

# Plant your year right!

How to create plant-based meals  
that are **balanced and delicious.**

Check out our  
nutritional tips  
and delicious recipes!



## Start with a protein base

### Checklist

- ☐ Does the dish feature a good source of protein such as legumes, beans, peas, or lentils?
- ☐ Is the protein source the relevant portion size amount? (see the protein portions size table as a guide).
- ☐ Check that your dish contains a complete protein. (see complementary proteins).

Other sources also include chia seeds, ground linseed, hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, buckwheat, quinoa, and wild rice.

25%

10%

## Incorporate healthy fats

### Checklist

- ☐ Are nuts and/or seeds featured in the dish?
- ☐ Is there a source of omega 3? Good sources include chia seeds, ground linseeds, hemp seeds and walnuts.
- ☐ Best choice is to use rapeseed oil.

# Plant-based MEAL GUIDE

A well-balanced vegan meal plan is most sustainable and nutritious when focused on whole foods rather than highly processed substitutes. Focus on a variety of whole foods will help meet nutritional needs and promote overall health.



## Include starchy carbs

### Checklist

- ☐ Does the dish include a starchy food?
- ☐ Does it include a higher fibre choice such as wholewheat noodles/pasta, brown rice, wholegrain bread, or oats?



## Add Vegetables, fruits and leafy greens

### Checklist

- ☐ Does the dish include 1-2 portions of fruit or vegetable (one portion = **80g**)?
- ☐ Does the dish contain at least **40%** fruit or vegetables?
- ☐ Does it contain Vitamin C to boost Iron absorption?

## PLANT BASED PROTEIN PORTIONS SIZE

Plant-based protein portions	Portion sizes in grams (g)
Beans (baked beans, kidney beans, butterbeans, black eyed beans etc.)	150g
Pulses (lentils, chickpeas)	150g
Soya, tofu, meat alternatives	100g
Nuts	30g
Seeds	10-15g

REMEMBER:  
Protein is  
essential, and  
**VARIETY IS  
KEY!**

# HOW TO CREATE A PLANT-BASED **BALANCED PLATE?**



## Top tip

Rotate different protein sources to ensure a balanced intake of all amino acids over time.

## 1. START WITH THE PROTEIN BASE

As an adult, aim to achieve **0.75g of protein per kg of body weight per day**.

Unlike animal proteins, many plant proteins are not “complete” proteins, as they don’t contain all nine essential amino acids.

(Check out complete proteins below)

## SOURCES

- Wholegrains: quinoa, barley or brown rice—these need to be paired with other foods (like legumes) to make them complete proteins.
- Legumes: beans, lentils, and peas.
- Soy products: soy beans and soy-based foods (tofu, tempeh, edamame) are complete proteins.
- Nuts & seeds

## 2. COMPLEMENTARY PAIRING (COMPLETE PROTEINS)

Complementary pairings are essential because they help ensure meals provide all the essential amino acids.



### Wholegrains + Legumes

Pairing rice and beans or lentil soup with whole-grain bread



### Wholegrains + Nuts & Seeds

Pairing wholemeal toast with a nut or seed butter



### Legumes + Vegetables

Pairing tofu and broccoli in a stir fry



### Legumes + Nuts & Seeds

Pairing chickpeas with sesame seeds in a hummus

**Top tip:** Think about variety in your diet. Eating different food groups across meals ensures all amino acids are covered without the stress over perfect combinations.





### 3. ADD VEGETABLES AND LEAFY GREENS

Vegetables provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Leafy greens, in particular, offer calcium and iron, two nutrients that vegans need to monitor.

#### *Top tip*

Pair leafy greens with a source of vitamin C to enhance iron absorption.

#### *Top tip*

Go for whole and minimally processed options to maximise nutrient intake and fibre. Pair starchy carbs with a source of protein or healthy fat to improve satiety and help manage blood sugar levels.



