

# Plant Variety Builder

A practical way to widen the range of plants you eat - by adding variety to meals you already have, not by redesigning your whole diet.

## THE EXPERIMENT

Aim for around 30 different plant foods across a week. Vegetables, fruit, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices all count - even in small amounts.

The goal is genuine variety: different plant foods can provide different fibres and plant compounds. Thirty is a useful direction, not a pass/fail score.

## 1 Start with what is already easy

Before adding anything new, notice the plants that already appear naturally in your week. These are your foundation.

### PLANTS I ALREADY EAT MOST WEEKS

Think broadly: vegetables, fruit, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices all count.

## 2 Add variety to what you already eat

Don't start by inventing new meals. Look at food you already eat and ask: Where could one more plant fit?

### ADD SOMETHING ON THE SIDE

Add a small salad, vegetable side, fruit, or fermented vegetables to a meal you already eat.

### ADD SOMETHING INTO THE MEAL

Add one extra vegetable to soup, pasta sauce, curry, stew, omelette or stir-fry.

### ADD A TOPPING

Add berries, nuts, seeds or spices to yoghurt or oats; herbs, seeds, chickpeas or nuts to soup or salad.

### MIX OR ROTATE

Use mixed nuts, mixed seeds or mixed legumes. Swap your usual leaves, beans, grains, herbs or berries sometimes.

## 3 Use easy variety multipliers

A few foods can add several plants without adding much work. This is about making variety almost automatic.

### Mixed nuts

instead of one nut

### Mixed seeds

sprinkle on meals

### Mixed legumes

combine beans, lentils, chickpeas

### Herbs & spices

change them across the week

### Frozen & fermented vegetables

frozen is ready to cook; fermented can keep for months

### Whole grains

rotate oats, rye, barley, quinoa

# BUILD VARIETY INTO REAL LIFE

Choose a realistic increase, plan a few easy additions, then notice what you actually ate.

## 4 Build towards 30

Around 30 different plant foods per week is a useful goal for increasing dietary variety. If that is far from where you are now, don't change everything at once: notice your current range and choose a realistic increase for this week.

### MY USUAL WEEK

About \_\_\_\_ different plants

### THIS WEEK'S TARGET

\_\_\_\_ different plants

### THE DIRECTION

Build towards around 30

Choose 3-5 easy ways to add extra variety to meals you already eat. Focus on the how, so the plan still works even when the exact plants change from week to week.

Examples: add seeds to soup; berries or another fruit to salad; mixed nuts to yoghurt; herbs to eggs; fermented vegetables on the side.

#### HOW WILL I ADD EXTRA VARIETY?

#### WHAT WILL MAKE IT EASY?

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## 5 Track the variety - not the score

Write each different plant once. Repeats are still good food; they simply do not add a new number to this experiment.

### WHAT COUNTS?

Vegetables, fruit, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices all contribute. Different varieties and colours can count towards variety too. The aim is genuine breadth, not gaming the number.

|    |       |    |       |    |       |
|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|
| 1  | _____ | 11 | _____ | 21 | _____ |
| 2  | _____ | 12 | _____ | 22 | _____ |
| 3  | _____ | 13 | _____ | 23 | _____ |
| 4  | _____ | 14 | _____ | 24 | _____ |
| 5  | _____ | 15 | _____ | 25 | _____ |
| 6  | _____ | 16 | _____ | 26 | _____ |
| 7  | _____ | 17 | _____ | 27 | _____ |
| 8  | _____ | 18 | _____ | 28 | _____ |
| 9  | _____ | 19 | _____ | 29 | _____ |
| 10 | _____ | 20 | _____ | 30 | _____ |

## 6 Use what you learned next week

### WHAT WAS EASY?

Which meals naturally gave me variety?

### WHERE WAS I REPETITIVE?

Not a failure - just useful information.

### ONE EASY SHIFT FOR NEXT WEEK

What will I buy, prep, mix, rotate or add?

**REMEMBER** The useful question is not "Did I get 30?" but "What made variety easier, and what could I repeat?"