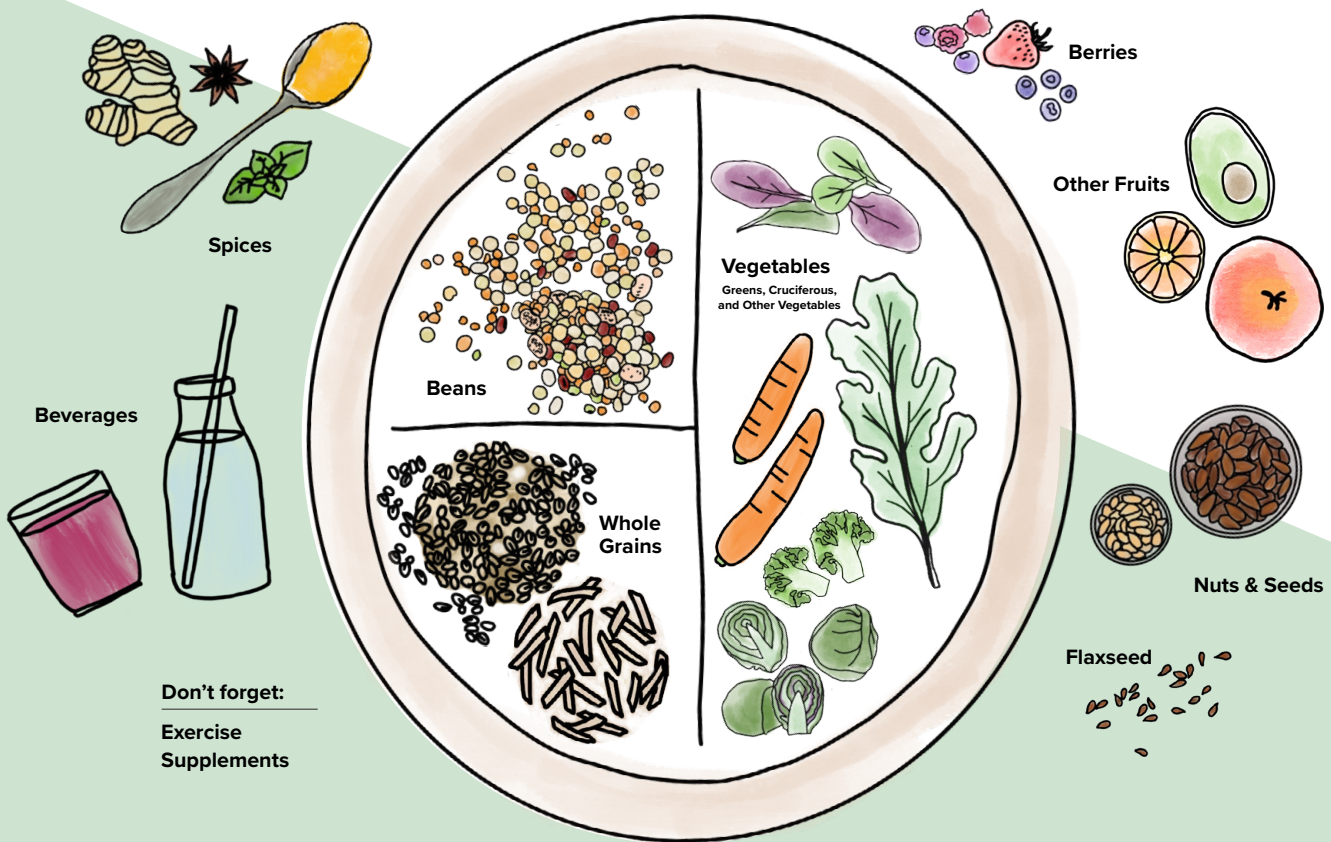


The Daily Dozen Meal Planning Guide

The healthiest diet is one that maximizes the intake of foods-as-grown—whole, plant-based foods—and minimizes the consumption of processed and animal-based foods. In the first half of his book *How Not to Die*, Dr. Greger covers the “why” of eating healthfully, exploring diet’s role in the prevention, treatment, and sometimes even reversal of the fifteen leading causes of death in the United States. In the second half, he dives into the “how” to eat healthfully, which includes the Daily Dozen checklist, grocery shopping tips, and ideas to help with meal planning.

Dr. Greger developed his Daily Dozen based upon the best available balance of evidence. **It is a tool to inspire you to include some of the healthiest of healthy foods in your diet.** In this guide, we’ll walk you through the steps for incorporating the Daily Dozen checklist into your meal planning and give you additional strategies to help you build more healthful eating habits.