### 4. INCORPORATE STARCHY CARBOHYDRATES

This is your primary source of energy and provides fibre, B vitamins, and minerals. They help maintain steady blood sugar levels, keeping you energised throughout the day.

#### SOURCES

Wholegrains, starchy vegetables (sweet potatoes, butternut squash, and pumpkin), legumes (lentils, chickpeas, and beans), and tubers (potatoes, yams, and taro).

### 5. INCORPORATE HEALTHY FATS

Healthy fats are vital for our health, and the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K). Fats also add flavour and texture to meals, making vegan dishes more satisfying.

#### SOURCES

Avocado, olives, nuts, seeds (Flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts are high in omega-3 fatty acids) and oils (olive, flaxseed, hemp-provide extra omega-3s and added flavour).

#### *Top tip*

Aim for a variety of fats each day, focusing on sources rich in omega-3s to balance the omega-6 intake common in many vegan diets.



# OTHER KEY NUTRIENTS AND PLANT-BASED SOURCES

## Vitamin B12



Supports healthy blood, nerves, and DNA production. Found in fortified foods (e.g., cereals, plant milks, nutritional yeast), Marmite, or supplements (consult a healthcare professional).

## Vitamin D



Aids calcium absorption for healthy bones, teeth, and muscles. Main source is sunlight; also in mushrooms and fortified products.

## Calcium



Essential for bones, teeth, and bodily functions. Sources: leafy greens, fortified plant milks, tofu, tahini, kidney beans, dried fruits, sesame seeds, almonds. Pair with Vitamin D for better absorption.

## Iron



Key for oxygen transport and hormone production. Found in lentils, chickpeas, beans, quinoa, spinach, dried fruits, and fortified cereals. Pair with vitamin C for better absorption.

## Omega-3 Fatty Acids



Supports heart, brain, and eyes function. Sources: chia seeds, flaxseeds, rapeseed oil, hemp seeds, walnuts.

## Zinc



Vital for growth, development, and immunity. Found in mushrooms, seeds, nuts, wheat germ. Improve absorption with fermented soy, sprouted grains/seeds, or soaked beans.

# PROTEIN IN PLANT-BASED FOODS



**PUMPKIN SEEDS**  
35G



**SOY BEANS**  
34G



**LUPIN BEANS**  
30G



**ALMONDS**  
29G



**LENTILS**  
24G



**PEAS**  
23G



**KIDNEY BEANS**  
22G



**SEITAN**  
22G



**CHICKPEAS**  
20G



**TEMPEH**  
19G



**TOFU, FIRM**  
16G



**AMARANTH**  
14G



**WALNUTS**  
16G



**OATS**  
13G



**SPELT FLOUR**  
12G



**QUINOA**  
12G

Protein amounts are given per 100g of each unprocessed food item.



# PLANT-BASED SWAPS

I HOPE YOU ARE SITTING DOWN; THESE MIGHT SHOCK YOU...



## CHIA SEEDS INSTEAD OF EGGS

**Did you know you can create an egg-like consistency with chia seeds?**

Mix 1 tablespoon of chia seeds with 3 tablespoons of water, let it gel, and use it for baking cookies, cakes, and more.

## AQUAFABA INSTEAD OF EGG WHITES

**Did you know the liquid from canned chickpeas can replace egg whites?**

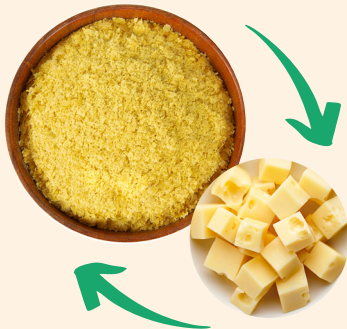
Aquafaba whips like egg whites, perfect for meringues, marshmallows, or as a binder. Use 3 tablespoons per egg white equivalent. It's low-calorie and rich in protein!



