TOP 10 High Protein Plant-Based Foods For Your Main Meals

Amino acids that we can't produce naturally come from plants. That's a fact. But what are the optimal plant-based foods to get those daily proteins? Here's my list.

From left to right: Jon Venus, Nimai Delgado, Derek Simnett, and Brian Turner

Some important things to consider first:

- I'm vegan, but not a nutritionist or a health professional by any means. This list is based on my own experience and personal research over the years.
- The ranking is based solely on protein content p/ ***100g*** (reference basis).
- The nutritional content of this article was derived from Cronometer. Percent Daily Values (%DV) are based on a standard ***2,000 calories*** diet for adults and children starting at age 4.
- Mostly whole-grain foods were considered, with a few exceptions. Other plant-based products such as vegan protein powder, Ezekiel bread, and others did not make the list.
- Only plant-based food which can be classified as *main courses* were considered. For instance, nuts and certain seeds were not included as I would classify them as *toppings* or *complements* instead.

Now that things are clear, let's move on to my list:

1. Seitan (75g of protein p/ 100g)

S**eitan** is a product made from *gluten* — the main protein in wheat. It has its roots set in China and is very popular in Asian cuisine. It can be prepared in two ways: (1) by purchasing *vital wheat gluten powder* and hydrating it with water to form a dough, or (2) by hydrating wheat flour with water, forming a dough, and then kneading it under running water until all starch is removed, leaving an insoluble, sticky gluten dough.

It’s extremely protein-dense and an excellent option for people looking for a high plant-based source of protein. However, it’s a bad call for people with gluten sensitivity (which is my case) and, needlessly to say, carriers of *celiac disease* should stay far away from it.

It’s very high in *selenium*, which plays an important role as an antioxidant, helping reducing inflammation, preventing chronic diseases, and improving overall immunity. It’s also highly associated with fertility and cognitive function.

100g of seitan will provide you approximately:

1.9g Fat / **13g** Carbs / **75g** Protein / **370 kcal**

72%DV — Selenium

65%DV — Iron

37%DV — Phosphorus

20%DV — Copper

14%DV — Calcium

10%DV — Manganese

Wheat falls weak on *lysine* — one of the 9 essential amino acids for humans and linked to collagen production, immune system health, production of enzymes, antibodies, and hormones, and mineral absorption. Thus, you should incorporate other plant-based protein richer in *lysine* to balance out your amino acid intake. Some examples of foods rich in lysine are:

Avocados, beans, soy products, seeds & nuts (pumpkin seeds, pistachios, cashews, macadamia nuts), and certain grains (buckwheat, quinoa).

Other than that, you can try reducing your consumption of *arginine* — a semi-essential amino acid that competes with lysine for absorption. Ironically, it’s commonly found in most nuts, seeds, and cereals & pseudocereals, which are also important sources of lysine. Thus, it’s optimal to simply focus on variety and equilibrium and don’t overcomplicate things.

2. Tempeh (19.9g of protein p/ 100g)

T**empeh** is a traditional Indonesian product made from fermented soybeans and very popular in Asian cuisine. It's particularly famous for being rich in *probiotics*— 'healthy' bacteria that improve and restore the gut flora, among other benefits. It can be consumed either directly or cooked to enhance its flavor and texture.

Its amino acid profile is very equilibrated when compared to other plant-based protein sources, including other forms of processed soybeans like tofu.

The fermentation process helps to break down the *phytic acid* content (antinutrient) in soybeans, aiding with overall digestion and leaving a very nutritious plant-based protein, rich in minerals and B vitamins.

100g of cooked tempeh will provide you approximately:

11.4g Fat / **7.6g** Carbs / **19.9g** Protein / **195 kcal**

60%DV — Copper

56%DV — Manganese

36%DV — Phosphorus

27%DV — Iron & Vit B2 (Riboflavin)

19%DV — Manganese

15%DV — Vit B6 (Pyridoxine) & Omega-6

14%DV — Zinc

13%DV — Vit B3 (Niacin)

12%DV — Potassium

8%DV — Omega-3

Be aware that soy products, like many other plant foods, contain large amounts of *oxalate* — a type of salt capable of binding to minerals and forming insoluble salt, resulting in kidney stones in the long-run. To prevent it, simply consume adequate amounts of *calcium* in your diet as well as high *citric fruits*, which will help to prevent calcium from binding to other minerals.

