to brown, sprinkle toasted sesame seeds over the triangles and cook for a few minutes. Don't worry if all the sesame seeds don't stick. Alternately, you can wait until the tofu is cooked and add the sesame seeds on top at serving time.

Wednesday

Breakfast: *Green Smoothie* [from week 2], whole grain toast

Lunch: Make a rice or noodle bowl using leftovers from last night.

Optional snack: Trail Mix (nuts / seeds / dried fruit).

Dinner: *Butternut Squash Soup* with crusty bread, and *Beet/Apple Salad*

Butternut Squash Soup

Serves 4 – 6 (freezes well)

Get your beta carotene and other anti-oxidants with this bright, warming soup!

- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cubed
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 Granny Smith apple, cored and diced (include the peel)
- Water or vegetable broth (2 to 3 cups)
- 1 cup light coconut milk
- 1 tsp fresh grated ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 Tbsp lemon juice (one lemon)
- Fresh cilantro or parsley for garnish (optional)

In a large pot, heat a thin layer of water. When water is very hot, add onions and sauté for about 2 minutes until soft. Add cubed squash, carrots, apple and enough water or broth to cover an inch above the veggies, about 2 – 3 cups. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes until vegetables are soft (test with a fork).

Add coconut milk, ginger, cinnamon, garlic and lemon juice. Puree with immersion hand blender until smooth.

Garnish with cilantro or parsley if using.

Beet Apple Salad

Serves 4 – 6

This is a nice variation to a green salad. Beets are rich in iron and anti-oxidants. The lemon and orange juice in this recipe will help you absorb the iron in the beets.

- 1 lb (4 to 5 medium loose) beets, peeled and grated
- 1/2 cup raw chopped walnuts
- 2 Granny Smith apples, diced
- 2 large navel oranges, peeled and sectioned
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 2 Tbsp finely diced red onion
- 3 Tbsp lemon juice (one lemon)
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ½ tsp salt (or to taste)
- Fresh ground black pepper to taste

Mix grated beets, walnuts, apples, oranges, raisins and onion. Whisk together lemon juice, orange juice, salt and pepper and pour over salad. If time allows, chill for a half hour or longer before serving. This salad gets better the longer it sits – so it's a great make-ahead recipe for potlucks or picnics.

Variations: Substitute raw almonds, pecans or sunflower seeds for walnuts. Add fresh chopped parsley as a garnish. Substitute two shredded carrots for two of the beets.

Thursday

Breakfast: *Green Smoothie* [from week 2]. Toast or bagel with nut butter (almond, peanut, cashew, etc)

Lunch: Leftovers from previous night: *Squash soup*, *Sesame Tofu* and *Beet Apple salad*

Optional snack: 1 or 2 pieces of dark chocolate

Dinner: *Cream of Broccoli Soup* and *Quinoa Asparagus Salad*

Cream of Broccoli Soup

Serves 6 – 8 (freezes well)

- 4 cups water
- 1 large head of broccoli, chopped
- 1–2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium potato, sliced or small dice
- 2 Tbsp flour
- 3 cups milk (plain almond, soy, rice milk, etc)
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed/minced
- 1 tsp thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a large pot, steam broccoli, onions, potato and celery in water for 10 minutes or until tender.

While veggies are steaming, whisk together flour and 4 table-spoons of the milk into a solution. Add the flour solution and remaining milk to the pot and bring to boiling point. Turn down heat to medium-low and continue to simmer until veggies are soft.

Add garlic, thyme, salt and pepper. Puree with hand-blender until smooth.

Quinoa Asparagus Salad

Serves 4

Quinoa is pronounced “keen-wa” – an ancient grain used by the Incas and Aztecs. It’s a complete protein containing all the essential amino acids (protein building blocks). It’s a good source of fiber, calcium and iron too. Quinoa is available at most health food stores, bulk stores and even some mainstream grocery stores. You can substitute quinoa for any recipe that calls for brown rice, white rice or couscous and instantly increase the nutritional value of that recipe.

