

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE

# Why **WHAT** You Serve Matters Now More Than Ever

HEALTH • EQUITY • ENVIRONMENT



# Welcome!



This booklet was created to address the importance of starting to move toward serving more plant-based meat/meat alternates (M/MAs), with practical implementation tips.

As you'll learn in this booklet, plant-based foods result in lower rates of diet-related diseases, which are increasingly impacting children. Eating more plant-based food strengthens our immune system, addresses equity issues, and has less of an impact on the environment.

Vegetables, legumes, fruits, and whole grains are healthy, nutrient-dense foods that students need to function their best in school and in life. One of the biggest areas for change includes serving legumes and other plant-based proteins in the meat/meat alternate (M/MA) category, in addition to the vegetables, fruits, and whole grains you are already serving. Please enjoy and share widely!

—Your friends at the Coalition for Healthy School Food and the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

The information in this resource will help you add more plant-based main dish options to your menu—which can benefit children's health, address equity, and support the environment.

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# Why Is Healthy Food So Important for Our Immune Systems?

Diets rich in plant-based foods can reduce our risk of many chronic diseases including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and overweight/obesity. These diets can also protect us from and fight infections, including COVID-19. Healthy, low-fat, plant-based diets are especially powerful because they have been proven to reverse chronic conditions. While eating a fully plant-based diet will reap the most benefits, even making small steps in the right direction will also make an impact.

## Building Our Immunity

Did you know that what we eat plays a huge role in our immunity? Other ways to support our immunity include getting enough sleep, not smoking, having a good social support network, and finding ways to reduce our



stress (a tall order for school food service workers—we know your job is hard!). Being mindful of what we eat is an often-overlooked part of preserving our overall health and preparing to fight off infectious diseases.

## Helpful Terms to Know for Incorporating More Plant-Based Foods

**Plant-based** = Refers to food that is 100% made from plants (also known as vegan).

**Plant-forward** = Refers to food that is mostly (but not completely) made from plants. An example might be a bean taco that has a small sprinkling of cheese.

**Vegetarian** = A diet or food that avoids meat, poultry, seafood, and byproducts such as lard or gelatin, but may contain dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt, etc.), eggs, or honey.

**Vegan** = A diet or food that is like vegetarian, but also avoids dairy, eggs, honey, or anything that comes from an animal. Students may choose to eat vegan foods because of health or environmental reasons, or because they don't want to eat animals. They may also eat vegan meals simply because their family does and they were raised this way.





## Improve Your Health With Whole Plant Foods

Providing more plant-based foods and less meat and processed foods benefits those at risk for chronic diseases and helps to prevent conditions like diabetes from developing in the first place. Oftentimes, low socioeconomic status and lack of access to healthy food or health care increases a person's risk of adverse health outcomes. These disproportionately affect Black and Indigenous individuals and other persons of color. By serving plant-based M/MAs or adding more of them to your menu, you can make a positive impact, not just on people who have historically been marginalized, but on everyone.

Eating a wide range and ample amounts of fruits, vegetables, starchy vegetables (like sweet potatoes and winter squashes), whole grains, beans, lentils, and split peas, as well as a small amount of nuts and seeds, helps improve one's overall health and immunity. Research shows that choosing these foods in place of meat and dairy has a very positive effect on our health.<sup>2</sup>

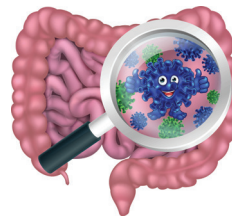


## Evidence-Based Research

The good news is that studies show plant-based diets are effective in treating diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and some forms of cancer.<sup>2</sup> Preliminary data even show a benefit to children with asthma who eat a plant-based diet.<sup>3</sup>

## How Foods Impact Immunity

Our digestive system plays a key role in supporting our immune system. Our intestines are full of trillions of bacteria, which can either help or harm our health. When we eat minimally processed, high-fiber, plant-based foods (fiber is found ONLY in plant foods), we are giving the good bacteria fuel to thrive and diversify. The antioxidants and phytonutrients found in plant foods also help lower the inflammation in our bodies, while most animal-based and highly processed foods contribute to inflammation.<sup>3</sup> Cultivating a gut full of good bacteria and eating foods that lower inflammation will better equip our immune system to defend itself when bad bacteria and viruses come our way.



## Show Me the Money

Plant-based M/MAs are affordable. Many schools have begun serving plant-based meals and have found that they easily fit within their food service budgets. Plant-based menus have also resulted in greater participation not only from students but also from teachers and other staff, bringing in greater reimbursements and revenue.



*“Locally grown tofu and black beans from New York state cost less than meat-based options like the \$1 chicken drumsticks we serve. Beans are a cost savings for the meat/meat alternate requirement.”*

—Beth Krause, RD,  
at Ithaca City School District

*“The food cost is neutral, if not less, for our vegetarian menu compared to the standard menu.”*

—Stephen O’Brien at the Office of School Food and Nutrition in New York City



## Healthy for Kids

More and more, children are experiencing the effects of unhealthy eating that used to be reserved for adults: Overweight/obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes are all on the rise among children and adolescents. Kids benefit greatly from reducing

The benefits of decreasing meat, dairy, and eggs and increasing high-protein plant-based foods in the M/MA category (beans, lentils, tofu, and plant-based meats) cannot be overstated.

meat and dairy consumption and increasing the amount of plant-based foods they eat. Often, when we think of increasing plant foods, we may think of serv-

ing more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Indeed many schools are already doing this! However, the benefits of decreasing meat, dairy, and eggs and increasing healthful high-protein plant-based foods in the M/MA category cannot be overstated. Introducing kids to high-fiber foods (fiber is found only in plant foods) from a young age can significantly improve their chances of continuing healthy eating habits as adults and help them avoid the diseases that impact so many of us now.<sup>1</sup>



## Healthy for School Food Service Workers, Teachers, and Staff

Kids are not the only ones who benefit from eating more plant-based food; adults benefit, too! Choosing more plant-based entrees over those that contain meat or dairy is healthy for everyone. Schools that have begun serving more plant-based meals made from scratch have seen increased participation from teachers and other staff.