The Daily Dozen plate helps you visualize building healthier meals.

At least half of your plate should be filled with vegetables, a quarter with beans or other legumes, and another quarter with whole grains. Additionally, you should include a small serving of nuts or seeds each day, along with plenty of herbs and spices, fruit with every meal, and healthy beverages.

Within several of the Daily Dozen categories, there are recommendations for specific kinds of foods. Some have special nutrients not found in abundance elsewhere. For example, cruciferous vegetables have their own spot on the Daily Dozen, alongside “greens” and “other vegetables.” Why did Dr. Greger single out crucifers? Sulforaphane, the amazing liver-enzyme detox-boosting compound, is derived nearly exclusively from cruciferous vegetables. You could eat tons of other kinds of greens and vegetables on any given day and not get any appreciable sulforaphane unless you also ate something cruciferous.

Dr. Greger's Daily Dozen



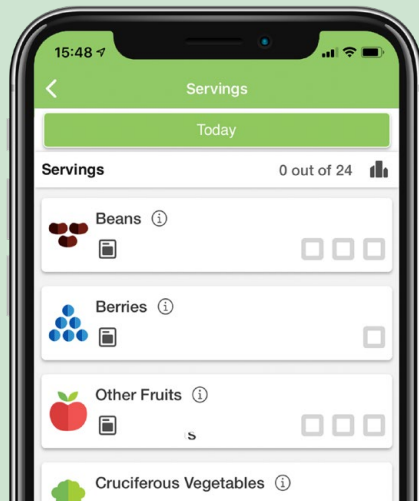
Category	Servings Per Day	Serving Size how much is considered a serving	Examples
Beans	3	½ cup cooked beans ¼ cup hummus	black beans, black-eyed peas, chickpeas (garbanzos), edamame, kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, split peas, tempeh
Whole Grains	3	½ cup cooked whole grains, whole-wheat pasta, or corn kernels 1 tortilla (2 for smaller corn tortillas) 3 cups air-popped popcorn	buckwheat, corn tortillas, hulled barley, millet, oats, popcorn, rye berries, sorghum, whole-wheat pasta, whole-wheat tortillas
Cruciferous Vegetables	1	½ cup chopped 1 tablespoon horseradish	arugula, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, watercress
Greens	2	1 cup raw ½ cup cooked	arugula, collard greens, kale, mesclun mix, spinach
Other Vegetables	2	½ cup raw or cooked non-leafy vegetables	artichokes, asparagus, beets, bell peppers, carrots, corn, mushrooms, okra, onions, snap peas, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini
Berries	1	½ cup fresh or frozen ¼ cup dried	blackberries, blueberries, cranberries, goji berries, mulberries, strawberries
Other Fruits	3	1 medium fruit 1 cup cut-up fruit ¼ cup dried fruit ⅓ cup cubed avocado	apples, avocado, bananas, cantaloupe, dates, honeydew, mangos, oranges, papaya, peaches, pears, pineapple, pomegranate, watermelon
Flaxseed	1	1 tablespoon, ground	ground flaxseed
Nuts & Seeds	1	¼ cup nuts and seeds 2 tbsp nut or seed butter	almond butter, almonds, cashews, chia seeds, hemp seeds, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, tahini, walnuts
Herbs & Spices	1	¼ teaspoon turmeric <i>Include other herbs and salt-free spices throughout the day</i>	allspice, basil, cardamom, chili powder, cilantro, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, curry powder, dill, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, parsley, sage, thyme, turmeric
Exercise	1	90 min. moderate or 40 min. vigorous	bicycling, canoeing, dancing, dodgeball, downhill skiing, fencing, hiking, housework, ice-skating, inline skating, juggling, surfing, swimming, tennis, walking
Beverages	5	12 ounces	chamomile tea, green tea, hibiscus tea, matcha, water, white tea, peppermint tea



The Daily Dozen’s suggested serving sizes are meant to serve as an aspirational minimum. Feel free to add even more Daily Dozen foods throughout your day! And, if you are an athlete, adolescent, pregnant or nursing woman, or particularly active, you may need to add more foods to your Daily Dozen meal plan to meet appropriate caloric needs. While fruits and vegetables are important for growing plant-based kids, it may be helpful to emphasize more calorically dense foods, such as nuts, seeds, nut or seed butters, avocados, and even smoothies, to help support their growth. See a modified version of the plate for children from [Plant-Based Juniors](#), and for more information on raising healthy plant-based kids, see the resources from the [Vegetarian Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group](#).

