

High energy vegetarian foods for growing kids, active teens, and those with fast-paced metabolisms



Book store shelves are stocked with "Eat more, weigh less" nutrition books, but little is written on healthy ways to increase your caloric intake. Vegetarian diets, particularly vegan diets, tend to have low calorie intakes because of their low fat and high fiber contents.

There are many cases where "high octane" foods are required to accommodate high energy demands. Those engaged in physical sports have increased energy needs ranging from 2000 to 6000 calories per day. Others such as pregnant women may easily meet their energy needs but may not necessarily meet nutrient requirements unless some attention is given to nutrient-dense foods. Even children, with limited stomach capacities have high nutrient requirements.

Big breakfasts

- granola-type cereal with soy milk, dates, figs, and other dried or fresh fruit.
- banana soy milk smoothies with tahini or almond, cashew or sunflower butter added
- nut butter, such as almond or cashew, with banana on whole grain toast and juice
- pancakes with sliced fruit, walnuts, non-hydrogenated margarine and maple syrup
- whole grain muffins with tahini & honey spread, banana and juice

Lay it on for lunch

- hummus in pita pocket with tabouli salad
- tofu or tempeh paté on whole grain bread
- sliced avocado with tofu cheese in a pita pocket
- cold or hot tofu burger, vegan mayonnaise on a whole wheat bun
- almond butter, cashew or peanut butter with banana or apple butter
- falafels, Jamaican vegetable patties, perogies, or roti

Substantial soups

When you are in a hurry, packaged soups can be turned into a substantial meal - try dressing them up with the following high calorie items:

- cooked beans - kidney, lentils, chickpeas, etc. Always have some in the fridge. They last approximately 4-5 days.
- have a container of brown rice precooked in the fridge - it will last approximately 5 days
- cooked potatoes and pasta will add calories to your soups.
- 1/2 an avocado, 1/2 cup of cooked brown rice and fresh squeezed lemon juice goes great in black bean soup mix.

Note: Soups have a tendency to fill you up due to the high water content. Focus more on increasing the sandwich volume than the soup.

Satisfying salads

If having a tossed salad, make sure you add avocado, olives, nuts and seeds.

Suggestions for high calorie salads:

- cold chick pea salad
- avocado salad
- pasta salad
- potato salad
- rice salad
- bean salad
- marinated tofu salad

Dinner entrées

How to increase your calories:

- in stirfrys, be more generous with canola or olive oil & nuts or serve with a peanut sauce.
- increase your pasta entrées and the portions - if you do not eat cheese, serve with ground almonds on top.
- incorporate a wide range of different pastas, making sure to increase the whole grain variety.
- pesto sauces with pine nuts make a wonderful high calorie pasta dish.
- add chickpeas to your tomato sauce and serve on pasta.
- drizzle canola or olive oil over your rice entrées and top with ground nuts.
- add tofu or tempeh.

Rich restaurant choices

- Middle Eastern/Mediterranean - falafel, hummus, baklava, Baba ghanoush, tahini sauce
- Greek - eggplant moussaka, hummus, baklava
- Indian - All-You-Can-Eat buffets are great when you are hungry. But watch out! They can be very high in oil
- Italian - large portion of pasta with olive oil, pesto, bruschetta
- Chinese - noodle dishes, vegetable fried rice dishes; ask them to add almonds, cashews or tofu
- European - potato perogies
- African - potato/chickpea roti with rice
- Mexican - burritos, tacos, enchiladas, refried beans and tortillas

Snack foods

- granola bars or granola-type cookies
- dried apricots, prunes, dates, figs, and raisins
- mixed dried nut and fruit mixture
- avocado with lemon
- banana slices with nut butter
- whole grain muffins, nut loaves, cookies using moderate amounts of sugar and oil
- corn chips with dips - guacamole, hummus, bean dips, tempeh paté, tofu dip
- banana soy milk smoothies with added tahini, peanut butter or cashew butter

Additional helpful hints

- Always be aware when you are hungry. Do not let yourself become preoccupied and let too much time pass.
- Carry snack foods on you such as nuts, dried fruit, trail mix, bananas, whole grain muffins and cookies.
- If you forget to make your lunch - buy it. Don't wait until you come home.
- Think a day ahead what you will eat. Plan your meals ahead of time.
- Always have frozen veggie type foods on hand for unplanned dinners such as veggie burgers, tofu lasagna and bean burritos.