## Adults Influence Kids

When adults model healthy eating behaviors, they also positively influence children. While parents play the most important role in their children's eating behaviors, we have seen that when food service staff encourage—and teachers or other adults eat—plant-based M/MAs, students are more likely to choose them.





## The Time Is Ripe

Despite some pandemic-era flexibilities, schools like yours have made great progress in serving abundant fruit, vegetables, and whole grains to students. We encourage you to go even further. The biggest opportunity to make meals healthier is to add more plant-based M/MA options, especially beans, lentils, split peas, tempeh, and tofu. As you know, this is all the more important for children who rely on school food and for whom school meals may be their only meals. Not only can it be healthier, achievable, and lower cost (or at least cost neutral), your efforts will help children develop healthier habits that can last a lifetime.

## What Do We Mean When We Say Plant-Based M/MA?

When we say plant-based, we mean 100% from plants. In the M/MA category, this includes beans, lentils, tofu, tempeh, soy yogurt, falafels, and CN-labeled products that contain only foods from plants.

### Examples of Healthful Plant-Based M/MAs:

Beans, lentils, tofu, tempeh, soy yogurt, nuts, and seeds. Other options could include CN-labeled products like falafel and veggie burgers.



## Easy Ways to Incorporate Plant-Based M/MAs Onto Your Menu

One way to introduce kids to new M/MA menu items is to take favorites and put a spin on them, which is easy to do with wraps, sandwiches, salads, and bowls. These foods are also easy to package. Veggies with hummus or baked tofu in a wheat tortilla, for example, can either be served as a wrap or be sliced. Roll-ups/pinwheels are a method of slicing a wrap

like sushi that makes the food especially fun to eat. Rather than serving salads with meat and cheese, try replacing animal proteins with plant proteins. For example, use roasted chickpeas and a packet of sunflower seeds.

### BEST PRACTICE:

A 1-ounce portion of two different meat alternates can make the serving size of beans smaller and more manageable. For example, you could use roasted chickpeas and a packet of sunflower seeds as salad toppers.



*Examples like these can be easily used in school meals.*

## Best Practices for Successfully Introducing New Menu Items

1. Strategic positioning of plant-based M/MAs on the menu, such as serving them first or as the default, can influence student choices for the better. Strategic placement of plant-based M/MAs on the menu will help make these choices become more popular.
2. Taste testing is a great way to familiarize students with plant-based foods. Offer small samples during lunchtime or feature new foods in a weekly special. Another way to familiarize students with plant-based M/MAs is to first offer them as a vegetable side.
3. We have also found that identifying plant-based foods as “vegan” may not always be helpful depending on how popular plant-based (vegan) food is in your community. If it is popular, you can label it with a (V). Alternatively, label it “PB” for plant-based—for example, “Ms. Patel’s Rajma (PB).”



*Pictured are plant-based foods served on the line at a CHSF Family Dinner Night event in the cafeteria at P.S. 244 in New York City.*



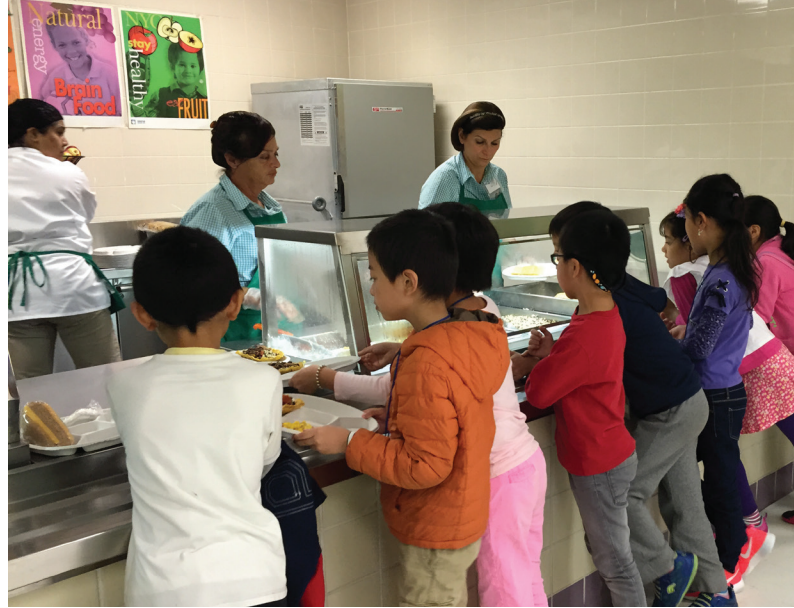
4. Recipe-specific morning announcements, especially when read by the principal, can really influence students. The Coalition for Healthy School Food has recipe-specific announcements. For example, “Today we are having Ms. Patel’s Rajma with vegetables, kidney beans, and a sweet and savory sauce, served with rice. This dish features flavors that are inspired by the cuisine of India. This is one of my favorites, and I bet you’ll like it, too. I hope you’ll try it, and let me know what you think!”

5. One of the biggest challenges to students taking plant-based M/MAs is that many schools have several choices for the M/MA, most of which are not plant-based. If schools limit or even eliminate the number of animal-based M/MAs being served, the plant-based option has a better chance of being chosen.

## When Kids Are in Line

The most effective ways to promote new plant-based recipes include the following:

1. Make sure the food is visually appealing.
2. Place the hot, plant-based items in the first well of the steam table as students approach the line.
3. Make sure the food is visible and not blocked by a tray, for example.
4. Encourage children to try the food with a friendly invitation and a smile.
5. Use Coalition for Healthy School Food marketing materials such as serving line signs and flyers.
6. If it is an international recipe, focus on the culture or country that the food is inspired by.



## The Importance of Encouraging Plant-Based Choices

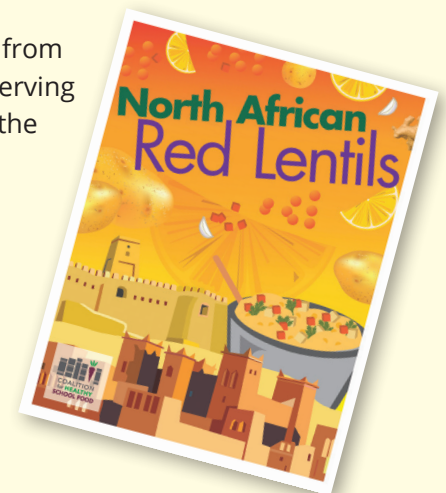
As you know, encouragement from food service staff can make a big difference in the choices students make. We’ve seen many more kids taking plant-based M/MAs in schools where the serving staff are enthusiastic. Kids will often surprise you, and we have found that kids love the plant-based M/MA options. Of course, they have to look and taste delicious, and our recipes achieve that goal! Even if you or your staff do not personally feel passionate about these choices, you play a huge role in how kids think about them. The research is clear that plant-based foods will help children prevent the chronic health conditions that are plaguing the majority of adults—and increasingly children. If we can help our kids avoid the devastating health challenges that so many adults are facing today, then we have achieved our goal of doing better for our kids.

