
IN THIS HANDOUT:

Vegetarian Meals in the CACFP

This handout provides information on vegetarian meals for programs that accommodate participants requesting a vegetarian diet and/or programs that want to incorporate vegetarian meals as part of the regular menu.



Types of Vegetarian Diets

All vegetarian diets consume plant-based foods including grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes, soy, nuts, and seeds. In addition, the following vegetarian diets consume additional foods:

- Ovo-vegetarian: Eggs
- Lacto-vegetarian: Dairy products
- Lacto-ovo vegetarian: Eggs and dairy products
- Pescatarian: Fish. May or may not consume eggs and dairy products
- Semi-vegetarian: Small amounts of meat, chicken, fish, dairy products, and eggs
- Vegan: Consume only plant-based foods. They do not consume animal products.

Menu Planning for Vegetarian Meals

Because all types of vegetarian diets eat foods from the vegetable, fruit, and grain components, only the milk and meat/meat alternate (m/ma) components may need adjustments.

- **Milk:** If cow's milk is not a part of the participant's vegetarian diet, a non-dairy beverage nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk can be served as a creditable substitute. Refer to the [Creditable Non-Dairy Beverages](#) handout for a list of creditable non-dairy beverages.
- **M/MA:** Foods served as a meat alternate must be creditable to the CACFP meal pattern. Refer to the next page for list of creditable meat alternate options.
 - Note: Meatless substitutes made with alternate protein products, grain ingredients, vegetables, etc. are only creditable when accompanied by a Child Nutrition (CN) label or a Product Formulation Statement (PFS).





Meat Alternate Options

The table below lists creditable meat alternate foods that contribute to the meat/meat alternate (m/ma) component of the CACFP meal pattern. Refer to the [CACFP Meal Pattern](#) or [CACFP Meal Pattern - ADC](#) for required serving sizes.

Meat Alternate	Additional Information
Alternate Protein Products (AAP) (e.g., burgers or links made from soy or other vegetable protein sources)	A Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) from the manufacturer is required
Eggs	
Cheese	Refer to Creditable and Non-Creditable Cheeses . Not Creditable: Imitation cheese (e.g., soy, almond, and other vegan cheeses)
Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas, lentils) Black Beans, Black Eyed Peas, Kidney Beans, Cannellini Beans, Chickpeas (Garbanzo Beans), Lentils, Lima Beans, Navy Beans, Northern Beans, Pinto Beans, Refried Beans, Soybeans, Split Peas	One type of legume may not be served as both a meat alternate and vegetable in the same meal. If serving two different types of legumes, one may credit as a meat alternate and the other as a vegetable.
Nuts and Seeds, and their Butters Almonds, Peanuts, Cashews, Hazelnuts, Macadamia Nuts, Chestnuts, Pecans, Pine Nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts, Pumpkin Seeds, Sesame Seeds, Sunflower Seeds, Soy Nuts, Tahini (soy nut butter)	Nuts and seeds may be used to meet no more than half of the M/MA component at lunch/supper. Some participants may have nut/seed allergies or intolerances which require meal accommodations to ensure participants are receiving a safe meal. Nuts and seeds can pose a choking hazard for children under four years of age.
Pasta made of 100% bean/legume flour(s)	May not be served a both a meat alternate or vegetable in the same meal. 1/2 cup cooked bean/legume pasta = 2 oz m/ma. Must be served with another 0.25 oz of visible meat alternate (ex. cheese).
Tempeh (Commercially Prepared)	
Tofu (Commercially Prepared)	2.2 oz (1/4 cup) of commercially prepared tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein
Yogurt (Dairy or Soy) (Commercially Prepared)	No more than 23 g of sugar per 6 ounces



Meal and Snack Ideas

Meal and snack ideas incorporating meat alternate options are below and on the next 2 pages. Refer to the [CACFP Meal Pattern](#) or [CACFP Meal Pattern – ADC](#) for required amounts to serve.

Breakfast Ideas and Standardized Recipes

A m/ma may be served in place of the grain component up to 3 times/week.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Southwest Tofu Scramble Kiwi Milk	Oatmeal Blueberries Milk	Cottage cheese Pineapple Milk	Cheerios Banana Milk	Breakfast burrito Hashbrowns Milk

Southwest Tofu Scramble

Makes 25 ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) servings*
(see recipe for 50 servings)

Crediting Information:

A $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving (6 fl oz spoodle) provides 1 oz eq. meat alternate, $\frac{1}{8}$ cup vegetable and 0.75 oz eq. grains.