- 1-1/2 cups quinoa
- 2-1/2 cups water
- 1 pound asparagus (or green beans), lightly steamed and chopped into 1” pieces
- 3 Tbsp lemon juice (one lemon)
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, julienned
- 1/4 cup fresh chives or green onions, chopped (can also substitute chopped red onion)
- 2 Tbsp tamari OR soy sauce OR Bragg’s Liquid Aminos
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1/2 cup diced red pepper (or roasted red pepper)

½ cup of pecans or walnuts (optional – add if you want a heartier main course meal)

Place the quinoa in a sieve and wash under cold running water. This will remove any bitter tasting saponin on the surface.

In medium saucepan, bring the water to a boil. Add the quinoa and return to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until the quinoa is tender but slightly crunchy, about 15 minutes.

Transfer quinoa to a serving bowl and toss with olive oil. When cooled to room temperature, mix in the asparagus, lemon juice, red pepper, basil and chives/green onions and tamari. Mix in nuts if using. Serve on a bed of mixed greens with cherry tomatoes.

Friday

Breakfast: Favourite whole-grain cereal with milk or non-dairy milk of choice, berries or other fruit.

Lunch: Leftovers from previous night: *Broccoli soup* and *Quinoa Salad*

Optional snack: Trail mix (nuts/seeds/dried fruit).

Dinner: *Creamy Corn Chowder* and mixed green salad (try adding sunflower seeds, dried cranberries and/or pecans)

Creamy Corn Chowder

Makes 9 cups

- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 3 medium carrots, shredded or fine dice
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 2 medium potatoes, diced
- 1 1/2 cup corn, canned, frozen or fresh
- 2 cups water
- 1 small can (14 oz) cream style corn (or extra corn)
- 2 cups milk (plain almond, soy, rice, etc)
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1-1/2 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1-1/2 tsp salt (or to taste)
- ½ red pepper, fine dice for garnish

In a large pot, heat a thin layer of water to boiling. Add onions and “saute” in water for a minute or two. Add carrots, celery, potatoes, corn kernels and the water. Cover and cook for 5 – 7 minutes until veggies are soft (check with fork).

Add the cream style corn (if using), milk, thyme, chili powder, pepper and salt. Stir and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes to let flavours meld. For a creamier, smoother soup, turn off heat and puree the soup with a hand immersion blender.

Garnish with diced red pepper and serve.

Saturday

Breakfast: Yogurt (vegan soy version available) and granola, store-bought vegan waffles, coffee substitute (such as Caf-Lib or Orzo) or herbal tea.

Optional snack: Fresh fruit.

Lunch: Leftovers from previous night: *African peanut stew* and salad.

Optional snack: Homemade popcorn with seasonings.

Dinner: *Spicy Enchiladas* with salad

Spicy Enchiladas

Makes 8

- 1 (15 oz) can black beans
- 1 cup corn, canned, frozen or fresh
- 1 tablespoon sunflower or other veg. oil
- 1/2 cup onion, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced or crushed
- 2 – 3 Tbsp jalapeños or pickled hot pepper rings (omit if you don't like heat)
- 1/2 cup crushed tomatoes
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 (14 ounce) can enchilada sauce (Old El Paso)
- 8 (6-inch) corn tortillas, thawed (I buy them frozen from the health food store or Latino market)
- 3 Tbsp sliced black olives for garnish
- 2 Tbsp fresh chopped cilantro

Line a 9 x 13" baking dish with parchment paper.

Drain and rinse black beans, and corn if using canned.

In a large skillet, saute the onions and garlic in the oil on medium heat. (If you are adding hot peppers, add them here). When soft and translucent, add the corn, beans, crushed tomatoes, salt and cumin. Stir to combine, and allow to heat through.

Spread about 3 – 4 tablespoons of enchilada sauce on the parchment paper.

Pre-heat oven to 350°F.