## Helpful Resources

The Coalition for Healthy School Food has toolkits with recipes inspired by foods from around the world, as well as marketing and educational materials including flyers, serving line signs, recipe-specific announcements, and slideshows for the classroom about the cultures the recipes are inspired by. You can find these resources at [HealthySchoolFood.org/Recipes](http://HealthySchoolFood.org/Recipes) under “Toolkits for Schools.”

In addition, Coalition for Healthy School Food also offers nutrition education resources including Feel Good Food Cards (which can also be used to show what is on the menu that day), and Wellness Wake Up Call, which are messages read over the PA system each day in the form of easy-to-digest sound bites.

The Physicians Committee offers menu consultation services by registered dietitians, tailored marketing materials upon request, various nutrition education opportunities, and bulk recipes. You can learn more about these services at [HealthySchoolLunches.org](http://HealthySchoolLunches.org).



## Healthy and Easy Recipes

Delicious recipes made from scratch that qualify in the M/MA category include **Southwestern Salad, Power Hummus, Chili Power Bowl, North African Red Lentils, Pasta Fagioli, Sweet and Sour Power Bowl, Awesome Bean Burgers, Tuscan Tomato Pie,** and **Breakfast Sushi**, to name just a few. See some of these recipes on pages 11 to 16 and refer to the linked resources to view the rest.

### Children's Health



High Cholesterol **2** in 10 Children



Overweight or Obese **3** in 10 Children



Will Develop Diabetes **3** in 10 Children

*Data are from the CDC.*

## Beans: Healthy and Inexpensive!

Beans are not just a vegetable subgroup! Beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas are a healthy M/MA that help support the immune system, and they significantly reduce the risk of many diet-related diseases. In fact, cultures around the world eat beans and other legumes daily. This simple dietary pattern is largely responsible for the long, healthy life enjoyed by people living in these communities.<sup>4</sup> The great news is that it's easy



to cook with beans! While many schools use canned beans, with just a few extra steps you can use dry beans. Both dry and canned beans are healthy and inexpensive, and dry beans cost even less than canned. See page 17 for instructions on how to cook dry beans, but if this is not an option, canned beans are just fine!



## Beans From Your State = Farm to School

Dry beans grown in your state make a great addition to your farm-to-school lineup! Farm-to-school is more than just fruits and vegetables, and beans are a great way to expand your local/regional offerings.

## Tofu Is Healthy and Kid-Friendly!

Tofu is made from soybeans. It very often contains calcium and may reduce the risk of heart disease<sup>5</sup> and certain cancers.<sup>6,7</sup> When tofu is prepared well, students can quickly become tofu super-fans. One day after being served some, a middle school student was overheard exclaiming: “This is the best chicken I ever had!” Others agreed and were shocked when they found out it was actually tofu.



## Tasty Tofu

Tofu can be as flavorful as you want it to be. It just depends how you prepare it, as it takes on the flavors of what it is marinated in or cooked with. Baked tofu is an especially great way to serve tofu. Press it, marinate it, and bake it. It's easy! See page 19 on how to prepare baked tofu from scratch and see our recipes section on pages 11 to 16 for meals that incorporate tofu. You can also learn how to advocate for having ready-made baked tofu on the USDA foods list for added convenience. See the “Requests to the USDA” section on the following page.



## Manufactured Plant-Based M/MA Products

These items can help increase the plant-based M/MAs on your menu whether or not you have a cooking kitchen.

- American Bean Products (AmericanBean.com)
  - Mediterranean Tots
  - Falafel
  - Falafel Stix
  - Black Bean Salsa Burgers
  - White Bean Puree
- Dr. Praeger's Food Service Line (DrPraegers.com/Food-Service)
  - Many CN-labeled products are available, such as shelled edamame, vegan burgers, vegan meatballs, vegan breakfast sausage, and chickenless chicken.
  - Choose products that do not contain dairy or eggs to ensure vegan-friendly menu options.
- Impossible Foods (ImpossibleFoods.com)
  - Impossible Beef Made From Plants (CN)
  - Impossible Sausage Made From Plants (CN)
  - Impossible Chicken Nuggets Made From Plants (CN)
- Kellogg's MorningStar Farms K-12 Vegan Line (KelloggsAwayFromHome.com)
  - Chick'n Nuggets (CN)
  - Italian Sausage Style Crumbles (CN)



*Student enjoying American Bean falafel.*

## Requests to the USDA

Did you know that you can make requests to the USDA to add items to their Foods Available List? Tofu is not yet on this list. The USDA wants to hear from food service directors who are interested in plain tofu and ready-to-eat, flavored baked tofu. You could suggest flavors such as BBQ, curry, and teriyaki tofu. If you have other flavor ideas, share those as well.

The great thing about flavored baked tofu is that it is delicious as a stand-alone, ready-to-serve M/MA item, *and* it can also be used as an ingredient in recipes, eliminating the tofu prep steps in the recipe.



Just email the USDA at [USDAfoods@usda.gov](mailto:USDAfoods@usda.gov) to let them know if you want plain, flavored, or both and which flavors you are most interested in. If there are any other plant-based protein options you want—for example, baked tempeh, roasted chickpeas, or hummus—they would like to hear from you about this as well. You need to specify how much of each item you would anticipate using per school year, the name of the district you are in, and the city and state.

The more requests they get, the more likely it is that they will add new items you can order.

Make sure to let your state agency know you are making this request and that, once any of these items become available, you are very interested in ordering them.