Curious if you’re getting enough to satisfy your needs? Consider working with a registered dietitian.

Other Nutrition Considerations	Notes
<p>Required Supplements</p> <p>Vitamin B12</p>	<p>At least 2,000 mcg (µg) cyanocobalamin once each week (or at least 50 mcg daily), ideally as a chewable, sublingual, or liquid supplement taken on an empty stomach</p> <p>OR servings of B12-fortified foods three times a day (at each meal), each containing at least 190% of the Daily Value listed on the label</p> <p>Those over 65 years of age should take at least 1,000 mcg (µg) cyanocobalamin every day.</p>
<p>Additional Supplements to Consider</p>	<p>Consider supplementing with vitamin D3, pollutant-free (yeast- or algae-derived) omega-3, and/or iodine.</p> <p>Please see our Optimum Nutrition Recommendations page for more information.</p>
<p>Calcium-Rich Foods</p>	<p>Kale, collard greens, broccoli, bok choy, soybeans, tempeh, figs, tahini, almonds, navy beans, chickpeas (garbanzos), black beans, unsweetened fortified soymilk, calcium-set tofu</p> <p>Note: Spinach, chard, and beet greens are all very healthy foods, but they’re stingy with their calcium and may increase the risk of kidney stones if cups a day are eaten.</p>
<p>Iron-Rich Foods</p>	<p>Whole grains, beans, dark green leafy vegetables, dried fruits, nuts, seeds</p> <p>To help boost iron absorption, pair plant-based sources of iron with foods rich in vitamin C, such as citrus, bell peppers, broccoli, and tropical fruits, and avoid drinking tea with meals.</p>



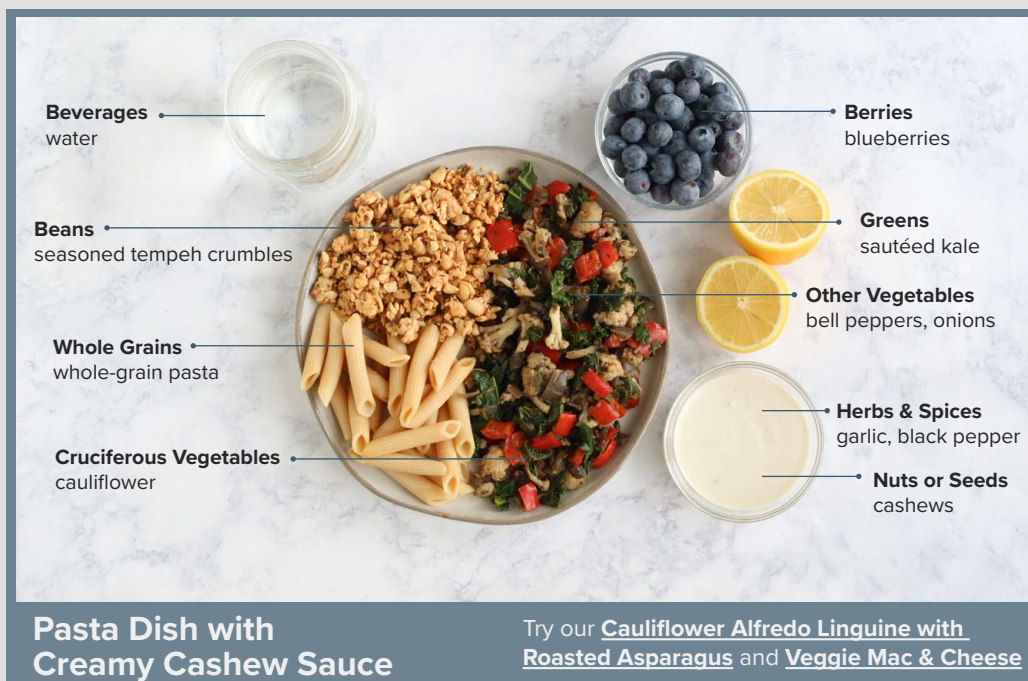
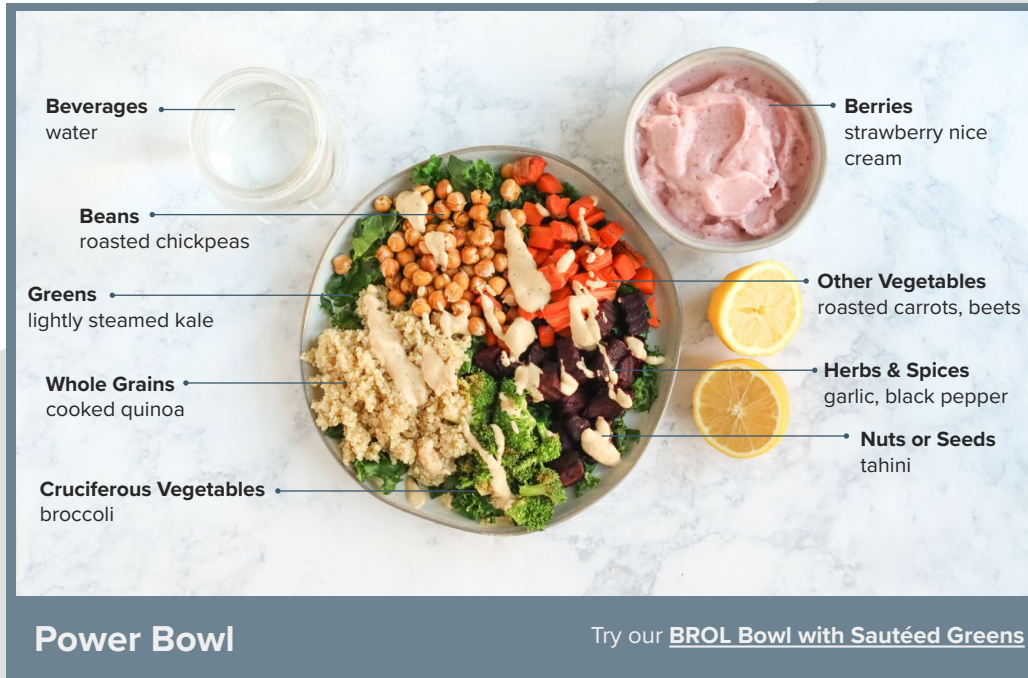
Download Dr. Greger’s Daily Dozen App today!

