

*“Plant-Powered for Life . . . will help eaters of all persuasions, from carnivores to vegans, make plant-based meals fun and exciting.”*

—PEGGY NEU, President, The Monday Campaigns

# PLANT- POWERED FOR LIFE

Eat Your Way to Lasting Health  
**WITH 52 SIMPLE STEPS  
& 125 DELICIOUS RECIPES**



**SET A GOAL,  
START TODAY,  
MAKE IT  
A HABIT**

**SHARON PALMER, RDN**

*Author of *The Plant-Powered Diet**

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# ADVANCE PRAISE FOR

## *Plant-Powered for Life*

“In *Plant-Powered for Life*, Sharon Palmer transforms the science of nutrition into an absolutely delightful culinary adventure. The fabulous recipes are inspired by traditions from around the world, and a clear understanding of food and health. This book is truly exceptional—from beginning to end, it is beautifully and brilliantly crafted.”

—BRENDA DAVIS, RD, coauthor of *Becoming Vegan*

“Nutrition science and sustainability are complex issues. Sharon has done a masterful job of simplifying the science with 52 recommendations that give the reader clear guidance on making choices that are good for personal health as well as the health of our planet. Her culinary talent shines through with 125 recipes inspired by plant-based cuisines and cultures from around the world. Reading this book will enhance your understanding of the science; cooking from this book will make shopping for, preparing, and cooking amazing meals satisfying and fun!”

—AMY MYRDAL MILLER, MS, RDN, Senior Director of Programs and Culinary Nutrition, The Culinary Institute of America

“Making healthy eating practical, realistic, and delicious—that’s what Sharon Palmer is known for. Her tips for improving dietary choices are simple but powerful, and her recipes—inspired by the world’s most appealing cuisines—will show you how to eat for good health while enjoying some of the best meals you’ve ever tasted.”

—VIRGINIA MESSINA, MPH, RD, coauthor of *Vegan for Life*, *Vegan for Her*, and *Never Too Late to Go Vegan*

“As you heed Sharon Palmer’s advice to *fall in love with plants*, you will no doubt fall in love with Sharon’s newest book. The pages of *Plant-Powered for Life* are filled with great tips and easy-to-follow, delicious-looking recipes that also happen to be incredibly healthy.”

—SARA BAER-SINNOTT, President, Oldways

“*Plant-Powered for Life* will give people a new appreciation for the dazzling and delicious variety plant foods offer. Sharon’s 52 simple steps and 125 recipes will help eaters of all persuasions, from carnivores to vegans, make plant-based meals fun and exciting.”

—PEGGY NEU, President, The Monday Campaigns

“Sharon has done it again! Enjoy this brilliantly written book filled with easy-to-prepare recipes that are sure to delight the palate of those new to plant-based cuisine.”

—JOHN PIERRE, author of *The Pillars of Health: Your Foundations for Lifelong Wellness*, [www.johnpierre.com](http://www.johnpierre.com)



BECAUSE EVERY BOOK IS A TEST OF NEW IDEAS

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## SELECTED PRAISE FOR

# *The Plant-Powered Diet*

“Registered dietitian Sharon Palmer wrote a book that is much like a superfood: dense with the good stuff. The abundance of information in the first half is worth its weight in kale, then followed by 75 of the author’s own, family-tested recipes. This is a tome ideal for flexitarians and new vegans who are still learning.”

—VegNews.com

“In *The Plant-Powered Diet*, Sharon Palmer shares her passion for wholesome, delicious plant foods. This book, which is based on compelling scientific evidence, will help you find your own plant-based eating style that’s healthy, sustainable, and delicious.”

—CHERYL FORBERG, RD, James Beard Award–winning chef, *New York Times* bestselling author, and original nutritionist for *The Biggest Loser*

“*The Plant-Powered Diet* makes the transition to a plant-powered lifestyle simple. The support tools, such as pantry lists, dining out tips, and recipes, will help anyone realistically make the leap into a plant-powered lifestyle. It’s refreshing to see a focus on whole food, vegetarian recipes.”