## Caring for the Environment

As we all know, taking care of the environment is important as it impacts all of us now and our children's future. Among the most impactful things we can do as individuals to reduce our impact on climate change is to eat more plant foods and fewer animal foods. By offering plant-based M/MA options in school, you are making a big contribution to helping the environment. Because schools in the United States serve a collective 7 billion meals per year, even small

*continued on next page*

"Kids today are much more socially conscious and concerned about the environment. They want to do the right thing and this includes their food choices. Plant-based M/MAs show them that we care."

—Christine Wallace, SNS, school nutrition consultant

changes can make a big difference. Recycled and compostable packaging are also good environmental choices.

## Equity: Milk Options for Everyone

It may come as a surprise to many that dairy can contribute to a number of health conditions and may not protect bones as well as we once thought. In fact, milk is not naturally part of the human diet. Lactose intolerance used to be the norm for all humans and still is in many cultures and across many races. This is because no mammal needs milk after being weaned, so people would naturally lose their ability to digest lactose (the sugar found in milk). The majority of the world's population cannot digest lactose, especially Black and Indigenous individuals and other persons of color. Some people, most of whom are white, have a genetic mutation called lactase persistence, which lets them continue digesting lactose, even after they naturally should have stopped. Symptoms of lactose intolerance include upset stomach, diarrhea, constipation, and gas. Dairy allergies are also very common. Because dairy is so common in the diet, most parents of children with chronic constipation would never guess that an undiagnosed dairy allergy may be the cause. Symptoms from both lactose intolerance and dairy allergies increase visits to the nurse's office. Preliminary evidence also indicates removing dairy from the diet can improve asthmatic control in children.



## LACTOSE INTOLERANCE IN DIFFERENT GROUPS<sup>8</sup>

About **95%**  
of Asian Americans

About **90%**  
of Native Americans

About **70%**  
of Black Americans

About **65%**  
of Hispanic Americans

About **2%**  
of White Americans

Dairy milk is unfortunately still a required component in school meals, but we need to consider the health consequences and how it perpetrates racial disparities among Black, Indigenous, and other persons of color. In addition, according to the Harvard School of Public Health, higher dairy consumption can increase the risk of prostate cancer and possibly ovarian cancer. Dairy is not necessary for good health, and while you are required to offer milk, students are not required to take it under Offer versus Serve. To help children achieve their best health, consider adding more plant-based options. Make it easier for children to access nondairy milk. Inform parents or caregivers that they can provide a note about their children's dietary needs/preferences to help ensure options are available.

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## Power Hummus

Hummus is a Middle Eastern recipe that is a favorite of children. Hummus can be served as a dip, in sandwiches, and on salads. You can experiment with the color and flavor of this basic hummus recipe by adding about a cup of cooked vegetables, such as beets, winter squash, or orange, yellow, or purple sweet potatoes.

### Ingredients for 29:

- 1 #10 can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drain and reserve liquid
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 2 cups tahini or sunflower seed butter
- 2 cups finely chopped fresh parsley
- 2 cups lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper (*optional*)
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin

### Optional:

- 1 cup peeled and chopped beets, steamed
- 1 cup baked winter squash
- 1 cup baked orange, yellow, or purple sweet potato

### Ingredients for 58:

- 2 #10 cans garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drain and reserve liquid
- ¼ cup minced garlic
- 4 cups tahini or sunflower seed butter
- 4 cups finely chopped fresh parsley
- 4 cups lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper (*optional*)
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin

### Optional:

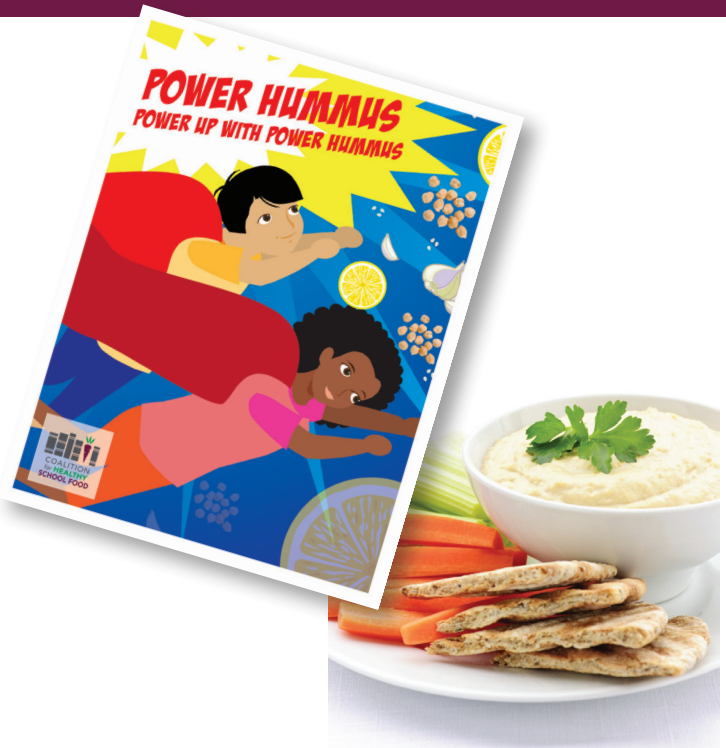
- 2 cups peeled and chopped beets, steamed
- 2 cups baked winter squash
- 2 cups baked orange, yellow, or purple sweet potato

### Procedure:

Add all of the ingredients, except the reserved bean liquid, to a food processor and process to a smooth consistency. If using optional vegetables, add, and continue to process while slowly adding reserved bean liquid, if needed, until smooth and the color is evenly distributed.

### Recipe Notes:

Serving suggestions: Hummus is great as a dip for carrots, celery, cucumber sticks, peppers, zucchini, broccoli, and other vegetables. It can also be served with whole-wheat pita bread cut into triangles. For gluten-free



children, it could be served with rice crackers or gluten-free bread. It is also great served in a whole-wheat pita pocket, cut in half, with lettuce, shredded carrots, and sliced cucumbers. A ½-cup scoop makes a great addition to a main dish salad in place of meat, eggs, or cheese.