Also, try to avoid animal products and other high *purine* foods (such as *alcohol*), as they leave a waste product known as *uric acid*, which builds up in the blood and joints over time and could lead to kidney stones and gout.

It's important to note that tempeh's flavor varies greatly depending on its fabrication process. Some brands will taste very earthy/sour while others will taste more hearty/savory. I suggest trying as many different brands as possible until you find one that suits your taste (or just make them at home!). The first time I tried it, I did not like it at all, and now it's a favorite of mine. So, don't let bad first impressions ruin your experience. Give it another chance!

3. Oat Bran (17.3g of protein p/ 100g)

O**at bran** consists of the outer layer (or shell) of the oat groat. It's sold separately and known for being a superfood and slightly more nutritious than oatmeal. It can be incorporated into your shakes, oatmeal, or as a baking ingredient.

It's rich in *beta-glucan* — a soluble fiber that is linked to several benefits including reducing LDL (bad) and total cholesterol levels, better blood sugar control, heart health, gut health, and improved bowel movement. It's also high in *polyphenols* — plant-based antioxidants with anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative properties — and other important antioxidants that combat free radicals in the body.

It scores low on the *glycemic index* (GI) — how fast it raises blood sugar levels — and when combined with (soluble) fiber and protein, it becomes gut- and stomach-friendly and a key food for appetite control and weight management.

It's incredibly rich in *manganese*, a mineral related to several important functions, including: the metabolism of essential nutrients (amino acids, carbohydrates, cholesterol, and vitamins), enzyme utilization, brain function, immune response, energy production, bone formation, blood coagulation, thyroid gland health, blood sugar regulation, and antioxidative properties.

Secondly, it's super-high in *phosphorus*, another mineral with many important functions, such as helping the body to store & produce energy, produce DNA & RNA, growth/maintenance/repair of cells and tissues, build strong bones & teeth, kidney function, nerve conduction, and heartbeat regulation. Too much of it with too little *calcium* intake can actually result in bone loss, so it's optimal to balance out these two (as with any other micronutrient).

100g of oat bran (dry) will provide you approximately:

7g Fat / **50.8g** Carbs / **17.3g** Protein / **246 kcal**

245%DV — Manganese

105%DV — Phosphorus

98%DV — Vit B1 (Thiamine)

82%DV— Selenium

68%DV — Iron

59%DV — Magnesium

45%DV — Copper

41%DV — Fiber

30%DV — Vit B5 (Pantothenic Acid)

28%DV — Zinc

17%DV — Vit B2 (Riboflavin) & Potassium

15%DV — Omega-6

13%DV — Vit B6 (Pyridoxine) & B9 (Folate)

8%DV — Omega-3

Because grains, nuts, and legumes tend to be high in *phytic acids* — anti-nutrients with binding properties that inhibit the absorption of minerals — , it's preferable to implement strategies such as soaking, sprouting, fermenting, or cooking prior to consumption.

I personally love having oat bran blended with oatmeal (plus nuts, seeds, fruits, and spices) as my first-morning meal. Although cooking helps to reduce the phytic acid content and making it more digestible, it can also destroy *phytase* and *vitamin C*, both of which help to counteract phytic acid action. Hence, I have a warm sugar-free lemonade alongside my oatmeal to boost up my vitamin C intake and enjoy my meal worry-free.

Tip: If you're a fan of *overnight oats* like me, try soaking and changing the water, as well as cooking prior to storing it. This way you can ensure to reduce the effect of antinutrients and optimize its nutritional benefits.