Ingredients:

- 1 lbs and 9 oz of Quinoa
- 1 qt and 2 cups Water
- 1 Tbsp and 1 tsp Olive Oil
- 3 lbs and 8 oz Tofu (firm, crumbled)
- 2 Tbsp Garlic (minced)
- 1 Tbsp Cumin (ground)
- 1 tsp Red pepper flakes (crushed)
- 2 tsp Salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Black pepper (ground)
- 2 Tbsp and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Turmeric (ground)
- 3 cups Red bell pepper (diced)
- 1 cup and 3 oz Green Onion (diced)



Instructions:

1. Rinse quinoa.
2. Combine quinoa and water in a large, covered pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low.
3. Simmer uncovered for 10–15 minutes until water is completely absorbed. Fluff. Set aside for step 6.
4. In a large pot, add oil and crumbled tofu. Heat uncovered over medium heat for 2–3 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Add garlic, cumin, red pepper flakes, salt, pepper, turmeric, bell peppers, and onions. Heat uncovered over medium heat for 1–2 minutes, stirring constantly.
6. Pour vegetable mixture over quinoa. Stir well to combine.
7. Portion with 6 fl oz spoodle ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup).

Additional Breakfast Recipes to Try:

- Breakfast Burrito with Salsa ([25/50 servings](#))
- Mango Smoothie Bowl ([6 servings](#)) ([25/50 servings](#))
- Maple Baked French Toast Squares ([25/50 servings](#))





Lunch/Supper Ideas and Standardized Recipes

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Tofu stir-fry (tofu and vegetables) Brown rice Pineapple Milk	Bean Tostada (tostada, beans, cheese, lettuce/tomato) Grape halves Milk	Greek Pita (Hummus) Pita Cucumber and tomato Fresh pea pods Milk	Scrambled eggs English muffin Hash browns Blueberries Milk	Nut/seed butter sandwich on whole grain bread Cheese stick Watermelon Broccoli Milk

Bean Tostada

Makes 25 (2 tostadas) servings
(see recipe for 50 servings)

Crediting Information:

2 tostadas provide 2 oz eq. meat alternate, ½ cup vegetable, and 1 oz. eq. grains.

Ingredients:

- 1 #10 can pinto beans, drained, rinsed
- 3 ¾ cup onions, chopped
- 1 ½ cups green bell pepper
- 1 Tablespoon chili powder
- 2 ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¾ teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cups water
- ¾ cup tomato paste, canned
- 1 ¾ cups cilantro, chopped
- 1 lb. 4 oz. lettuce, shredded
- 1 ½ cups tomatoes, chopped
- 3 ¾ cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- 50 whole-grain yellow corn tostada shells

Instructions:

1. Pour beans, onions, peppers, and spices into a large food processor. Pour water slowly in processor while puréeing on medium speed for 1–2 min until beans have a smooth consistency.
2. Place puréed bean mixture and tomato paste in a large stock pot. Cook over medium heat covered for 15 minutes. Stir occasionally.
3. Heat to 165 °F for at least 15 seconds.
4. Remove from heat and fold in cilantro.
5. For topping: Combine lettuce and tomatoes. Toss lightly. Set mixture aside for step 10.
6. Assembly (2 tostadas per serving):
7. First layer: Using a No. 16 scoop, spread ¼ cup bean mixture on each tostada shell.
8. Second layer: Using a No. 10 scoop, divide equally between two tostadas, 3/8 cup (about 1½ oz) lettuce & tomato mixture on top of bean mixture.
9. Third layer: Using a rounded No. 30 scoop, divide equally between two tostadas, 2 Tbsp ½ tsp (about ½ oz) shredded cheese on top of lettuce and tomato mixture.



Additional Lunch/Supper Recipes to Try:



- [Bean Burrito Bowl \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Chinese Style Vegetables with Tofu \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Purple Power Bean Wrap \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Sautéed Tempeh with Vegetables \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Vegetable Chili \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Recipes from DPI's CACFP Tofu Recipe Guide](#)



Snack Ideas and Standardized Recipes

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cheese cubes Baby tomatoes	Nut/seed butter Apple slices	Hard-boiled egg Toasted bagel	Hummus Baby carrots	Yogurt Strawberries
Pureed beans Toasted pita	Cottage cheese Diced peaches	Baked tofu Banana slices	Grilled cheese sandwich	Pancake topped with nut/seed butter

Baked Carrot Fries with Yogurt-Sunflower Seed Butter Dip

Makes 25 (1/2 cup) servings*
(see recipe for 50 servings)
(6 servings)

Crediting Information:

A ½ cup serving of carrots and
2 tablespoons dip provides
½ cup vegetable and
½ oz equivalent meat alternate.

