

12 Inexpensive Plant Based Sources of High Protein



By: Cori DiDonato, C.S.C.S., Owner, [CrossFit Silver Tiger](#)

Looking for an alternative to getting the majority of your protein from meat and dairy? Want to take advantage of all the veggies available at your local farmers' markets? These 12 plant-based alternatives are not only significantly cheaper on the wallet, they pack additional nutrients and vitamins to enhance the nutritional density of your daily caloric intake. That means more nutritional value for the same amount of calories consumed compared to their meat based counterparts. I found ALL of these foods at my local Trader Joe's and also at my local Market Basket so none of them required trips to a pricier grocery store. To help you incorporate these foods into your meals, I've also included some of my favorite recipes using these ingredients and other fruits and vegetables below. Please note, this list is not entirely Paleo, so if you are sticking to a Paleo diet, you'll want to skip the items marked with an asterisk (*).

- Peanut Butter*

8 tablespoons of peanut butter (about 1 cup) has 28 grams of protein. Two tablespoons equals 7 grams, making peanut butter a huge source of protein for very little money. Check out this delicious no bake peanut butter cookie recipe:

<http://allrecipes.com/recipe/239969/no-bake-energy-bites/>

- Edamame*

Cooked edamame has 18 grams of protein in just a single 1 cup serving. A great cucumber edamame summer salad recipe can be found here:

<http://noblepig.com/2017/06/cucumber-edamame-salad-with-ginger-soy-vinaigrette/>

- Black Beans*

In addition to being an excellent source of potassium, folate, and B6, a single 1 cup serving has 15 grams of protein. Try this excellent black bean and avocado (item #10 below) salad recipe: <http://www.food.com/recipe/avocado-and-black-bean-salad-301350>

- Pumpkin Seeds- At approximately 10 grams of protein in each handful (1/4 cup) serving, pumpkin seeds are one of the seeds highest in protein. As an additional bonus, 23% of your daily zinc needs can also be covered in the same 1/4 cup serving. I love this recipe even though it only includes one ingredient from this list: <http://www.paleoplan.com/recipes/paleo-snacks-recipes/spiced-roasted-pumpkin-seeds/>

- Raw Cashews

Cashews are a nutrient packed powerhouse and contain less fat than other nuts

because cashews are actually seeds. Cashews are found on the bottom of the cashew apples produced by cashew trees. A typical ¼ cup serving has approximately 8 grams of protein. This is an awesome and easy to make raw cashew dessert that also used chia seeds (#7 below). Note- hemp hearts called for in this recipe are shelled hemp seeds and I've also substituted pumpkin seeds above (more easily found) when I've made this recipe:

<http://rawfoodrecipes.com/recipes/strawberry-coconut-balls/>

- Raw Almonds

Almonds pack 24 grams of protein in every cup, or, in a more traditional ¼ cup serving, approximately 6 grams. For a delicious side dish, you can pair this with #12 below in this Paleo Broccoli Slaw recipe:

<https://www.tastesoflizzyt.com/paleo-broccoli-slaw-recipe/>

- Chia Seeds

Chia seeds also clock in at 24 grams of protein per cup, or in a more traditional ¼ cup serving, 6 grams. For a great dessert/breakfast dish, check out this basic chia seed pudding recipe: <http://nomnompaleo.com/post/149299087508/coconut-chia-pudding> For more options (I am constantly making new versions of chia pudding for myself and my daughter), check out this list of chia pudding recipe ideas:

<http://paleogrubs.com/chia-seed-pudding>

- Steel-cut Oatmeal*

Steel-cut Oatmeal has one big advantage over its more processed rolled-oats counterpart- steel cut oats are lower on the glycemic index meaning they won't spike your blood sugar as much after eating them. They are also slightly lower in calories. Rolled-oats are also called old-fashioned oats. Steel-cut oats (they will say steel cut on the packaging) are cut into just two or three pieces whereas rolled-oats are steamed and then rolled (and sometimes even toasted) so they cook faster. Instant oatmeal is rolled oats that have also been cut to cook even quicker- often by just pouring boiling water over them. They are all equal in protein, however and clock in at 20 grams of protein in 1 cup of dry oats. In a typical ¼ cup serving (dried) that makes up a single small bowl, there are 5 grams. For make ahead steel cut oat recipes go here (they'll take more time than instant oats to cook, so make a breakfast batch ahead of time and just heat when you need them):

<http://ohsheglows.com/2011/09/20/make-ahead-steel-cut-oatmeal-4-new-oatmeal-recipes/>

- Quinoa*

Quinoa, another seed, packs approximately 4 grams of protein in 1/2 cooked cup (1/4 dried). For an awesome twist on tabbouleh normally made with bulgur wheat, try this quinoa version:

<http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/quinoa-tabbouleh-395939>

- Avocado

One avocado has approximately 3 grams of protein. Avocados pack nearly 20 vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients including vitamin K, B-6, C, E, and magnesium. and For a great recipe combining Avocado with Quinoa (above), try this awesome summer salad: <https://www.simplyquinoa.com/cucumber-tomato-avocado-quinoa-salad/>

- Brussel Sprouts

Brussel sprouts are considered one of the healthiest vegetables you can consume. While coming in at 3 grams of protein in 1 steamed cupful, they also contain numerous nutrients. Folate, manganese, vitamin B6, fiber, choline, copper, vitamin B1, potassium, phosphorus and omega-3 fatty acids can all be found in your single 1 cup serving. Check out this great Brussel sprout and zucchini recipe: <http://www.food.com/recipe/brussels-sprouts-with-shallots-and-zucchini-378550>

- Broccoli

1 cup of steamed broccoli has 3 grams of protein. Broccoli is also a good source of dietary fiber, pantothenic acid, vitamin B6, vitamin E, manganese, phosphorus, choline, vitamin B1, carotenoids, potassium and copper. For a broccoli recipe that even those who hate broccoli will love, try this awesome paleo broccoli fritters recipe: <http://paleomg.com/paleo-broccoli-fritters/>

*Not Paleo- items marked with an asterisk are not considered acceptable on the Paleo diet.

For more articles, check out our resource library here:

<http://crossfitsilvertiger.com/BLOG.php>

Cori DiDonato, C.S.C.S.; USA Weightlifting Club Coach, CrossFit Level 1 Training, owner of CrossFit Silver Tiger in Wakefield & [Silver Tiger Consulting](#), and former owner of Avalon CrossFit. <http://crossfitsilvertiger.com>