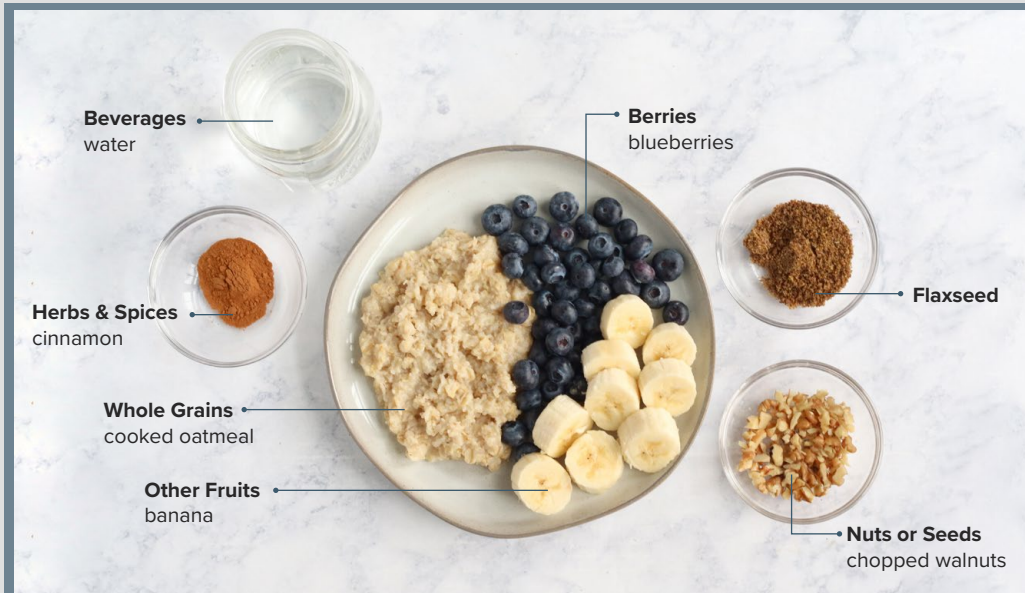


Build Your Own Meals

Now that you can visualize what a Daily Dozen plate might look like, let's put it into action! Here are some examples of easy meals you can put together using the plate framework. Pick foods from different categories on the Daily Dozen and visualize it with half of the plate (or meal) filled with fruits and vegetables.