Ingredients:

- 3 ¼ cup and 2 Tbsp Greek yogurt (non-fat, plain)
- ¾ cup and 1Tbsp Sunflower seed butter
- 4 lbs and 7 oz Baby carrots (fresh)
- ½ tsp Salt
- 2 Tbsp Canola oil



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F.
2. In a small bowl, combine yogurt and sunflower seed butter. Use a fork or spatula to mix until smooth. Set aside. Keep cold at 40 °F or lower.
3. In a medium bowl combine carrots, salt, and oil. Toss.
4. Place carrots on a baking sheet in a single layer. Bake for 30 minutes or until lightly brown on the bottom.
5. Serve ½ cup carrot fries (about 6–10) and 2 Tbsp dip (#24 scoop).

Additional Snack Recipes to Try:



- Apples and Almond Butter (6 servings) (25/50 servings)
- Cheesy Bean Tostada (6 servings) (25/50 servings)
- Mini Egg Salad Sandwiches (6 servings) (25/50 servings)
- Mini Graham Crackers and Berry Nut Butter (6 servings) (25/50 servings)
- Peach and Yogurt Smoothies (6 servings) (25/50 servings)
- Savory Yogurt-Hummus Dip with Veggies (6 servings) (25/50 servings)
- Very Berry Parfaits (6 servings) (25/50 servings)

From [DPI Snack Inspiration](#)

- Cottage Cheese Dip
- Crispy Baked Tofu
- Fruity Dip
- Roasted Chickpeas
- Sheet Pan Eggs
- White Bean Ranch Dip



Menu Planning for Vegetarian Meals

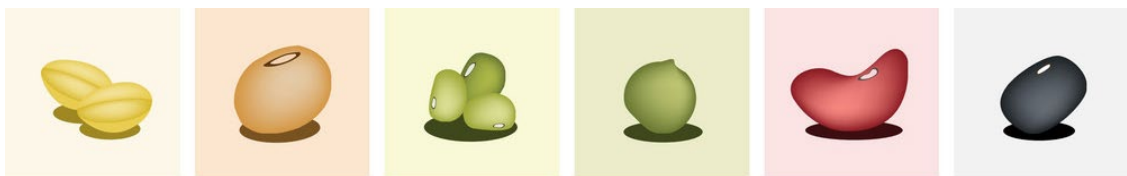
Planning menus for participants who request a vegetarian diet?

- Programs are not required but may choose to accommodate participants following a vegetarian diet. A vegetarian diet is generally considered to be a non-disability special dietary need request.
- Modify the regular menu with a few substitutions; an entirely different set of meals and snacks does not have to be prepared.
- Meal substitutions must be creditable to the CACFP meal pattern.
- Families may choose to provide one creditable component of a participant's meal. The program must provide all other meal components with creditable foods to claim the meal for reimbursement.



Looking to incorporate more vegetarian meals as part of the regular menu?

- Plan a vegetarian meal once a week, once a day, or more for all participants!
- Start **Meatless Mondays!** Serve meat alternate foods as the meat/meat alternate component at all meals and snacks on Mondays.
- Serve meat alternates in place of the grain component at breakfast up to 3 days per week.
- Serve meat alternate foods at snack.
- Incorporate vegetarian recipes when menu planning.



Handouts in this CACFP Training Spotlight can be found under the following Guidance Memorandums (GM) on the [Guidance Memorandum webpage](https://dpi.wi.gov/community-nutrition/cacfp/guidance-memo) (dpi.wi.gov/community-nutrition/cacfp/guidance-memo):

- [Creditable Non-Dairy Beverages](#): GM 12: Special Dietary Needs (GM L: Special Dietary Needs for FDCH Sponsors)
- [CACFP Meal Pattern](#): GM 12: Meal Requirements 1-18 Years (GM L: Meal Requirements 1-12 Years for FDCH Sponsors)
- [CACFP Meal Pattern – ADC](#): GM 12: Meal Requirements (Adult Care Component)