



GETTING STARTED WITH SUSTAINABLE EATING



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Contrary to popular belief, a plant-based diet is not necessarily a vegan diet. While the two share characteristics, they differ in one fundamental way – plant-based diets can still include the consumption of animal-based products. Rather than focusing on foods to EXCLUDE, people following plant-based diets focus on all the wonderful plant-based foods they can ADD to their diet.

Following a plant-based diet is an excellent way to reduce your environmental footprint¹ and may positively affect your overall health (including heart health and [type 2 diabetes](#)). Here are **3 actions** you can take today to start incorporating more plant-based foods into your diet and living more sustainably.



In need of Meatless Monday (or any day!) inspiration? Here are 3 recipes to get you started:

1. START SMALL

When you are just starting out, making the [switch to a plant-based diet](#) can feel intimidating, but small swaps can still make a big difference!

Here are some small swaps you can make to get started with plant-based eating:



Swap chickpeas for chicken in a pasta or curry.



Swap tofu for beef in a stir-fry.



Swap plant-based milk for dairy milk in your smoothie.



Swap plant-based butter, margarine, or spread for dairy butter on your toast or in baking.

MEATLESS MONDAYS

If you are looking to make a plant-based meal a weekly habit, Meatless Mondays can be a fun way to ease into eating more plant-based foods. Originally started in 2003 in association with the Johns Hopkins Centre for a Livable Future, Meatless Monday benefits both your health and the planet.²

Here are some tips for making Meatless Mondays a success:

01

Plan ahead! Set a weekly reminder on the day you normally grocery shop to remind yourself to pick up the ingredients you need.

02

Make a shopping list and stick to it. This will help you figure out exactly how much fresh produce to buy, ensuring you do not end up purchasing produce you are not going to use.

03

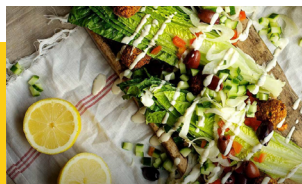
Think about what you like to eat and try adapting your favourite recipes to swap meat for a plant-based protein.

04

Recruit a family member or friend to join you and help keep you accountable.

05

Herbs and spices are your friend! Experiment with different flavour profiles to help keep things interesting.



FALAFEL SALAD WITH TAHINI DRESSING



MOROCCAN-STYLE RED LENTIL SOUP



EASY VEGAN BLACK BEAN TACOS

2. REDUCE FOOD WASTE



DID YOU KNOW
THAT AS MUCH AS:

58%

of food produced in Canada
is lost or wasted each year?



THAT'S OVER

**35 MILLION
TONNES,**

or, for size reference,

BLUE WHALES!

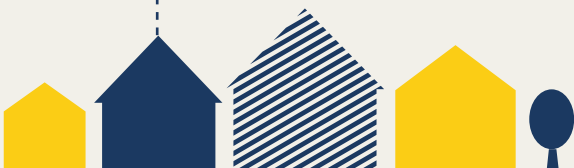
175,000



IT IS ESTIMATED THAT
THE AVERAGE CANADIAN
HOUSEHOLD SPENDS ABOUT

\$1766

on food that is wasted every year.³



HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR MINIMIZING FOOD
WASTE WHILE FOLLOWING A PLANT-BASED DIET:



Consider buying “ugly produce.” These misshapen fruits and vegetables may otherwise get thrown away because they do not meet appearance standards, but from freshness and taste perspectives, they are just as good. Plus, you may get them at a discount!



Consider buying frozen or canned vegetables and fruits.

They are also nutritious choices and are less likely to go bad before you get around to eating them.



Follow the “First In, First Out” method. If you have ingredients that are on the verge of going bad, plan meals around using up these foods.



If you do not think you will be able to eat leftovers within 3 or 4 days, **freeze them.**



If fruit begins to go brown or mushy, add it to smoothies or baked goods. If vegetables are starting to spoil, add them to a soup or stew.



Use vegetable scraps, like carrot peels and potato skins, to make a stock.



Compost any produce that you are unable to use.

3. COMPOSTING

Even if you are trying your best to reduce food waste, there are still certain things (like banana peels and coffee grounds) that you are not going to eat. Keeping food out of a landfill can be a great way to contribute to a sustainable lifestyle. That is where composting comes in. By composting, you help keep food out of a landfill while giving back to the planet.

Here are 5 steps for getting started with composting:

01

Select your food scraps. Fruit and vegetable scraps, tea bags, coffee grounds, eggshells and old flowers can all go into your compost. Avoid putting meat and dairy products in your compost, as they can attract pests.



02

Store the food scraps. Food scraps should be added to compost in deliberate layers to help speed up their breakdown. Storing the food scraps in a bag in your freezer is a great way to save scraps until you are ready to compost them. If you live in a place with snowy winters, you may need to store your food scraps for a few months until it warms up enough to compost outside.



03

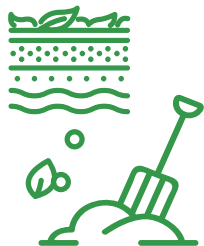
Choose a place to make your compost. If you are lucky, your city may already have a composting program that picks up your food scraps with your garbage and recycling. If you would like to try composting at home, all you need to get started is an old trash bin or large storage container!



04

Make the compost mix. When it comes to composting, there are two main components – “greens” and “browns.” Greens include wet materials like food scraps and grass clippings, while browns include dry materials like egg cartons, newspapers, and dried leaves. The browns are important because they

allow the compost to aerate, which enables the microorganisms to break everything down. Try to layer 1- to 2-inch layers of alternating browns and greens for best results. It is important to make sure you have more browns than greens, otherwise, the compost will get too wet, and it will not be able to decompose properly.



05

Wait and aerate. Composting takes patience! It can take anywhere from 2 to 6 months before the compost is ready to use on your garden. To keep the decomposition process going, be sure to turn or rotate the pile every 7 to 10 days with a shovel to ensure there is enough drainage and airflow.⁴



For a more detailed guide on starting your own compost, check out [Evergreen's Guide to Backyard Composting](#).

MOST IMPORTANTLY, remember that small changes can come together to make an impact on both the environment and your health, so do not hesitate to start incorporating more plant-based foods and living more sustainably now.



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