—DAWN JACKSON BLATNER, RD, author of *The Flexitarian Diet*

“A *plant-powered diet* is a very powerful step in the right direction toward an all plant-based, whole-food diet. A very useful and very informative book.”

—GENE STONE, editor of *Forks Over Knives: The Plant-Based Way to Health* and author of *The Secrets of People Who Never Get Sick*

“*The Plant-Powered Diet* is a compilation of compelling arguments for the ideal nutrition plan—one that is based on whole plant foods. Palmer is welcoming to her readers as she provides solutions for eating in a more health-promoting way. I recommend this as a resource for anyone seeking a healthier diet.”

—JULIEANNA HEVER, MS, RD, CPT, plant-based dietitian and author of *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Plant-Based Nutrition*

“*The Plant Powered Diet* is a spot-on roadmap for our time. Eating deliciously, healthfully, and with a sense of our place in the world has never been easier, thanks to Sharon—I love this book!”

—KATE GEAGAN, MS, RD, author of *Go Green Get Lean: Trim Your Waistline with the Ultimate Low-Carbon Footprint Diet*

“*The Plant-Powered Diet* is a celebration of the delicious, healthful qualities of beautiful plant foods in their natural form. Everyone can gain tremendous benefits from eating this way.”

—PATRICIA BANNAN, MS, RD, nutrition expert and author of *Eat Right When Time Is Tight*



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# PLANT-POWERED FOR LIFE

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Eat Your Way to Lasting Health

