

An elderly couple is shown at a farmers market. The woman, on the left, has short blonde hair and wears red-rimmed glasses and a white lace top. She is smiling broadly while holding a bunch of green leafy vegetables. The man, on the right, has a white beard and is wearing a green and white checkered shirt. He is also smiling and holding a wicker basket filled with fresh produce, including a pineapple, yellow bananas, and red radishes. The background is a blurred outdoor market setting with other people and stalls.

How a Flexitarian Diet Could Work for You



PeaceHealth

Your speaker

Jessy Richards, MS, RD, CDE

Clinical Dietitian

- *Dietitian and diabetes educator*
- *Roots in Vancouver, WA*
- *Loma Linda University grad*
- *Worked at Adventist while earning diabetes education certification*
- *Loves spending time in the outdoors with her husband and 3 children*



Overview

- What is a flexitarian diet?
- Does a flexitarian diet work?
- How do I get started?

What is a flexitarian diet?

Flexible + Vegetarian = Flexitarian

MORE plants

FEWER animal products





Timeline of “Flexitarian Diet”

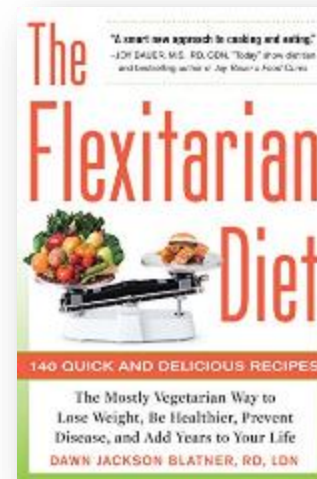
1990’s

Flexitarian word came into use



2008

“The Flexitarian Diet”
by Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD, LD



2012

Flexitarian word added to Merriam-Webster dictionary





From the book...

3 Levels of Flexitarian Diet

Beginner:

1-7 meatless meals
per week

Advanced:

8-14 meatless meals
per week

Expert:

15-21 meatless meals
per week



Plant-Based diets

- Flexitarian
- Mediterranean
- Vegan
- Vegetarian varieties
- Whole foods, plant-based



Why people choose a flexitarian diet?



Top 4 Reasons

1. Overall health: 76 percent
2. Weight management: 51 percent
3. Animal welfare: 24 percent
4. Environmental: 23 percent

1/3 consider themselves flexitarians

Does it work?

Research and Publications on the Flexitarian Diet



Does it work?

#1 Blue Zone Study, Dan Buettner with National Geographic

Which communities have the highest concentration of people living over 100 years of age?

1. Sardinia, island by Italy
2. Okinawa, island by Japan
3. Loma Linda, CA
4. Nicoya, located in Costa Rica
5. Ikaria, island by Greece





Does it work?

#1 Blue Zone Study *continued*

9 evidenced-based common denominators believed to slow aging:

1. Move naturally
2. Live with a purpose
3. Downshift or routine rest
4. Eat until 80% full, eat most food earlier in the day
5. **Plant slant** – beans including fava, black, soy & lentils
Meat <5 times per month
Serving sizes of 3-4 oz.
6. Wine at 5, except Adventists
7. Belong
8. Loved ones first
9. Right tribe

Does it work?

#2 The Journal for Nutrition Study

- 424,600 participants
- Four diet scoring tools- high in fruit, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes
- Results = all plant-based diets were associated with lower
 - overall mortality
 - rates of heart disease
 - rates of cancer



Does it work?

#3 The PREDIMED Study

- 7,216 participants
- Questionnaires baseline and yearly
- Positive points for fruit, vegetables, nuts, cereals, legumes, olive oil and potatoes
- Negative points for animal fats, eggs, fish, dairy and all meat products
- Results = Participants with a plant-derived food pattern were associated with lower mortality



Does it work?

#4 The Permanente Journal

Nutritional Update for Physicians: Plant-Based Diets

- Major benefits of a plant-based diet are:
 - possibly reduce medications to treat chronic conditions
 - lower body weight
 - decrease risk of cancer
 - reduce risk of death from ischemic heart disease



“...prevention and treatment of disease is centered, not on a pill or procedure, but on another serving of fruits and vegetables.”

Does it work?

#5 US News and World Report
Best Diets for 2020



Flexitarian Diet ranked...

- Best Overall Diet, tied for 2nd place
- Best Diabetes Diet, tied for 2nd place
- Easiest Diet to Follow, 2nd place

Summary of health benefits of plant-based diets:

Improvements in

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Cardiovascular disease
- Many cancers
- Obesity
- Overall mortality



Limitations of a flexitarian diet

- Guidelines not clearly defined, may need personalization or monitoring with certain disease states
- Strict vegetarian diets require supplements for B12
- Is it more expensive?
- Is it too high carb?
- GI distress



How do I start?



**Where do you get
your protein?**





Item	Amount	Grams of Protein
Black, pinto beans, or chickpeas	1 cup, cooked	14-16
Lentils	1 cup, cooked	18
Tempeh	3 oz	17
Tofu	4 oz	12
Edamame	1 cup, cooked, shelled	24
Seitan or gluten	1/3 cup, cooked	21
Peanut butter	2 tablespoons	7
Broccoli	1 cup, steamed	3
Almonds	¼ cup	6
Brown rice	1 cup, cooked	5
Quinoa	1 cup, cooked	9
Whole grain bread	1 oz	4
Whole grain or white pasta	2 oz uncooked	7
Red lentil pasta	2 oz uncooked	13

Flexing up Tacos

Vegetables

- Shredded lettuce or cabbage
- Cilantro
- Tomatoes
- Corn
- roasted Brussel sprouts
- roasted butternut squash
- Jackfruit

Starch

- mini corn tortillas or whole grain tortillas
- Spanish brown Jasmine rice
- spicy Quinoa

Protein

- Black beans
- pinto beans
- Lightly fried tempeh or cubed tofu

Toppings

- Salsa
- Guacamole
- Olives



Flexing up Pasta

Vegetables

- Roasted zucchini
- Mushrooms
- Eggplant
- Caramelized onions

Starch

- Whole grain or white pasta
- Red lentil pasta
- Spaghetti squash
- Zoodles (noodles of zucchini)

Protein

- Edamame
- Garbanzo beans
- Vegetarian Italian sausage

Toppings

- Fresh basil
- Red pepper flakes



Flexing up Salads or Veggie Bowls

Vegetables

- Dark greens
- Lettuce
- Cabbage
- Cucumber
- Jicama
- Carrots
- Peppers
- Mushrooms
- Tomatoes

Protein

- Edamame
- Beans
- Nuts
- Seeds

Fruits

- Pomegranate arils
- Raspberries
- Pear or apple slices

Starch

- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Corn
- Croutons
- Roasted butternut squash
- Sweet potato

Toppings

- Cilantro
- Salsa
- Avocado
- Salad dressing
- Café Yumm® sauce



Resources & Handouts

- Recording
- Presentation slides
- Overview handout
- Plant-based proteins
- Research papers

[Peacehealth.org/healthy-you/flexitarian-diet](https://peacehealth.org/healthy-you/flexitarian-diet)