**Serving Size:** ½ cup

**Yield:** 7.25 quarts—29 servings, 14.5 quarts—58 servings

### Meal Pattern Contribution:

Meat/meat alternates (ounce equivalents): 2

*Recipe developed for Coalition for Healthy School Food by Chef Wynnie Stein of Moosewood Restaurant.*

## Try It! Cool School Food

Plant-Powered & Climate-Friendly Recipes  
From Around the World

**More Recipes Can Be Found at:**

[HealthySchoolFood.org/Recipes](https://HealthySchoolFood.org/Recipes)

[HealthySchoolLunches.org](https://HealthySchoolLunches.org)

[Sub4Health.com/K-12-Recipes](https://Sub4Health.com/K-12-Recipes)

# Main Dish Salad



Serves 1

This is a template recipe from which you can make many different salads, which will credit as three meal components: M/MA, a grain, and multiple vegetables. Salads can be very

delicious and filling and are one of the healthiest and most planet-friendly meals we can offer our students. Make sure to give your salads great names, such as Planet Earth Salad!

## Ingredients:

### Basic Salad:

- 1 to 2 cups mixed fresh salad greens (lettuce/spinach/baby kale)

Plus, at least 3 additional vegetables:

- ½ cup chopped cucumbers
- 2 tomato slices (in season, ripe)
- ¼ cup shredded carrots
- ¼ cup shredded beets
- ⅛ cup finely shredded purple cabbage

### Grain:

Choose one:

- ½ cup cooked quinoa
- ½ cup cooked brown rice
- 1 piece cornbread (see *Chili Power Bowl recipe for Cornbread recipe*)
- ½ cup whole-wheat couscous
- ½ cup other grains (for example, farro, bulghur, millet)

### Meat Alternate:

Each of the following is a 2-ounce equivalent. Serve any one, or half of one plus half of another:

- ½ cup rinsed and drained beans (canned or freshly cooked black beans, chickpeas, cannellini, great northern, kidney, navy, pinto)
- ½ cup Oven-Roasted Chickpeas (CHSF recipe follows)
- ½ cup hummus (CHSF recipe—three small scoops of regular, sweet potato, and beet hummus equaling ½ cup total for a beautiful presentation)
- 8 pieces American Bean brand Mediterranean tots
- 4.4 ounces Baked Tofu or Crispy Tofu Bites (CHSF recipe)
- 2 ounces Baked Tempeh Strips (CHSF recipe)

OR half of any of the above plus one of the following:

- ¼ cup shelled sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup shelled pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup roasted edamame

## Procedure:

Serve the salad greens in a large compostable bowl. Top with additional vegetables and meat alternate 2-ounce equivalent. Tuck dressing container into side of bowl and cover.

## Menu Idea:

Make it a Southwestern salad: Top salad greens with corn, sliced cucumbers, black beans, and salsa and optional guacamole.

## Dressing Options:

### Maple-Mustard Vinaigrette, Two Ways

Yields 3 quarts (96 1-ounce/2-tablespoon servings)

Way One:

- 1 quart yellow mustard
- 1 quart maple syrup
- 1 quart white vinegar

Way Two:

- 2 cups maple syrup
- 4 cups Dijon-style mustard
- 6 cups balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic

Puree in a blender or whisk until evenly blended.

### Creamy Ranch Dressing

Yields 2 quarts (64 2-tablespoon servings)

- 3 pounds firm silken tofu
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup fresh herbs (dill, parsley, oregano), or 2 tablespoons dry
- 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast flakes (optional, but delicious!)

Puree all the ingredients. Keep refrigerated for up to a week.

### Moosewood Green Dressing (or Green Goddess Dressing)

Yields about 5 quarts (160 2-tablespoon servings)

- 3 pounds tofu, drained
- 3 cucumbers, peeled and chopped (6 cups)
- 9 ounces fresh spinach, sorted but no need to remove stems
- 3 ounces fresh basil (1½ cups packed)
- 1½ cups apple cider vinegar
- 3 cups apple juice
- 3 cups vegetable oil
- 1½ tablespoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper



## Main Dish Salad (continued)

Puree all the ingredients until evenly colored. Keep refrigerated for up to a week.

### Oven-Roasted Chickpeas

Serves 21

- 1 #10 can chickpeas, drained but not rinsed
- 1 tablespoon salt
- *Optional: 2 tablespoons seasoning, such as curry powder, chili powder, ground cumin, smoked paprika, onion powder, garlic powder*

Preheat the oven to 350 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Drain the chickpeas well, and do not rinse. In a mixing bowl, toss the chickpeas with the salt. (Do not add the

other seasoning at this point; it may scorch or inhibit crisping.)

Bake for about 30 minutes, until golden brown and dry/crispy to the touch. Remove from the oven and, while still warm, toss with seasonings if desired. Cool for at least 5 to 10 minutes; the roasted chickpeas will continue to crisp as they cool.

Store in a loosely covered container or jar at room temperature for up to 5 days. Or, seal well and freeze for up to 1 month. Note that stored chickpeas may not remain crisp; to restore crispiness, reheat them in a hot oven for a few minutes.

*Recipe developed by Chef Nancy Lazarus of Moosewood Restaurant, MoosewoodRestaurant.com, for Coalition for Healthy School Food.*

## Pasta Fagioli

This Italian recipe, pronounced “fah-zjo-lee,” is a huge hit with the students. We put our recipe on the back of the monthly lunch menus, and during the taste testing in elementary schools, many students told us that their parents had already made the recipe at home and they loved it! The name “pasta fagioli” means “pasta and beans.”

### Ingredients for 44:

- 1 cup olive oil
- 11 cups chopped onions
- 7 cups diced carrots
- ½ cup minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons dried oregano
- ¼ cup dried basil
- 2 tablespoons ground fennel seeds
- 2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes (*optional*)
- 7 cups crushed tomatoes
- 7 cups tomato sauce
- 2 #10 cans white beans, cannellini, navy, or great northern, drained
- 2 pounds kale, stems removed, leaves chopped
- 2 pounds, 12 ounces short, chunky pasta (shells, elbows, or fusilli)

### Ingredients for 88:

- 2 cups olive oil
- 22 cups chopped onions
- 14 cups diced carrots
- 1 cup minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons ground black pepper
- ¼ cup dried oregano
- ½ cup dried basil
- ¼ cup ground fennel seeds
- 1 tablespoon crushed red pepper flakes (*optional*)
- 14 cups crushed tomatoes

- 14 cups tomato sauce
- 4 #10 cans white beans, cannellini, navy, or great northern, drained
- 4 pounds kale, stems removed, leaves chopped
- 5 pounds, 8 ounces short, chunky pasta (shells, elbows, or fusilli)

### Procedure:

1. Cook the onions, carrots, and garlic in oil until onions have softened.
2. Add seasonings and cook until carrots have softened.
3. Add crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, and drained beans and bring to a simmer.
4. Stir in the chopped kale and simmer until tender but still bright green.
5. Cook the pasta until al dente. Drain and add to sauce.