## NUTRITIONAL YEAST INSTEAD OF CHEESE

**Did you know nutritional yeast is a tasty plant-based cheese alternative?**

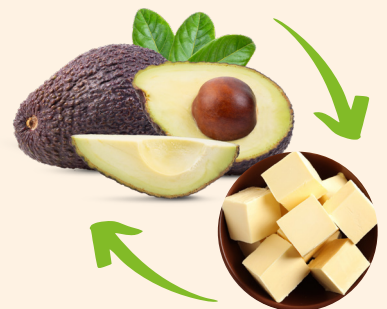
It provides B vitamins, protein, and fibre while adding a cheesy, nutty flavour to popcorn, pasta, sauces, and creamy dishes like mac and cheese.



## AVOCADO INSTEAD OF BUTTER

**Did you know mashed avocado can replace butter?**

Swap equal amounts in recipes for healthy fats and a smooth texture. Great for baking, spreading on toast, or savoury dishes.



## MUSHROOMS INSTEAD OF BEEF

**Did you know mushrooms make a savoury, plant-based substitute for beef?**

Their meaty texture and umami flavour work well in tacos, burgers, or stir-fries. Mushrooms are low-calorie, rich in fibre, and a source of vitamin D.



# BUSTING PLANT-BASED MYTHS

## MYTH 1

**A PLANT-BASED DIET  
LACKS SUFFICIENT  
PROTEIN**

## REALITY

**Plants Are Protein-Packed!**  
Legumes, tofu, tempeh, seitan, nuts, seeds, wholegrains (like quinoa), and veggies (e.g., broccoli, spinach) are great protein sources. Eating a variety ensures all essential amino acids. Plant-based diets easily meet protein needs!

## MYTH 2

**PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE  
NOT SATISFYING**

## REALITY

Whole, plant-based meals are often high in fibre, keeping you full longer. Staples like beans, lentils, potatoes, and grains are nutritious, satisfying, and easily customisable to your taste.

## MYTH 3

**PLANT-BASED FOODS ARE  
ALWAYS MORE EXPENSIVE**

## REALITY

Staple plant foods like beans, rice, potatoes, oats, and seasonal produce are among the most affordable foods worldwide. While some vegan substitutes (like mock meats) can be pricey, they are not essential for a balanced diet.

## MYTH 4

**SOY PRODUCTION FOR  
PLANT-BASED PRODUCTS  
IS A LEADING CAUSE OF  
DEFORESTATION**

## REALITY

Most soy (75%) is grown to feed animals like cows, pigs, and chickens—not people. Only a small amount (less than 10%) is eaten directly by humans. While soy farming does cause deforestation, most of it is driven by the demand for meat, not plant-based foods.



# TIPS TO HELP **REDUCE** YOUR MEAT CONSUMPTION



**Plan ahead** meal planning is a way of ensuring you have a variety of foods and nutrients in your diet, plus it helps save time and money!

**Include a meat free day once a week**, this can benefit your health as well as the environment.

**Research new foods and cuisines for inspiration** to add more plant-based proteins into delicious meals!

**Try using meat alternatives** – however double check their food labels when purchasing, as these can be high in salt!

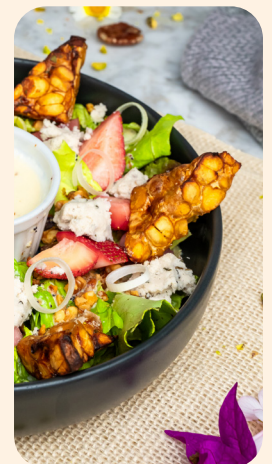


**Be daring and explore new grains and vegetables** that can add a variety of new flavours and textures to your meals.

Worried you will miss meat? **Try adding “meaty” flavours to your meals** such as soy sauce, mushrooms or ‘meaty’ textures like aubergines.