4. Tofu (13.3g of protein p/ 100g)

T**ofu** (aka **bean curd**) is a soy product made from condensed soy milk. The resulting curds from the coagulation process are pressed down into blocks, separating the liquid, and forming tofu blocks (a process similar to cheese production). They can be found in either *silken* (soft) or regular forms, varying in textures. The first is commonly used in sauces, dressings, and desserts whereas the later is best for stir-frys and baking.

Unfortunately, soy suffers a lot of misjudgment due to misinformation. Many people, especially men, believe that it contains *estrogens* — the feminine hormone — when it actually contains *phytoestrogens* — natural compounds in plants that are similar to estrogen but actually compete with estrogens in our body for binding to estrogen receptors, meaning they have anti-estrogenic effects. Because of that, they are related to reducing breast cancer growth.

Just as soybeans, tofu is linked to many health benefits, such as (but not limited to):

- reducing: blood vessel inflammation, bad cholesterol levels, and risk of breast cancer (women) and stomach and prostate cancer (men), and the incidence of 'hot flashes' in postmenopausal women;
- improving: endothelial function, heart health, cognitive function (especially for postmenopausal women), menopausal symptoms, and bone health;

100g of cooked tofu (not-silken) will provide you approximately:

7g Fat / **0.9g** Carbs / **13.3g** Protein / **110 kcal**

39%DV — Manganese

38%DV — Calcium

34%DV — Iron

31%DV — Selenium

30%DV — Copper

22%DV — Vit B5 (Pantothenic Acid) & Omega-3

21%DV — Phosphorus

19%DV — Omega-6

13% DV — Zinc

12% DV — Magnesium

It's particularly very weak in *cystine* — an essential amino acid with antioxidant properties, used for collagen production, and for the synthesis of other antioxidants. To not fall behind, incorporate lentils, oats, sunflower seeds, and other legumes into your diet.

Soy contains antinutrients by design, such as *trypsin inhibitor* — enzymes related to protein digestion — and *phytates* — reduce the absorption of minerals. Although tofu is safe for consumption in its 'raw' form, you can stir-fry (oil-free!) them, or any other method of cooking in order to reduce these antinutrients.

Soy products and other *oxalate-rich* foods require special attention. To counteract them, soaking is an efficient method to reduce oxalate levels. Because tofu comes already soaked, all you need is to rinse it off. Other than that, boost up your *calcium* & *vitamin C* intakes and you are good to go!

If possible, opt for *non-GMO* forms of soy products because they are often processed with a solvent known as *hexane* that is used to extract oil out of soybeans. Also, always give preference for minimally processed forms of soy, such as soybeans, edamame, tofu, and tempeh.

5. Buckwheat (13.3g of protein p/ 100g)

B**uckwheat** (aka '**groats**' or '**kasha**') is a pseudocereal, meaning that it doesn't grow on grass like other cereals. Instead, it's a seed that is consumed as a cereal due to its similar properties. Despite its name, it has no relation to the wheat family, which makes it *gluten-free*.

Due to its highly nutritious profile, it's considered a superfood. It's packed with antioxidants such as *polyphenols* and *flavonoids*— plant compounds related to fighting diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases, and cardiovascular diseases, as well as improving digestion and protection of DNA and cells against oxidative stress — in particular.

It's super-rich in *copper*, an important fuel for the production of red blood cells, alongside *iron*. Besides helping with iron absorption, it contributes to the maintenance of healthy blood vessels, nerves, bones, immune system, and overall prevention of cardiovascular disease.

Its package of complex carbs, dietary fiber, and protein content work in synchrony to slow down and improve digestion, as well as to keep blood sugar levels stabilized.