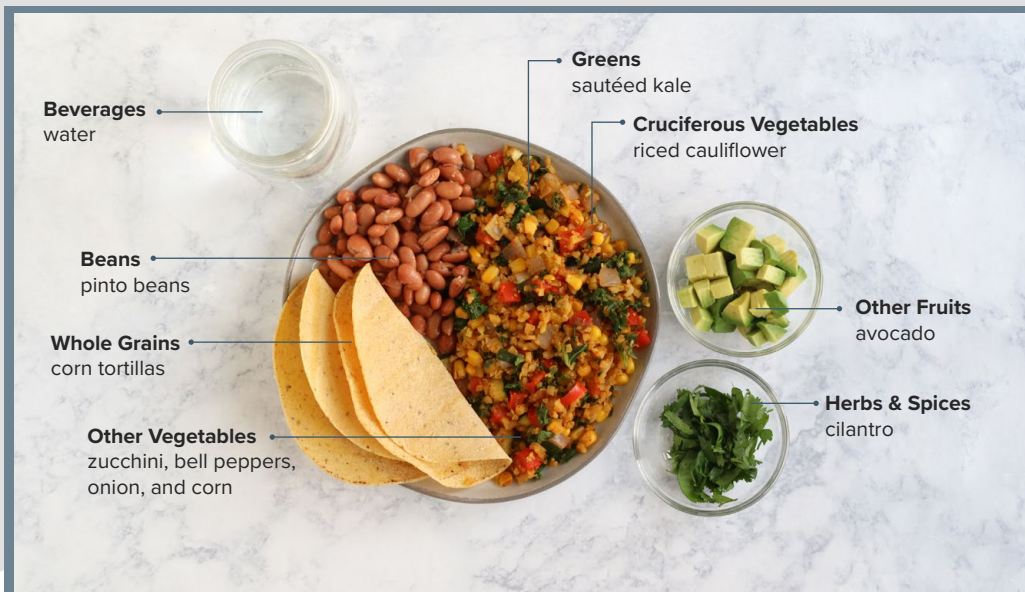
Not every meal or snack needs to contain all of the categories, but every meal should ideally be loaded with fruits and vegetables. For example, you might eat a bowl of oatmeal in the morning with fruit and then have a bean-based chili packed with vegetables in the evening.





Breakfast Bowl

Tip: Add some beans! See our [Morning Grain Bowl](#) and [BROL bowl](#) for ideas



Tacos

Need a recipe? Try our [Easy Veggie Tacos](#)

Take your favorite dishes and rebuild them to follow this framework. Can you add more vegetables to the dish? More fruits? Can you serve the main dish with a large salad or roasted vegetables? Can fruit be served for dessert?

Put it into action!

Let's rebuild one together. What's your favorite pasta dish? Use whole-grain or legume-based pasta to check a serving or two of beans or whole grains off the Daily Dozen checklist. Add vegetables, such as zucchini, kale, bell peppers, and broccoli, so the majority of your plate is brimming with veggies. Perk up the flavor with your favorite herbs and spices, and drizzle on some tahini, a creamy cashew sauce, or a peanut-butter sauce for your daily dose of nuts and seeds. Serve some banana nice cream and berries for dessert with a tall glass of water. Now you've got a delicious, balanced Daily Dozen meal!

Including more fruits and vegetables to your meals not only adds a nutritional punch, but it makes your dishes more colorful, too. The colors are the antioxidants, disease-preventing phytonutrients. Plant-based foods contain more than 100,000 biologically active components—more specifically, more than 100,000 phytonutrients, *phyto* for the Greek word for *plant*. Hundreds of phytonutrients have been found to have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity. For example, beta-carotene makes carrots and sweet potatoes orange, lycopene makes tomatoes and watermelon red, and anthocyanins make blueberries and purple sweet potatoes blue and purple. Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables throughout the day ensures we get a wide variety of the phytonutrients found in whole plant-based foods.

Meal Idea: pasta dish

Beans	<u>white beans</u>
Whole Grains	<u>whole-grain pasta</u>
Cruciferous	<u>broccoli</u>
Greens	<u>steamed kale</u>
Other Vegetables	<u>bell peppers</u>
Berries	
Other Fruits	
Flaxseed	
Nuts & Seeds	<u>sauce: cashews</u>
Herbs & Spices	<u>sauce: paprika, pepper</u>
Beverages	<u>water</u>

Our templates will help you build your own meals. Use the samples as a guide, and customize them with your favorite foods. The chart on page 2 can help. If using a recipe, deconstruct it to see how many categories it covers. The goal over the course of the day is to check all of the Daily Dozen boxes, so think about how to add items into your meals or snacks to reach the goal. Our [free Daily Dozen app](#) can also help you keep track!