**Bulk up your meals with beans, grains and vegetables** to reduce its meat content. Try adding lentils or carrots in your spaghetti bolognese or sweet potato and extra kidney beans into your chilli con carne. This makes the meal just as flavourful and doesn't hinder the integrity of the dish.

**Swap meat with more plant-based protein** sources such as lentils, beans, and pulses. Protein has many benefits, such as helping us feel fuller and satisfied for longer. The UK recommendation for protein is 0.75g per kg of body weight per day.



Improve the nutritional density of your snacks by **trying to include more whole and unprocessed foods** such as vegetables and hummus, instead of crisps and cookies.

# BENEFITS OF REDUCING YOUR MEAT INTAKE

## FOR YOUR HEALTH



Helps to maintain a **healthy weight**

Add more vegetables and plant-based sources to your meals helps you **achieve your 5ADAY** and adding more fibre to your diet **improving gut health** and ensuring we **consume all vital vitamins and minerals**

By replacing half a serving of meat every day with a plant-based protein, it can **help decrease the risk of Type 2 Diabetes**

Can **improve heart health** and reduce the risk of heart disease

May **protect against certain cancers** such as colorectal cancer



## FOR THE PLANET



Reduces the demands of **environmental resources** such as water, land and energy

Reduced impact on **global warming**



Increases space for **Biodiversity**



Helps **reduce the production of greenhouse gases**



# SUNSHINE TOFU SCRAMBLE

SERVES 2

This is a game changer, step aside scrambled eggs. This delicious breakfast adds iron, B vitamins and protein to help kickstart your day! Serve this on top of sourdough toast.

## INGREDIENTS

½ White onion, diced  
400g Extra firm tofu  
½ Tomato, chopped  
80g Spinach  
1 tsp Nutritional yeast  
¼ tsp Ground turmeric  
¼ tsp Garlic powder  
1-2 tbsp Water  
Pinch of black pepper and salt

## METHOD

1. In a nonstick pan, add the onions and water. Cook over medium heat until the onions have softened.
2. Then dice the extra firm tofu into bite-sized pieces, then place them into the pan.
3. Next add the chopped tomatoes, seasoning, turmeric, garlic powder, nutritional yeast and stir until combined. Continue to sauté for 5-8 minutes. One minute before removing from the heat, add the spinach and cook until wilted.
4. Then serve!



# APPLE & CINNAMON BREAKFAST OATS

SERVES 4



This warming breakfast provides us with fibre, healthy fats, and an extra sweet boost from delicious apples! Perfect for keeping you energised throughout the day.

## INGREDIENTS

200g Rolled oats  
1 ltr Plant-based milk  
2 Apples, diced  
2 tsp Cinnamon  
3 tbsp Walnuts, chopped  
2 tbsp Maple syrup (optional)

## METHOD

1. Cook oats with your plant-based milk of choice in a pan over a medium heat until creamy.
2. Add diced apple and cinnamon to the pan, cooking until softened.
3. Top with walnuts and drizzle with maple syrup if desired.

# HARICOT BEAN & PEANUT DIP WITH CORIANDER, GREEN CHILLIES & LIME



SERVES 4



This zesty dip is great as a snack. It will provide you with extra protein from the haricot beans, healthy fats from olive oil and peanut butter, and a burst of flavour from lime and chilli.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 Garlic clove
- 1 Spring onion, chopped
- 1 Green chilli, de-seeded and chopped
- 400g Haricot beans (keep a little of a juice from the tin)
- 1 tbsp Peanut butter
- 3 tbsp Olive oil
- 1 Lime, zest and juiced
- Bunch of coriander

## METHOD

1. Place the peeled garlic, whites of the spring onion, green chilli and haricot beans with a little of their juice, peanut butter, olive oil, and coriander (reserve some for garnish) along with the zest and juice of one lime into a blender or food processor.
2. Then blitz until smooth.
3. Place the purée into a bowl and scatter over the spring onion whites and remaining coriander.