100g of cooked buckwheat will provide you approximately:

3.4g Fat / **61.5g** Carbs / **13.3g** Protein / **343 kcal**

122%DV — Copper

58%DV — Magnesium

57%DV — Manganese

50%DV — Phosphorus

44%DV — Vit B3

33%DV — Vit B2

28%DV — Iron

26%DV — Fiber

25%DV — Vit B5

22% DV — Zinc

16%DV — Vit B6

15%DV — Selenium

14%DV — Potassium

6%DV — Omega-6

5%DV — Omega-3

You can improve the digestibility and even its nutritional profile by sprouting it. Other than that, soaking and rising them before cooking will help to get rid of certain antinutrients and ensure better absorption of nutrients. Notice that while soaking, the water gets slimy. This simply means that the enzymes that prevent it from being digested by plants/humans are coming out.

6. Oats (13.2g of protein p/ 100g)

O**ats** is a very popular species of cereal which is commonly consumed as oatmeal/porridge, or as a baking or cooking ingredient. It comes in many different processed forms such as rolled, steel-cut, and instant.

Steel-cut oats are the least processed form. The whole oat groat gets chopped in several pieces, making it retain much of its original form. As a result, it takes the longest to cook, has poor absorbability, and it has a chewier texture than its counterparts. Its firm texture makes it an excellent option for baking.

Rolled oats (aka ***old-fashioned oats***) come in second in the level of processing. The whole oat groat is steamed before being pressed down into flat flakes. The outer bran layer gets usually removed during the process. They are faster to cook and absorb liquid better, making them an excellent option for oatmeal. Its medium texture makes it also a good option for baking. It's my personal favorite form.

Instant oats (aka ***quick oats***) are the most processed form. The whole oat groat is pre-cooked, then dried, rolled, and pressed until its thinner than rolled oats. It cooks the fastest and absorbs liquid very fast, making it retain a mushy texture. Not the best option for baking, but can be consumed as oatmeal or as a thickening agent.

Regardless of its form, oats are very nutritious and considered a superfood. Just as oat bran, it's associated with heart health due to its rich antioxidant and *polyphenols* content that fight inflammation and lower blood pressure, resulting in better blood flow. It's also rich in *beta-glucan*, though in lesser amounts compared to oat bran.

Research shows that oats *polyphenols* work together with *vitamin C* to enhance human LDL (bad cholesterol) resistance to oxidation, which can help to counteract heart disease progression.

100g of rolled oats will provide you approximately:

6.5g Fat / **57.6g** Carbs / **13.2g** Protein / **370 kcal**

158%DV — Manganese

59%DV — Phosphorus

53%DV — Iron & Selenium

43%DV — Copper

38%DV — Vit B1

35%DV — Magnesium

33%DV — Zinc

27%DV — Fiber

22%DV — Vit B5

13%DV — Omega-6

12%DV — Vit B2

11%DV — Potassium

6%DV — Omega-3

Although oats are considered *gluten-free*, it contains *prolamins* —plant storage proteins with high proline amino acid content commonly found in the seeds of cereal grains that could trigger celiac disease. Oats prolamin, known as *avenin*, is structurally similar to *gliadin* in wheat, one of the several culprits responsible for wheat allergy.

Furthermore, cross-contamination is common in grain production facilities. Thus, people sensitive to wheat should aim for *gluten-free* oats to ensure better safety. Oats allergy is a relatively rare form of allergy, so it's safe for most people. But pay close attention to any allergy symptoms.

If you're not a fan of DIY fermenting or sprouting, soaking will help to reduce antinutrients such as *oxalates*, whereas cooking will help to reduce *phytic acid* levels.

7. Edamame (12.4g of protein p/ 100g)

Edamame comprises of immature soybeans. It's commonly found in the frozen section of supermarkets, either with or without their pods. They cook extremely fast and are very versatile, fitting perfectly in salads and a variety of cold or hot dishes.

They are particularly a great and very nutritious snack, which can be spiced up in different ways. You'll usually get served edamame as an appetizer in Japanese and Chinese restaurants.

