



October 2025

Plant-Based Basics

Non-Metro New Mexico Area Agency on Aging

Nutrition Corner

Research that has been done through the “Blue Zone Project” has identified common characteristics in people living long, meaningful lives. The characteristics include having good social connections, regular physical activity, having a sense of purpose, stress reduction practices, and eating a primarily plant-based diet. Making positive life-style changes in these areas can help older adults live happier, healthier lives, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. (bluezones.com)

What Does “Plant-Based” mean?

According to Merriam-Webster, a diet that is plant-based, “consists primarily or entirely of food (such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, oils, and beans) derived from plants.” With this type of eating pattern, you choose more food from plant resources while minimizing the amount of animal products.

Example: The Mediterranean Diet focuses mostly on plant-based foods, but may include eggs, fish, poultry, cheese, and yogurt just a few times per week. Other meats and sweets are eaten less often. This is different from a Vegetarian or a Vegan diet that do not include meat or dairy.

Plant-based diets offer all the necessary nutrients such as protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, etc. and are high in fiber.

Caution: Please pay attention to the ingredients in processed food items that are labeled as “plant-based”. They may be high in oil, sugar, sodium, and/or other unnecessary ingredients. Please consult with your doctor about any dietary concerns or questions you may have.

health.harvard.edu



The Benefits of Eating More Plants

Research shows that adding more plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, and grains to your meals have many health benefits.

These foods tend to be high in **fiber** which can:

- ☐ aid in digestion
- ☐ help you feel fuller longer and manage weight
- ☐ lower cholesterol
- ☐ regulate blood sugar
- ☐ reduce the risk of colon cancer

Plant-based foods are full of nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and **antioxidants**. Antioxidants protect our cells from the damage of daily living. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, herbs, and spices are great sources of antioxidants. Vitamins C and E are two well-known antioxidants.

What about Protein?

It is surprising how many plant-based foods contain protein! Protein can be found in foods such as:

- legumes (black, pinto, and kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils)
- nuts (walnuts, almonds)
- seeds (chia, flax)
- soy
- grains (quinoa, brown rice)

Protein can also be found in some vegetables too, like broccoli and Brussel sprouts!

chhs.colostate.edu

“The Senior Difference” Health Fair

Santa Fe, New Mexico



Please join us for our 2nd Annual Health Fair on November, 13th at 8:00 am. This is a FREE event providing New Mexico’s older adults with wellness services, entertainment, and other resources. Please visit our website for more information: nonmetroaaa.com

Blueberry Chia Seed Pudding

This blueberry chia seed pudding is an easy and nutritious dessert or snack option for diabetics. With the benefits of fiber-rich chia seeds and antioxidant-packed blueberries, it's a satisfying and refreshing treat that won't spike your blood sugar.

Servings: 2

Ingredients:

- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 3 tbsp chia seeds
- 1/4 cup stevia or monk fruit sweetener
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup fresh blueberries
- 1 tbsp lemon zest (optional)

Instructions:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the almond milk, chia seeds, sweetener, and vanilla extract. Stir until well combined.
2. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight, allowing the chia seeds to absorb the liquid and thicken the mixture.
3. Once the chia pudding has set, give it a good stir to break up any clumps.
4. Spoon the pudding into serving cups or bowls and top with fresh blueberries and a sprinkle of lemon zest if desired.
5. Serve chilled and enjoy!



Eatinginbirdfood.com



Blueberry Chia Muffins

(Blue Zones)

Servings: 12 muffins

INGREDIENTS

- 1 3/4 cup spelt flour (whole wheat, gluten-free or whatever you have on hand will work just fine)
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom
- 3 tablespoons chia seeds (1 teaspoon set aside for topping)
- 6 tablespoons coconut oil
- 3/4 cup almond milk (oat milk, coconut milk, etc.)
- 7 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup frozen blueberries

DIRECTIONS

1. Whisk dry ingredients.
2. Melt coconut oil on stovetop, mix in other wet ingredients over gentle heat until smooth.
3. Mix wet ingredients into dry ingredients.
4. Carefully stir in blueberries.
5. Scoop into muffin tin.
6. Sprinkle remaining chia seeds on top of muffins.
7. Bake in oven at 350 degrees F for 25-30 minutes.

Ingredient Highlights

Blueberries:

- ❖ source of vitamins C and K
- ❖ source of manganese
- ❖ great source of fiber
- ❖ rich in antioxidants



Chia Seeds:

- source of fiber
- source of protein
- rich source of Omega-3 fatty acids
- source of antioxidants
- contain various vitamins and minerals such as calcium and magnesium

health.harvard.edu

Fall Produce

Fruit:

- Apples
- Pears
- Pomegranates
- Cranberries
- Grapes
- Citrus Fruits

Vegetables:

- Winter squash
- Pumpkins
- Carrots
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower...and more!