### Note:

For Next-Day Service: Cook pasta until al dente, drain, cool, and refrigerate. Follow above directions up to adding kale. Refrigerate. On day of service, reheat sauce to 165 F. Add kale and pasta, reduce heat, and simmer until kale is tender but still bright green.

**Serving Size:** 1⅔ cups

**Yield:** 4 gallons plus 1½ quarts—44 servings, 8 gallons plus 3 quarts—88 servings

### Meal Pattern Contribution:

Meat/meat alternates (ounce equivalents): 2

Grains (ounce equivalents): 1

Vegetables (cups): ¾ cup total—other

*Recipe developed by Chef Wynnie Stein of Moosewood Restaurant for Coalition for Healthy School Food.*



# North African Red Lentils

This incredibly delicious recipe comes together quickly with lentils and vegetables simmering together in a fragrant, spicy sauce. Couscous is a tiny pasta.

## Ingredients for 25:

### Lentil/Vegetable Mixture Ingredients:

- ¼ cup vegetable oil (*optional*)
- 6 cups chopped onions
- ½ to 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (*optional*)
- ½ cup minced garlic
- ½ cup peeled and grated fresh ginger
- 6 cups diced carrots
- 3 tablespoons ground cumin
- 3 tablespoons ground coriander
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 quart water
- 4 cups diced potatoes
- 4 cups diced or crushed tomatoes (#3 can, 33 ounces)
- 4¼ cups dry red lentils, rinsed
- 2 quarts water (more if needed)
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1½ cups chopped fresh cilantro

### Couscous Ingredients:

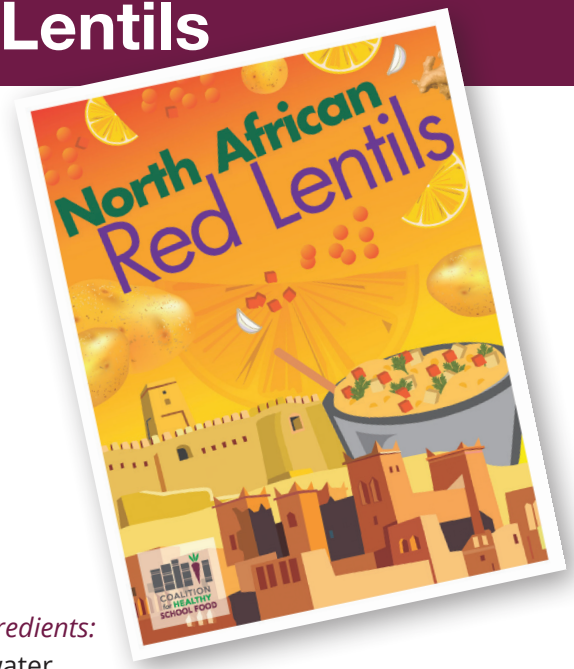
- 1 quart plus 2 cups water
- 4 cups dry whole-wheat couscous
- 1 teaspoon salt

*Optional: For a gluten-free version, use millet or quinoa. You will need to look up measurements and cooking instructions as they are not the same as for couscous.*

## Ingredients for 50:

### Lentil/Vegetable Mixture Ingredients:

- ½ cup vegetable oil (*optional*)
- 12 cups chopped onions
- 1 to 2 teaspoons red pepper flakes (*optional*)
- 1 cup minced garlic
- 1 cup peeled and grated fresh ginger
- 12 cups diced carrots
- ½ cup ground cumin
- ½ cup ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon turmeric
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 quarts water
- 8 cups diced potatoes
- 8 cups diced or crushed tomatoes (2 #3 cans, 66 ounces)
- 8½ cups dry red lentils, rinsed
- 4 quarts water (more if needed)
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 cups fresh cilantro, chopped



### Couscous Ingredients:

- 3 quarts water
- 8 cups dry whole-wheat couscous
- 2 teaspoons salt

*Optional: For a gluten-free version, use millet or quinoa. You will need to look up measurements and cooking instructions as they are not the same as for couscous.*

## Procedure:

1. Sauté the onions with the red pepper flakes until the onions are soft, but not browned. To eliminate oil, cook the onions in a small amount of water on medium-high heat.
2. Add the garlic, ginger, carrots, spices, and salt if using. Stir to coat the vegetables with the spices. Cook for about 5 minutes, until carrots have softened.
3. Stir in the water, potatoes, and tomatoes. Bring to a boil, lower heat, and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Add the lentils and additional water. Return to a boil and then reduce the heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally and adding more water if necessary, until the lentils are soft.
5. Stir in the lemon juice and cilantro.
6. To make the couscous: Bring the water to a boil. Add the couscous and salt if using, remove from the heat, and cover. Let stand for 5 minutes and then toss and stir to fluff.
7. Serve about 1¼ cups of the lentils on a ½-cup bed of couscous.

**Serving Size:** ½ cup couscous, 1¼ cups lentils

**Yield:** 4 gallons—25 servings, 8 gallons—50 servings

## Meal Pattern Contribution:

Meat/meat alternates (ounce equivalents): 2

Grains (ounce equivalents): 1

Vegetables (cups): ¾ cup total—other

*Recipe developed for Coalition for Healthy School Food by Chef Wynnie Stein of Moosewood Restaurant.*



# Sweet and Sour Power Bowl

In this bowl, the “sweet and sour” comes from the orange ginger sauce, and the “power” is delivered by plant-based protein. Swap out sweet potatoes for baked winter squash or broccoli for another green vegetable.