They possess the same benefits as other soy products, being rich in *phytoestrogens* and antioxidants. So, let's dive straight into their nutritional profile:

100g of cooked edamame beans will provide you approximately:

6.4g Fat / **6.7g** Carbs / **12.4g** Protein / **141 kcal**

31%DV — Iron

28%DV — Folate

23%DV — Phosphorus

22% DV — Vit B1 (Thiamine), Manganese, & Omega-3

19%DV — Vit C

16%DV — Potassium & Omega-6

15%DV — Calcium & Magnesium

13%DV — Vit K & Copper

12%DV — Vit B2 (Riboflavin)

11%DV — Fiber

Similarly to other forms of soy products, edamame contains lower levels of *cystine,* though not by as much compared to its more processed forms. Just make sure to consume lentils, oats, sunflower seeds, and other legumes in your diet and you'll be good to go!

8, 9, & 10: Legumes

As legumes are an incredibly diverse family and an important source of protein for people on a plant-based diet, I felt they deserved special attention. Also, because their protein levels are very similar, I decided to break down the last 3 positions into **lentils**, **garbanzo beans**, and **other beans**, respectively.

8. Lentils (9g of protein p/ 100g)

L**entils** are a legume that comes in many different colors, each with different compositions of antioxidants, phytochemicals, and taste based on their color. Their variety of flavors makes them hard food to get tired of.

Brown & ***green lentils***: green lentils have a slightly more robust flavor than brown lentils. They retain their shape very well during cooking, making them excellent for 'al dente' dishes, including salads and as a side dish.

Red & ***yellow lentils***: the tastiest of all; very popular in Indian & Middle Eastern cuisines; faster to cook due to their 'split' format, making them perfect for hot dishes, such as soups, stews, and casseroles, functioning as a thickener agent.

Black beluga & ***puy lentils***: fancier types; both known for their very rich, earthier, flavor; black beluga lentils have a caviar-like look and texture while puy lentils are grown in volcanic soils of a French region with the same name.

Just as legumes and other plant foods, lentil are rich in *phytochemicals* like *polyphenols*, which play a fundamental role in combating chronic diseases. They are particularly linked to heart health because they help to reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol and to increase HDL (good) cholesterol levels while lowering blood pressure and improving blood sugar levels.

They have the richest concentration of *folate* (*vitamin B9*) in plants, which is a key ingredient to the production of blood cells, to convert carbohydrates into energy, and to produce DNA & RNA in our body. It's also particularly important for periods of fast growth, such as during pregnancy, infancy, and adolescence.

Moreover, they are low glycemic and an excellent source of dietary fiber and *biotin* (*vitamin B7*) — a water-soluble vitamin that helps to convert carbohydrates into energy and important for the health of hair, skin, and nails. Pregnant and breastfeeding women benefit the best from this vitamin.

Nevertheless, they are rich in *molybdenum* — an essential mineral found in grains and legumes that activate enzymes that help to break down harmful sulfites and prevent toxins from building up in our body.

100g of cooked lentils (from dried) will provide you approximately:

0.4g Fat / **14.3g** Carbs / **9g** Protein / **116 kcal**

45%DV — Folate

42%DV — Iron

28%DV — Copper

26%DV — Phosphorus

21%DV — Manganese

15%DV — Fiber

14%DV — Vit B1 (Thiamine) & B6 (Pyridoxine)

13%DV — Vit B5 (Pantothenic Acid)

12%DV — Zinc

11%DV — Potassium

They are particularly weak in *methionine* — an amino acid essential for protein synthesis, to repair damaged DNA, to reduce oxidative stress, and overall cell metabolism. Recent studies found that restricting methionine levels slowed tumor growth of certain cancers, thus promoting anticancer effects. Although it's a specific case and more studies are required, they are still important to consume. Just keep in mind that there's no need to get 'super-high levels' of this amino acid.

Alongside lysine, it's considered the toughest amino acid to find in great concentrations in plants. They are both rich in animal products, which you definitely want to avoid. You can find them easily:

Brazil nuts (winner by far!), spinach, hemp seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, and oats.