# SUNDRIED TOMATO PESTO



**MAKES 1 SMALL JAR**

This vibrant pesto is perfect for tossing with pasta, spreading on sandwiches, or drizzling over roasted veggies. It provides you with protein, healthy fats and B vitamins, a great addition to any dish.



## INGREDIENTS

80g Sunflower seeds  
1 Garlic clove, peeled  
2 tbsp Nutritional yeast  
80g Sundried tomatoes (from a jar)  
1 tbsp Tomato purée  
20g Fresh basil  
2 tbsp Lemon juice  
2 tbsp Olive oil  
2-3 tbsp Tap water  
Salt and pepper

## METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4.
2. Add the sunflower seeds to a tray and roast the seeds for 10 minutes, then set aside to cool fully.
3. Add all the ingredients to a blender or food processor, starting with 1-2 tbsp of water. Blend to a smooth mix, with some small chunks, adding more water as needed or until it reaches your desired consistency.
4. Transfer to a bowl or jar and keep sealed for 3-5 days in the fridge.

# MIXED BEAN & SWEET POTATO CHILLI

SERVES 4

Perfect for those colder evenings... This hearty and flavourful dish provides protein, fibre, and essential vitamins. Not bad for a chilli!



## INGREDIENTS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Onion, diced                                 | 2 Bell peppers, different colours, de-seed and chopped |
| 4 Garlic cloves, peeled and crushed            | 100g Mushrooms, chopped                                |
| 800g Chopped tomatoes (tinned)                 | 60g Tahini   |
| 400g Kidney beans (tinned), drained and rinsed | 3 tbsp Chilli powder                                   |
| 400g Butter beans (tinned), drained and rinsed | 2 tsp Cumin  |
| 250g Vegetable stock                           | 1 tsp Dried oregano                                    |
| 1 Sweet potato, cubed                          | Pinch of salt  |



## METHOD

1. Place a large saucepan on a medium heat, add the onion, garlic and 2 tablespoons of water and cook for 2-3 minutes.
2. Add all the remaining ingredients to the pan and bring to a boil. Once boiled, cover and simmer for a further 35 minutes (or until the sweet potato is cooked).
3. Serve! You can garnish with fresh coriander and coconut yoghurt if desired.



# CREAMY ALFREDO WITH MUSHROOMS & TENDER-STEM BROCCOLI

SERVES 4

A delicious plant based dish that is quick and easy, providing you with key nutrients: calcium, iron and protein!



## INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp Olive oil  
400g Mushrooms, sliced  
2 Garlic cloves, peeled & crushed  
150g Tender-stem broccoli  
200g Fettuccine  
300g Silken tofu  
1 Lemon, juiced  
1 tsp Salt  
2 tbsp Nutritional yeast (optional)  
15g Flat leaf parsley, chopped

## METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a deep frying pan, add the mushroom and cook for 5 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and tender-stem broccoli and gently fry for a further 2 minutes.
3. In the meantime, cook the pasta as per the packet instructions. Drain and reserve the pasta water.
4. Add the tofu to 100ml pasta water, lemon juice and nutritional yeast into a blender and blend until smooth.
5. Add into the pan with the mushroom and tender-stem broccoli, and heat through for approx. 3-4 minutes, then add the pasta and finish with chopped parsley.

# “BUTTER” CHICKPEA CURRY WITH BASMATI RICE

**SERVES 4**



Fancy a Friday fake away? Try this fragrant chickpea curry. You can even add tofu or more colour with your favourite veggies.