## Ingredients for 25:

### Tofu Bites Ingredients:

- 7 pounds (112 ounces) firm or extra-firm tofu, pressed (see instructions below)
- ½ cup soy sauce (optionally wheat-free and/or low-sodium)
- ½ cup vegetable oil (optional)
- ½ cup cornstarch (organic preferred)

### Orange Ginger Sauce Ingredients:

- 2 quarts orange or pineapple juice
- ¼ cup peeled and grated fresh ginger
- ½ cup soy sauce (optionally wheat-free and/or low-sodium)
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar or rice vinegar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- ⅔ cup cornstarch, dissolved in ½ cup cold water

### For the Bowl:

- 12½ cups cooked brown rice
- 1 pound, 12 ounces fresh broccoli, cut into florets
- 3 pounds sweet potatoes, cut into chunks

## Ingredients for 50:

### Tofu Bites Ingredients:

- 14 pounds (224 ounces) firm or extra-firm tofu, pressed (see instructions below)
- 1 cup soy sauce (optionally wheat-free and/or low-sodium)
- 1 cup vegetable oil (optional)
- 1 cup cornstarch (organic preferred)

### Orange Ginger Sauce Ingredients:

- 4 quarts orange or pineapple juice
- ½ cup peeled and grated fresh ginger
- 1 cup soy sauce (optionally wheat-free and/or low-sodium)
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar or rice vinegar
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1½ cups cornstarch, dissolved in 1 cup cold water

### For the Bowl

- 25 cups cooked brown rice
- 3 pounds, 8 ounces fresh broccoli, cut into florets
- 6 pounds sweet potatoes, cut into chunks

## Procedure:

### Press tofu:

1. Drain tofu.
2. Place tofu in flat pan.
3. Place another flat pan on top of tofu.

4. Place heavy items in top pan, such as two #10 cans, and allow tofu to press for 30 to 60 minutes.
5. Remove cans and top pan and drain tofu.
6. Slice into half-inch cubes.

### Make the tofu bites:

Preheat the oven to 400 F.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or lightly oil. In a mixing bowl, drizzle tofu cubes with the soy sauce and optional oil. Toss to combine. Sprinkle the cornstarch over the tofu and toss to coat (the cornstarch will be absorbed and will not be visible).

Spread the tofu on the prepared baking sheet and arrange it in an even layer, spaced so that the pieces are not touching. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, tossing the tofu halfway, until the tofu is deeply golden on the edges. Experiment with baking for longer to make the tofu bites extra crispy, since the baking time may differ among ovens.

**Make the sauce:** Bring the juice, grated ginger, soy sauce, vinegar, and brown sugar to a boil. Whisk in the dissolved cornstarch. Reduce the heat and stir the sauce until it becomes thick and clear.

### Cook the rice, sweet potatoes, and broccoli:

Cook the rice.

Cook the sweet potatoes. Either bake and then cut into chunks or wedges, or peel (or not) and cut into chunks to steam, boil, or roast.

Lightly steam the broccoli, making sure that when broccoli is served, it won't be overcooked.

**Fill the bowls:** In each bowl, arrange the rice, broccoli, and sweet potato chunks. Sprinkle baked tofu cubes over all. Drizzle with the sauce.

**Serving Size:** ½ cup rice, ½ cup broccoli, ¼ cup sweet potato, ½ cup tofu, 3 ounces sauce

### Meal Pattern Contribution:

Meat/meat alternates (ounce equivalents): 2

Grains (ounce equivalents): 1

Vegetables (cups): ¾ cup total; ¼ cup Red/Orange, ½ cup Dark Green

*Recipe concept developed by Coalition for Healthy School Food. Crispy Tofu sourced from CookieAndKate.com. Orange Ginger Sauce developed by Nancy Lazarus of Moosewood Restaurant.*



# Tuscan Tomato Pie

The topping on this pizza is a white bean hummus. Topped with colorful chopped vegetables, it is beautiful to look at, and it tastes great, too! We tell the students that this is a different type of pizza. We ask if they know where Tuscany is (Italy), and explain that this is a real Italian pizza. Red, white, and green balloons (to represent the colors of the Italian flag) and Italian music are a great way to introduce it.

## Ingredients for 24:

### Pizza crust:

- 3 pizza crusts, 16 inches round (18 to 19 ounces minimum) OR half sheets (24 ounces minimum)  
*(The pizza crust should be substantial enough to hold the heavier-than-usual toppings.)*

### White Bean Topping:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons water or oil
- 1½ #10 cans cannellini, great northern, or other white beans, drained
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dried oregano

### Tomato-Spinach Topping:

- 2 quarts plus 1 cup chopped fresh tomatoes
- 1 quart plus 1 cup chopped fresh spinach
- 1¾ cups chopped fresh basil
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

## Ingredients for 48:

### Pizza crust:

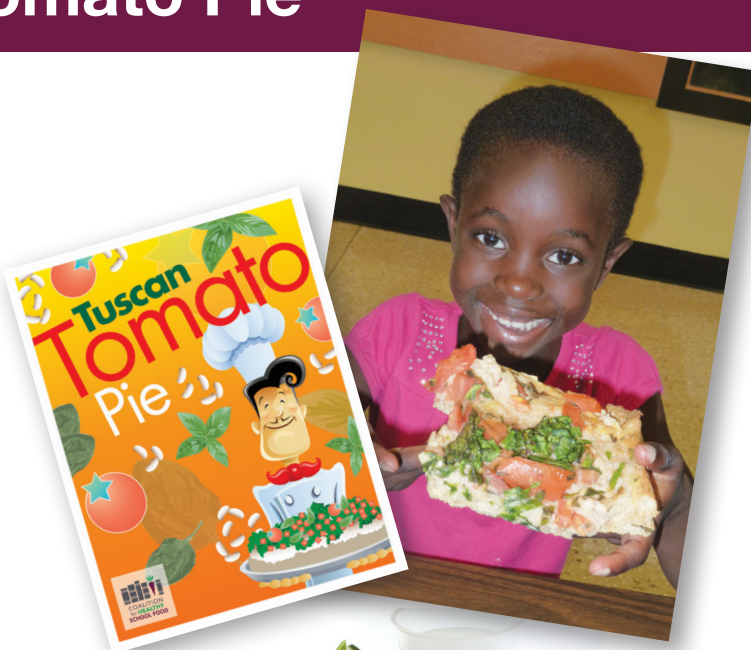
- 6 pizza crusts, 16 inches round (18 to 19 ounces minimum) OR half sheets (24 ounces minimum)  
*(The pizza crust should be substantial enough to hold the heavier-than-usual toppings.)*