Meal Idea: _____

Beans	
Whole Grains	
Cruciferous	
Greens	
Other Vegetables	
Berries	
Other Fruits	
Flaxseed	
Nuts & Seeds	
Herbs & Spices	
Beverages	

Meal Planning

Now that you've mastered the plate method, let's plan out your meals and snacks for the week. Use recipes or just come up with simple meals to put together. Batch-cooking or making extra portions of a dish can make it even easier to eat healthfully, especially on busy days. Batch-cooking can be as simple as making more quinoa than you need for one day or doubling a recipe you already plan to make. Freeze the leftovers or enjoy them within three to four days, making sure you store them properly, of course.

Using the worksheet below, write out the meals and snacks you are planning for the week. List the Daily Dozen foods they contain, and note any additional ingredients you can add to help meet the Daily Dozen each day. Remember to include calcium-rich plant-based foods and to pair iron-rich foods with foods rich in vitamin C. (See chart on page 3.)

Date: / /

Meal

Daily Dozen foods included

Foods to add

Date: / /

Meal

Daily Dozen foods included

Foods to add

Meal

Daily Dozen foods included

Foods to add

Meal

Daily Dozen foods included

Foods to add

Meal

Daily Dozen foods included

Foods to add

Meal

Daily Dozen foods included

Foods to add

Snack

Daily Dozen foods included

Foods to add

Snack

Daily Dozen foods included

Foods to add

Meal Planning Worksheet



Date: / /	Date: / /
Meal _____ Daily Dozen foods included _____ Foods to add	Meal _____ Daily Dozen foods included _____ Foods to add
Meal _____ Daily Dozen foods included _____ Foods to add	Meal _____ Daily Dozen foods included _____ Foods to add
Meal _____ Daily Dozen foods included _____ Foods to add	Meal _____ Daily Dozen foods included _____ Foods to add
Snack _____ Daily Dozen foods included _____ Foods to add	Snack _____ Daily Dozen foods included _____ Foods to add

Meal ideas: tacos, pasta dishes, power bowls, stir fries, roasted sheet-pan meals, one-pot meals, soups, and stews

Snack ideas: roasted chickpeas, smoothie bowls, banana nice cream, homemade fruit & nut bars, fresh fruit, kale chips, and fresh cut vegetables with hummus

Need more ideas for meals or snacks? See our [recipe page](#) and our cookbooks, [The How Not to Die Cookbook](#) and [The How Not to Diet Cookbook](#).

Daily Dozen Shopping List

Now that you've decided what meals and snacks to eat this week, it's time to plan your shopping list. Looking through the recipes, meal ideas, and snacks on your list, see what foods and ingredients you already have in your kitchen. Write down the items you need to shop for. The list below is organized by the Daily Dozen categories to help you keep your kitchen stocked with the healthiest of healthy foods.

Beans black beans, black-eyed peas, chickpeas, edamame, kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, split peas, tempeh

Whole Grains buckwheat, corn tortillas, hulled barley, millet, oats, popcorn, rye berries, sorghum, whole-wheat pasta, whole-wheat tortillas

Cruciferous arugula, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, watercress

Berries blackberries, blueberries, cranberries, goji berries, mulberries, strawberries

Greens arugula, collard greens, kale, mesclun mix, spinach

Other Fruits apples, bananas, cantaloupe, dates, honeydew, mangos, oranges, papaya, peaches, pears, pineapple, pomegranate, watermelon

Other Vegetables artichokes, asparagus, beets, bell peppers, carrots, corn, mushrooms, okra, onions, snap peas, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini

Nuts & Seeds almond butter, almonds, cashews, chia seeds, hemp seeds, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts, tahini

Herbs & Spices allspice, basil, cardamom, chili powder, cilantro, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, curry powder, dill, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, parsley, sage, thyme, turmeric

Flaxseed

Beverages green tea, hibiscus tea, matcha tea, peppermint tea, white tea

Other

We developed these tools to help you make your meals—and snacks!—more nutrient-dense, convenient to create, and delicious to enjoy. We hope you're feeling even more confident about meal planning and ticking off the Daily Dozen boxes.

Every time we put something in our mouth, it's a lost opportunity to eat something even healthier. We only have about 2,000 calories in the calorie bank to spend each day, so we should choose the foods that give us the most nutritional bang for its caloric buck.

A healthy lifestyle is not about perfection, but about the continuum of healthy living.

Be sure to check out [The How Not to Die Cookbook](#) and [The How Not to Diet Cookbook](#) for more recipe inspiration and cooking tips.

