



CAN YOU GET ENOUGH PROTEIN FROM PLANTS?

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Protein is essential in our diet. It is a component of almost every part of our body. Protein is what feeds our muscles, helps us grow stronger and keeps our body functioning properly. 10% - 35% of one's daily calories should come from protein. Based on a 2,000-kal diet this translates to 50g – 175g, however factors like age, weight, height and activity level are important considerations in determining the proper amount for each individual. Surprisingly, most people actually consume significantly more protein than they need!

Plant based protein is an excellent source for obtaining this macronutrient. Despite the common misconceptions that plant-based foods provide poor quality and inadequate amounts of protein, “vegetarian and vegan diets typically contain adequate amounts of quality protein, including adequate amounts of all 20 amino acids.”¹ Just be sure to mix and match your food options to ensure that your body is properly nourished with the 9 essential amino acids³ – the building blocks of protein – that your body must obtain from food.

The USC Village Residential Restaurant offers plant based cuisine². You can find healthy whole food options there including quinoa, hummus and assorted vegetables like broccoli, asparagus and brussel sprouts. Yes, even veggies contain protein! Black beans, rice and tofu are also good (and delicious) sources of protein! Be sure to check out the menu for the Plant Based station! <https://hospitality.usc.edu/residential-dining-menus/>

Below is a quick-reference guide showing the protein content of some popular plant-based foods⁴:

- Black beans 15.0g per 1 cup
- Almonds 16.5g per ½ cup
- Edamame 8.5g per ½ cup
- Quinoa 8.0g per 1 cup
- Chia seeds 4.0g per 2 Tablespoons
- Hemp seeds 5.0g per 1 Tablespoon
- Ezekiel bread 4.0g per slice
- Broccoli 2.6g per 1 cup
- Hummus 2.4g per 2 Tablespoons
- Kale 2.0g per 1 cup

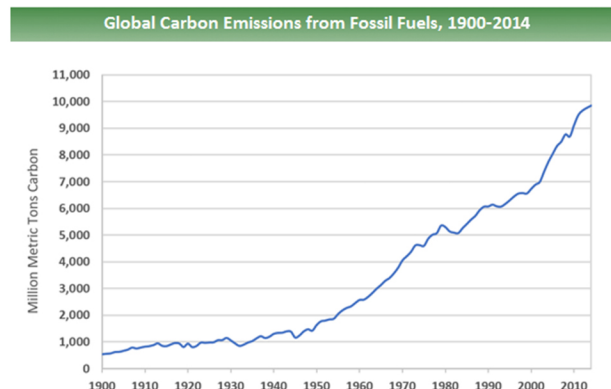
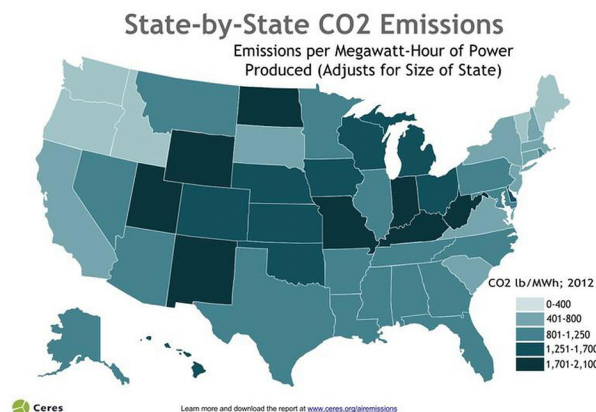




Plant-based protein powders & bars are on the rise and can be good options for when you don't have time to make a meal. If you're a shake lover, try making a smoothie and add protein packed chia seeds, hemp seeds, spirulina, nut or peanut butter. If you're in need of a bar, KIND bars are found throughout USC Hospitality retail locations such as Seeds Marketplace and Tutor Café.

SUSTAINABILITY

Plant-based foods can be more eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable than animal protein foods. This means that they leave less of a carbon footprint behind. Producing meat protein is more expensive, requires much more energy and natural resources, and contributes to the degradation of land and water.⁵ Many people are also proponents of animal rights - another topic to consider. The effects will become more apparent as time goes on. Click on each image below for more information. If this information doesn't hit home quite yet, perhaps this YouTube clip from the movie "Idiocracy" will get you thinking...or at least laughing! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3boy_tLWqA



State-By-State CO2 Emissions:

<https://www.wired.com/2008/10/map-of-us-carbon-dioxide-emissions-per-capita/>

Global Carbon Emissions from Fossil Fuels:

<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data>

References:

¹<https://academic.oup.com/nutritionreviews/article/77/4/197/5307079>

²Edible Education for Trojans (2019) "Special Dietary Needs flyers Residential and Hospitality 2019"

³<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/protein/>

⁴<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321474.php>

⁵<http://www.ift.org/food-technology/past-issues/2010/novem->