## INGREDIENTS

180g Brown Basmati rice  
1 Onion, chopped  
3 Garlic cloves, peeled and crushed  
2 tsp Curry powder  
2 tsp Ground cumin  
½ tsp Paprika  
400g Chopped tomatoes (tinned)  
450g Chickpeas (tinned)  
180g Light coconut milk  
50g Tahini  
1 tbsp Cider vinegar  
1 tbsp Soy sauce  
20g Coriander, chopped

## METHOD

1. Cook the rice as per package instructions.
2. In a pan, add the onion, garlic, 1-2 tablespoons of water and sauté for approximately 3 minutes.
3. Add the curry powder, cumin, paprika and stir into the onion mixture until well covered.
4. Next add the tomatoes, chickpeas, coconut milk and tahini. Then stir in the cider vinegar and soy sauce.
5. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes until cooked. Serve with rice and freshly chopped coriander.





# FUDGY AVOCADO BROWNIES

SERVES 16

Prepare yourself-  
you are going to  
want to lick the spatula  
clean... This vegan treat  
offers healthy fats from  
avocado and fibre from  
wholemeal flour, making  
it both nutritious and  
indulgent.



## INGREDIENTS

1 ripe Avocado, peeled,  
pitted and mashed  
180ml Plant-based milk  
150g Maple syrup  
120g Wholemeal flour  
1 tsp Baking powder  
½ tsp Salt  
50g Unsweetened cocoa powder  
90g Vegan dark chocolate,  
chopped

## METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/  
gas mark 4 and line a baking tin 8 x 8  
inches with baking parchment paper.
2. Combine the mashed avocado,  
plant-based milk of your choice  
and maple syrup in a large bowl.
3. In another bowl, add the dry  
ingredients: wholemeal flour, cocoa  
powder, baking powder and salt.
4. Mix the dry ingredients with the  
avocado mixture until the batter is  
smooth. Stir in the chocolate chips and  
add the batter into the prepared tin.
5. Bake for 30-40 minutes. Allow the  
brownies to cool for 15 minutes before  
cutting and enjoying!



# ALMOND & APPLE CAKE

**SERVES 8**



"Let them eat cake"  
You don't need to tell  
me twice... This delicious  
almond & apple cake provides  
you with fibre, healthy fats  
and is the perfect addition  
to your afternoon cuppa.



## INGREDIENTS

150g Dairy free spread

300ml Oat milk (or your milk of choice)