As with other legumes, it contains different antinutrients, such as *trypsin inhibitors*, *lectins*, *tannins*, and *phytic acid*. No need to memorize their complicated names, just be sure to implement habits such as soaking to reduce levels of *lectins* and *oxalates*. Cooking will take care of the rest.

While soaking and rinsing, look out for stones & debris mixed with your lentils. These invaders find their way during the fabrication process and are commonly found in all sorts of legumes. Let's not break a tooth!

9. Garbanzo Beans (8.9g protein p/ 100g)

G**arbanzo beans** (aka **chickpeas**) have their roots in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisines. They have a nutty and grainy texture and are very versatile to cook, being perfect for roasting, curry, patties, salads, and, of course, the all-time favorite hummus.

Their combination of micronutrients, soluble fiber, low GI, and protein makes them a powerful fuel to combat chronic

diseases. Together, they slow carbohydrate absorption, lowering and allowing better control of blood sugar levels, promote a healthy gut, reduce triglycerides and LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, and prevent high blood pressure.

They are also great cancer-fighting food. Soluble fiber fermented in the colon allows certain beneficial bacterias to produce *butyrate* — a short-chain fatty acid that helps reducing inflammation, regulation of intestine, and possibly prevent colon cancer via apoptosis. Also, they are rich in *saponins* — plant compounds that help to prevent the development of certain cancers and inhibit tumor growth.

100g of cooked garbanzo beans (from dried) will provide you approximately:

2.6g Fat / **19.7g** Carbs / **8.9g** Protein / **164 kcal**

45%DV — Manganese

43%DV — Folate

39%DV — Copper

36%DV — Iron

24%DV — Phosphorus

20%DV — Fiber

14%DV — Zinc

12%DV — Magnesium

11%DV — Vit B6 (Pyridoxine)

10%DV — Vit B1 (Thiamine)

9%DV — Potassium

Soaking and rinsing beforehand can help to get rid of some of their undigestible complex sugars and smooth down bloating and stomach discomfort. Draining canned legumes can also help lowering sodium by up to 40%.

However, keep in mind that chickpeas' liquid can be used to make *aquafaba* — an odorless, tasteless, and nutrient-poor liquid which is comprised of a mix of undigestible starch and trace protein. It's commonly used as an emulsifier, binding, or thickening agent, and as an egg replacement for vegans. 3 tbsp of *aquafaba* = ~1 whole egg. It's safe for consumption unless legumes = gassy hell for you.

As with other legumes, remember to watch out for unwanted invaders such as stones & debris prior to cooking.

10. Other Beans (8.2g — 9g of protein p/ 100g)

Beans are from the fabaceae or leguminosae family, which embraces peas, lentils, garbanzo beans, soybeans, and peanuts. It comes in many different shapes and colors. The color of the bean relates directly to its *phenolic* content or antioxidant capacity. The more colored, the higher its antioxidant content (black beans = winner!).

Just as other legumes, they are rich in *polyphenols* and contribute to the prevention of many forms of cancer — breast, colorectal (especially), kidney, prostate, and stomach — via their many bioactive compounds (*flavonoids*, *tannins*, *phenolic compounds*, etc.).

They are a rich source of *folates*, which work alongside *saponins* & *phytosterols* in lowering bad cholesterol and *homocysteine* levels in the blood, consequently clearing out blood vessels and reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Their mix of complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber helps to slow down digestion, lower and stabilize blood sugar levels after meals, and reduce systolic blood pressure. Thus, beans are an excellent food to fight obesity. Furthermore, a variety of beans in the diet is associated with improved gut health due to their high soluble fiber content.