**WITH 52 SIMPLE STEPS  
& 125 DELICIOUS RECIPES**

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**SHARON PALMER, RDN**

**Photography by Heather Poire**



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# Contents

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## Introduction

### **1. Create your own plant-powered goal.**

*Shanghai Stir-Fry with Forbidden Rice*

*Fettuccine with Romesco Sauce*

### **2. Take meat off the center of your plate.**

*Tofu Mushroom Tacos*

*Arugula Salad Pizza*

*Chickpea Stew with Kale and Za'atar*

### **3. Reclaim your culinary traditions, or develop new ones.**

*Green Bean Casserole with Caramelized Onions*

*Red Bean and Okra Jambalaya*

*Sesame Udon Salad with Snow Peas*

### **4. Love your legumes for protein and beyond.**

*Caribbean Calypso Beans*

*French Lentil Salad with Cherry Tomatoes*

### **5. Choose foods as close to nature as possible.**

*Roasted Chickpeas with Spices*

*Haricots Verts, Tomato, and Almond Salad*

### **6. Collect a plant-powered pantry arsenal.**

*Farro and White Bean Veggie Burgers*

*Steel-Cut Oats Risotto with Asparagus*

### **7. Aim for at least six servings of veggies every day.**

*Miso-Braised Collard Greens with Cashews*

*Spaghetti Squash with Pomodoro Sauce and Pine Nuts*

*Jicama-Chayote Slaw*

### **8. Read it before you eat it.**

*Easy Peanut Soba Noodles with Seitan*

*Zucchini-Orzo Soup*

*Bell Pepper Rye Pilaf*

### **9. Eat more, weigh less.**

*Pineapple and Mango with Coconut*

*Endive Salad with Peas, Pea Shoots, and Creamy Lemon Dressing*



**10. Embrace whole grains for flavor and health.**

*Ruby Winter Quinoa Salad*

*Persian Couscous with Apricots and Pistachios*

*Orange Millet Scones*

**11. Good meals don't just happen—plan them wisely.**

*Sweet Potato Gnocchi with Pistachio-Orange Pesto*

*Tropical Red Cabbage and Spelt Salad*

**12. Make variety your motto.**

*Tofu Cobb Salad*

*Polenta with Puttanesca Sauce*

*Rosemary and Olive Cassoulet (Bean Stew)*

**13. Shop thoughtfully and purposefully.**

*Ethiopian Yam and Lentil Stew*

*Mediterranean Eggplant and Artichoke Lasagna*

*Sicilian-Style Eye of the Goat Beans*

**14. For whole plant treasures, try a farmers market, CSA, or even your backyard.**

*Strawberry-Macadamia Shortcake*

*Roasted Lemon-Dill Asparagus and Tofu*

**15. Shoot for three to four servings of fruit a day.**

*Watermelon-Basil Ice*

*Peach and Cranberry Crumble*

**16. Remember, fresh isn't always best.**

*Tortilla Soup*

*Fig Oat Bars*

**17. Be globally inspired.**

*Swedish Pea Soup*

*Pesto Trapanese with Whole Grain Penne*

**18. Make the switch to extra virgin olive oil.**

*Pantescan Potato Salad*

*Roasted Cauliflower with Freshly Ground Spices*

**19. Be very picky about carbs.**

*Pumpkin Spice Muffins with Pumpkin Seeds*

*Stir-Fried Barley with Sea Vegetables and Peanuts*

**20. Find the time for a truly balanced breakfast.**

*Pinto Bean and Tofu Breakfast Rancheros*

*Peanut Butter and Banana Quinoa Breakfast Bowl*

*Pear Buckwheat Pancakes*

**21. Eat well on the run.**

*Bombay Carrot, Beet, and Bulgur Salad*

*Curried Tofu Papaya Wraps*

**22. Snack right!**

*Edamame Hummus*

*Crispy Ginger-Amaranth Cookies*

**23. Spend some time cooking every day—and enjoy it.**

*Sun-Dried Tomato and Olive Chickpea Focaccia*

*Yellow Squash Stuffed with Saffron Rye Berries*

*Vegetable Ribbon Salad with Lime Vinaigrette*

**24. Put real foods first.**

*Spicy Black-Eyed Pea Salad*

*Buckwheat Tabbouleh*

*Teff Porridge with Dates, Figs, and Pistachios*

**25. Eat a dark green leafy vegetable every day.**

*Harvest Wild Rice Salad with Persimmons and Baby Spinach*

*Tuscan Fusilli with Swiss Chard and Fava Beans*

**26. Spice it up!**

*Muhammara*

*Red Lentil Soup with Root Vegetables and Sage*

*Moroccan Vegetable Tagine with Couscous*

**27. Ditch the salt, power up on real flavor.**

*Black Bean, Cilantro, and Avocado Quesadillas*

*Rustic White Bean and Sun-Dried Tomato Toasts*

**28. Eat your way to the end of the rainbow.**

*Blueberry Oatmeal Waffles*

*Apple and Fennel Salad with Arugula*

*Chana Dal Stew*

**29. Invest in the money- and time-saving kitchen tools you need.**

*Smoky Chili with Sweet Potatoes*

*Pigeon Peas with Pumpkin and Sofrito*

**30. Lose your fear of fats.**

**31. Power up on nuts and seeds.**

*Seeded Whole Wheat Biscuits*

*Scandinavian Apple-Cardamom Oatmeal*

*Artisanal Nut and Seed Spread*

**32. Honor the growing seasons of plants.**

*Creamed Spring Peas and Potatoes*