1 tbsp Lemon juice

200g Self-raising flour, plus 1 tbsp to coat the apples

150g Wholemeal self-raising flour

100g Caster sugar

100g Light brown soft sugar

1 tsp Baking powder

1 tsp Almond extract

½ tsp Salt

300g Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cubed

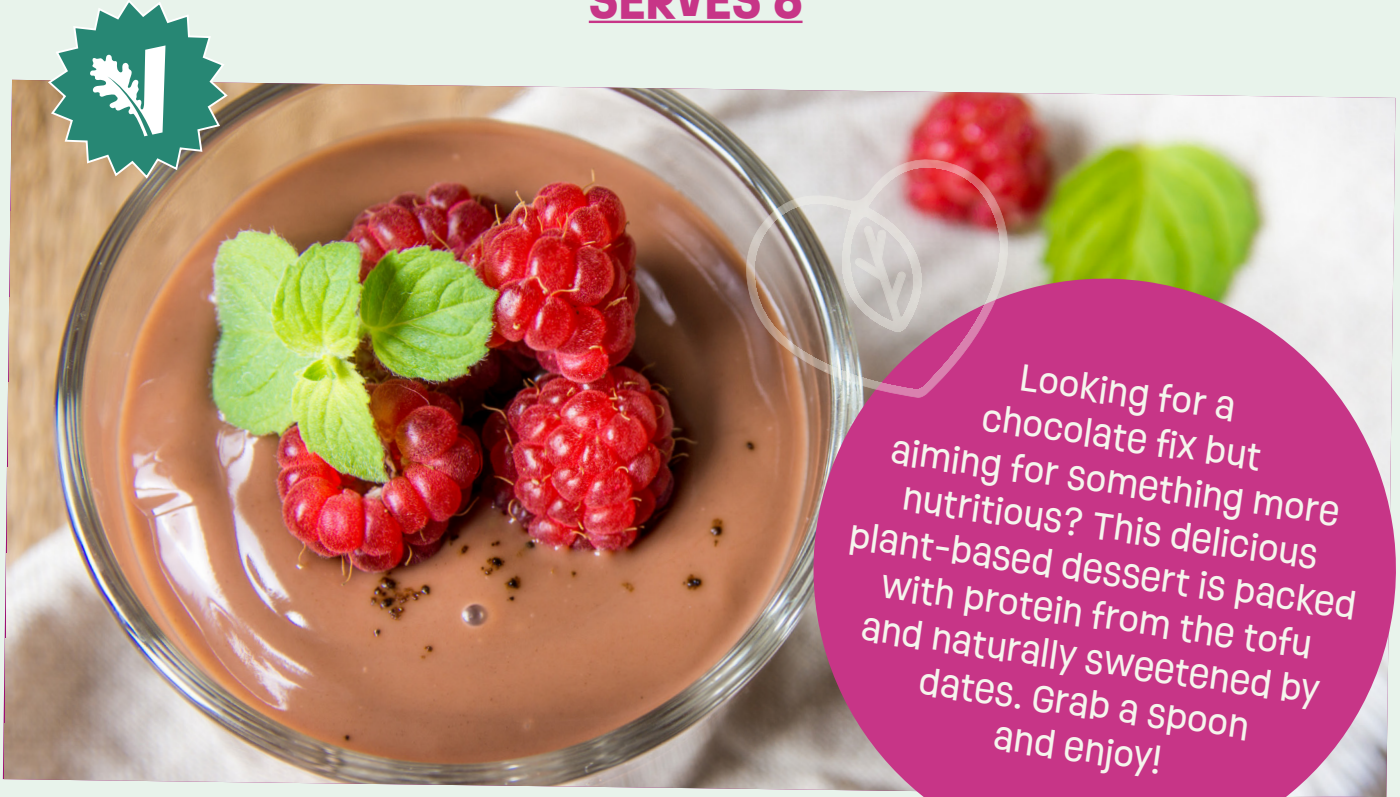
2 tbsp Flaked almonds

## METHOD

1. Grease a 20cm deep cake tin and line it with baking parchment and pre-heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4.
2. Add the oat milk into a jug along with the lemon juice and leave to sit for 5 minutes at room temperature.
3. Add the flour, sugars and baking powder in a large bowl, add in the oat milk mixture, almond extract, vegan spread and ½ tsp salt. Mix together.
4. Next, add the Granny Smith apples into another bowl, sprinkle over the extra 1 tbsp flour and toss to coat. Fold the apples through the cake batter using a spatula, then spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and sprinkle over the almonds.
5. Place in the centre of the oven to bake for 1 hr to 1 hr 20 minutes, or until golden brown.

# TOFU CHOCOLATE & RASPBERRY MOUSSE

SERVES 6



Looking for a chocolate fix but aiming for something more nutritious? This delicious plant-based dessert is packed with protein from the tofu and naturally sweetened by dates. Grab a spoon and enjoy!

## INGREDIENTS

150g Pitted dates  
300g Silken tofu  
150g 65% Dark chocolate, melted  
144g Aquafaba  
3g Cream of tartar  
120g Raspberries  
Mint to garnish

## METHOD

1. Overnight, soak your pitted dates in water. When you are ready, drain your soaked dates and place them into a blender until pureed.
2. Add the silken tofu and melted dark chocolate, and blend until smooth (creamy batter texture).
3. Pour the aquafaba and cream of tartar into a medium-sized bowl and whip with a hand mixer to obtain a frothy mixture. This may take a couple of minutes, so don't worry!
4. Slowly add the chocolate mixture from the blender into the fluffy aquafaba. Gently whisk with a spoon to incorporate until you have a creamy chocolate mousse.
5. Divide into glasses and refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.
6. Garnish with the fresh raspberries and mint.