### White Bean Topping:

- 1½ cups minced garlic
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water or oil
- 3 #10 cans cannellini, great northern, or other white beans, drained
- 1½ tablespoons salt
- 1½ tablespoons ground black pepper
- 2 cups lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dried oregano

### Tomato-Spinach Topping:

- 4 quarts plus 2 cups chopped fresh tomatoes
- 2 quarts plus 2 cups chopped fresh spinach
- 3½ cups chopped fresh basil
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup olive oil



## Procedure:

1. Bake crusts according to case instructions.
2. To prepare the white bean topping, briefly cook the garlic in water or olive oil. Combine the cooked garlic, drained beans, salt, pepper, lemon juice, and oregano, and mash until it holds together but is still chunky (until some of the beans are broken, not fully mashed).
3. To prepare the tomato-spinach topping, stir together all of the ingredients.
4. To assemble Tuscan Tomato Pie, for each pie, spread 5 cups of bean mixture evenly over each prebaked pizza crust. Then spread 4¾ cups of the tomato-spinach topping evenly over the beans.
5. Bake at 475 F until heated through and edges browned, around 10-15 minutes.
6. Serve immediately or hold between 135-160 F.

**Serving Size:**  $\frac{1}{8}$  cut of round or  $\frac{1}{2}$  sheet

**Yield:** 3 pies—24 servings, 6 pies—48 servings

## Meal Pattern Contribution:

Meat/meat alternates (ounce equivalents): 2

Grains (ounce equivalents): 2.25 minimum,  $\frac{1}{8}$  wedge OR  $\frac{1}{2}$  sheet = 3 ounces equivalent

Vegetables (cups):  $\frac{3}{8}$  cup total—other

*Recipe created by Chef Wynnie Stein of Moosewood Restaurant for Coalition for Healthy School Food. Recipe inspired by Robin Robertson, from her book Vegan on the Cheap.*



# How to Prepare Dried Beans



**1. CLEAN THE BEANS.**  
Place the beans in a shallow layer in a pie plate, baking layer in a pie plate, baking sheet, or bar pan.



Pick out and discard any foreign objects like leaves, small stones, or twigs, as well as any broken beans.



**2. RINSE THE BEANS.**  
Place the beans in a pot with water and swish around.



Pour beans into colander to drain and then rinse with cold water.

**3. SOAK THE BEANS.**

There are three soaking methods you can use, the Hot Soak Method, the Traditional Soak Method, and the Quick Soak Method. The Hot Soak Method is the recommended method because it reduces cooking time and gas-producing compounds the most, and it produces consistently tender beans.



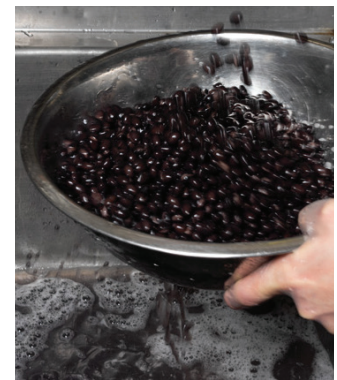
**Hot Soak Method**  
Place beans in large pot and add 10 cups fresh water for every 2 cups beans.



Place on stove and heat to boiling. Boil for 2 to 3 minutes.



Remove beans from heat, cover, and let stand for 4 hours.



Drain and rinse beans with fresh, cool water.



**4. COOK THE BEANS.**  
Place beans in a large stockpot and cover with fresh, cold water.



Place over medium heat; keep cooking water at a gentle simmer to prevent split skins. Add warm water periodically during the cooking process to keep the beans covered.



Stir beans occasionally throughout the cooking process to prevent sticking.



Beans take 30 minutes to 2 hours to cook, depending on the variety. Beans should be tender but not mushy, with no hard core in the middle.



# How to Prepare Canned Beans



1. Open canned beans.



2. Pour beans into a colander to drain.



3. Rinse beans.



4. Drain beans.



5. Use as directed in recipe.





# How to Prepare Tofu

Delicious as is, or use in a recipe calling for flavored tofu.



1. Drain tofu.



2. Place in flat pan.



3. Place another flat pan on top.



4. Place heavy item(s) in top pan, and allow to drain for 30 to 60 minutes.



5. While tofu is being pressed, prepare marinade.



6. Drain tofu.



7. Cut tofu into large slices.



8. Pour marinade over tofu and marinate for 30 minutes or as long as overnight (in refrigerator).



9. Bake tofu at 350 F for 1½ to 2 hours, flipping every 30 minutes until all liquid is absorbed.

# Testimonials

*“When we started adding plant-based M/MAs, our participation went up. Not only among students but teachers and other staff, too. And for us it has been cost neutral.”*

—Beth Krause, School Food Service Director, Ithaca, N.Y.

*“I love eating food from faraway places. It’s good and I like to learn about different places in the world.”*

—Abel, Age 8

*“Thank you for adding this food to our school’s menu. I’m so glad that I can get food at school now. It tastes so good.”*

—Theo, Age 10

*“At age 49, I had a widow-maker heart attack, and it’s a miracle I survived. My wife and I switched to a totally plant-based diet and I lost 60 pounds, my total cholesterol went down from 198 to 110, and I haven’t felt this good since I was a teenager! I even ran my first marathon at age 58.”*

—Doug Schmidt, retired enrichment teacher, Victor School District, founder of Eat Plants Love, which does 10-day challenges for businesses, teachers, and food service staff (EatPlantsLove.com)

*“I’m so happy our school started serving plant-based entrees. We love that the recipes are from different cultures and thank you for the family-size versions of the recipes—we make them at home, too!”*

—Naomi Sommers, parent

*“Adding more plant-based foods to your menus is a 3-way win: reduced food costs for center-of-the-plate items; increased menu diversity to expand your customer base; and appealing to this generation of socially conscious student customers who want to make their food choices sustainable for the planet.”*

—Christine Wallace, SNS, school nutrition consultant

*“This is the best ‘chicken’ I ever had.”*

—Anonymous student in Ithaca, N.Y., after eating a tofu veggie stir-fry (with no chicken!)