100g of beans (cooked from dried) will provide you approximately:

Black / **Navy (white)** / **Pinto** / **Red kidney:**

0.5g / **0.6g** / **0.7g** / **0.5g** — Fat

14.9g / **15.5g** / **17.2g** / **16.2g** — Carbs

8.9g / **8.2g** / **9g** / **8.7g** — Protein

132 / **140** / **143** / **127** — kcal

37% / **35%** / **43%** / **33%** — DV Folate (vit B9)

26% / **30%** / **26%** / **28%** — DV Iron

23% / 23% / 24% / 24% — DV Copper

23% / 28% / 24% / 17% — DV Fiber

20% / 21% / 21% / 20% — DV Phosphorus

19% / 23% / 20% / 19% — DV Manganese

20% / 20% / 16% / 13% — DV Vit B1 (Thiamine)

18% / 13% / 13% / 11% — DV Magnesium

20% / 11% / 13% / 12% — DV Potassium

5% / 11% / 18% / 9% — DV Vit B6 (Pyridoxine)

10% / 9% / 9% / 9% — DV Zinc

7% / 11% / 9% / 10% — DV Omega-3

Such beans are better sources of omega-3 than their cousins — lentils & garbanzo beans. Though they are good contributors, they should not be your main source of omega-3. Foods such as flaxseeds, chia (soaked), and olive oil (extra-virgin; first-pressed; not heated) are much more reliable.

Nevertheless, legumes contain *oligosaccharides* known as *galactans* — complex, undigestible sugars that can lead to bloating and discomfort. So, always remember to soak up and rinse off your legumes before cooking them.

Honorable mentions

11. Green Peas

Pros:

- Excellent source of Vitamin A.
- Their fiber content helps lowering blood sugar and insulin levels, helping with digestion as well as preventing gastrointestinal diseases.

- Rich in *phytonutrients* (*carotenoids*, *flavonoids*, *phenolic acids*, *polyphenols*, *saponins*, etc.), which have anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative properties and help to prevent and combat cancer (especially stomach cancer via *coumestrol*).
- They can be purchased in protein powder form (pea protein), which are usually tasteless and can be incorporated into shakes, oatmeals, and baked goods.

Cons:

- They contain antinutrients, such as *phytic acid* and *lectins* (though in lower levels compared to other legumes).
- Low in the amino acid *cystine*.

100g of cooked peas will provide you approximately:

0.3g Fat / **9.7g** Carbs / **5.2g** Protein / **78 kcal**

70%DV — Vit A

24%DV — Vit B1 (Thiamine)

20%DV — Vit K

19%DV — Iron

15%DV — Folate

12%DV — Fiber, Copper, & Manganese

11%DV — Phosphorus & Vit C

9%DV — Vit B3 (Niacin) & B6 (Pyridoxine)

8%DV — Vit B2 (Riboflavin)

12. Quinoa

Pros:

- “mother of all grains;” rich in all essential amino acids.
- rich in antioxidants, especially certain *flavonoids* linked to anti-inflammatory, viral, cancer, and depressant effects.
- gluten-free.
- low GI and rich in insoluble fiber, which bulks up stool and speeds digestion, helping with bowel movement.

Cons:

- It contains *oxalates*, which restrain calcium absorption, possibly leading to kidney stones.
- It contains *phytic acid*, which hinders mineral absorption, such as iron, zinc, and calcium.

100g of cooked quinoa will provide you approximately:

2g Fat / **19g** Carbs / **4.7g** Protein / **122 kcal**

29%DV — Manganese

23%DV — Copper

22%DV — Phosphorus

19%DV — Iron

17%DV — Magnesium

15%DV — Folate

12%DV — Vit B6 (Pyridoxine)

10%DV — Vit B1 (Thiamine)

9%DV — Zinc

8%DV — Vit B2 (Riboflavin)

Conclusion

I hope that my list has helped you in any way and stimulated you to incorporate these incredible foods into your diet.

Protein intake is definitely overrated but the overall quality of the protein source plays a much more important role than protein quantity alone. Micronutrients matter much more than macronutrients.

There’s no such thing as the perfect food, but what works best for us as individuals. If you don’t do well with any of these, there are always other quality protein sources in the plant kingdom 🌱. All it takes is creativity.

Peace ✌️ and keep eating your plants!

Written by Mario V. Hashiba: Fitness & Nutrition enthusiast; Vegan; Nature lover; I change my views to face the facts and write about what I've learned.