Prepare enchiladas: Put about 1/4 cup of the bean/corn filling from skillet on the bottom third of a tortilla. Fold over sides, then roll up. Place seam-side down on the prepared tray. Repeat with remaining filling and tortillas.

Spread remaining enchilada sauce over all the rolled tortillas. Garnish with sliced olives. Cover with tin foil and bake for 20 – 25 minutes.

Garnish with chopped cilantro and serve with sour cream (vegan recipe follows).

Vegan Sour Cream

Makes 1 1/2 cup.

- 1 (12-oz) pkg firm **silken** tofu
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 - 1 tsp salt (to taste)
- 1 tsp sweetener of choice (organic sugar, agave, etc.)

Blend all of the above until smooth. Chill before serving. This will keep in the fridge for 3 – 4 days.

Sunday

Breakfast: Fresh whole grain bagels with cream cheese (or vegan Tofutti version), fruit salad, and herbal tea.

Lunch: Leftovers from previous night: *Corn chowder* and *enchiladas*

Optional snack: Fresh cut veggies with hummus or other dip

Dinner: *Kale-bouli* (Like tabouli, but healthier!) and *African Peanut Stew* with brown rice

Kale-bouli Salad

Serves 4 - 6

This salad is simple and is extremely nutritious with the addition of kale and hemp seeds. Kale is an excellent source of iron, calcium and other minerals, while hemp seeds provide protein and essential omega-3s. Use organic ingredients when possible. Unlike most salads, this one keeps well in the fridge for 3 to 4 days, and actually gets better as it sits. The kale becomes more digestible as the salt and lemon work to break down the tough fibers. (Traditional Middle Eastern tabouli salad is made with parsley and bulgur)

- 1 bunch kale, thoroughly washed, tough stalks removed
- Juice of one large lemon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil (optional)
- 1/4 cup soft hemp seeds
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- 2 green onions, sliced OR 2 Tbsp diced red onion

Roll up the kale leaves and julienne (cut into fine ribbons). In a large bowl, combine kale with lemon juice, salt and olive oil if using. If you want to eat this sooner than later, then with clean hands, reach in there and massage the salt and lemon into the kale to help break down the tough fibers. Otherwise, let it marinate for an hour, continue by adding the rest of the ingredients and toss well. Let marinate in fridge for a couple of hours or even overnight and serve.

Note: Kale can be hard to digest unless marinated, thoroughly blended (as in a green smoothie), or lightly steamed.

African Peanut Stew

Serves 4 - 6

This recipe is a little bit higher in fat than most of the other main courses in the Veggie Challenge. However, there's plenty of fibre and anti-oxidants, so enjoy it as a once-in-a-while treat, especially on a cold fall or winter evening.

- 1 1/2 tablespoons oil (olive or other)
- 1 large red onion, diced
- 3 to 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 medium-large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger, or more to taste
- 3 cups water
- 1 (28-oz) can diced tomatoes, with liquid
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 cups green beans, trimmed and chopped (or use frozen)
- 1/2 cup natural peanut butter
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes, more or less to taste
- Salt to taste (start with 1 tsp)
- 1 lime, juiced
- Chopped peanuts or scallions for garnish, optional

Heat the oil in a soup pot or steep-sided stir-fry pan. Add the onion and garlic and sauté over medium heat until the onion is golden.

Add the potatoes, sweet potatoes, ginger, and 3 cups water. Bring to a boil, then simmer gently, covered, until the potatoes and sweet potatoes are nearly tender, about 15 minutes.

Add the green beans, then stir in the peanut butter, a little at a time, until it melts into the broth. Add tomatoes with their juice. Stir in the cayenne or red pepper flakes, then simmer gently, covered, for 10 minutes longer, or until all the vegetables are tender. Add a bit more water if needed for a moist but not soupy consistency. Add the lime juice and stir through.

Season with salt and serve in bowls over hot cooked brown rice. If desired, garnish each serving with chopped scallions and/or chopped peanuts.