*Ginger-Cardamom Baked Acorn Squash*

*Stone Fruit Trifle*

**33. Enjoy sweets—when they're worth it.**

*Creamy Peanut Butter Pie*

*Applesauce Raisin Snack Cake*

*Sweet Potato and Pecan Maple Pie*

**34. Eat the whole plant.**

*Lentils with Wild Mushrooms and Broccoli Rabe*

*Borscht with Beets and Beet Greens*

**35. Foster friendly bacteria.**

*Black Bean and Corn Chili*

*Banana-Coconut Brown Rice Pudding*

*Thai Lettuce Wraps*

**36. Strengthen your bones with plants.**

*California Tofu Scramble*

*Grits Smothered with Mustard Greens*

**37. Make friends with soy.**

*Tofu Ratatouille*

*Tempeh Noodle Skillet with Bok Choy*

**38. Pay respect to heritage foods.**

*Cajun Rattlesnake Beans with Corn*

*Summer Succotash with Heirloom Tomatoes*

**39. Eat mindfully.**

*Tomato Barley Soup*

*Forest Berry Salad with Juniper Vinaigrette*

**40. Learn your foods' pedigree.**

*Tuscan Kale Salad with Nectarines and Brazil Nuts*

**41. Sport a plant-based milk mustache.**

*Baked Potato and Leek Soup*

*Strawberry Soy Lassi*

**42. Get a daily plant-powered omega-3 boost.**

*Banana-Walnut-Flax Bread*

*Crunchy Farro-Hemp Breakfast Bowl with Fresh Berries*

*Dark Chocolate and Cherry Energy Mix*

**43. Become a smoothie operator.**

*Fruit and Almond Breakfast Shake*

*Tropical Green Smoothie*

**44. Discover the magic of mushrooms.**

*Savory Shiitake and White Bean Bake*

*Broccoli-Mushroom Gratin*

*Portobello Mushroom and Spinach Pie*

**45. Take a bite out of raw plant foods.**

*Spring Vegetable Salad with Green Goddess Dressing*

*Kiwi Herb Salad with Pistachios and Orange Dressing*

**46. Make it coffee or tea time today.**

*Lemon-Lavender Cooler*

*Whipped Hazelnut Iced Coffee*

*Flower and Pomegranate Tea*

**47. Find a place for fermented foods.**

*Korean Kimchi Hot Pot*

*Toasted Chickpea Sea-Salad Sandwiches*

**48. Splurge on dark chocolate in petite portions.**

*Chile Hot Chocolate*

*Black Bean Brownies with Walnuts*

**49. Give sprouted grains (and legumes) a try.**

*Zucchini Verde Sprouted Rice*

*Sprouted Lentil Granola with Apricots*

**50. Indulge moderately in alcohol, especially red wine.**

*Hot Spiced Wine with Raisins and Almonds*

**51. Share the plant-powered love!**

*Cashew Cheese with Popped Seeds*

*Butternut Squash and Caramelized Onion Salad*

*Carrot Spice Cupcakes with Chocolate “Cream Cheese” Frosting*

---

**52. Create a new plant-powered goal.**

*Chimichurri Seitan-Vegetable Skewers*

*Oven-Roasted Root Vegetables with Caraway*

*Savory Grain and Nut Loaf with Mushroom Sauce*

*Ingredients Notes*

*Further Reading*

*Seasonal Recipe Guide*

*Acknowledgments*

*Index*

*About the Author*

# Introduction

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If I were to offer one nugget of nutrition advice it would be to *fall in love with plants*. Because if you really, truly start loving plants—craving their flavors, textures, aromas, and colors—they will start loving you back. Whole plants, which have sustained humans throughout the centuries, possess the power to keep you healthy, functional, and fit—to help you live a long, rich, full life. It’s that simple.

In the coming pages, I will illuminate this simple message and equip you with fifty-two equally simple habits that form the core of plant-powered eating, along with recipes to inspire and sustain you. One step at a time, I will take you on a journey toward optimal health and all the other delicious rewards that a diet rich in plants can provide. Along the way, you’ll learn so many amazing things about plants that you’d need a heart of stone not to fall in love with them.

Every plant food—grain, legume, vegetable, fruit, nut, or seed—has a story to tell. Take the carrot, which began in Afghanistan as a purple or yellow root before Dutch growers took hold of a mutant orange carrot and developed the forefather of today’s sweet, plump orange root. Or okra, which arrived in the United States via female slaves who tucked okra seeds—one of their most precious possessions—into their hair when they were stolen from their homes in West Africa.

Throughout history, people have collected and nurtured plants: plants were their sustenance, their medicine, their life. They traded their precious plants between their worlds—flax and dates from Mesopotamia, exotic spices from the East, and potatoes, tomatoes, and chocolate from the New World. Farmers began to save the seeds from their showiest, tastiest crops—from squash to corn—recognizing them as “heirlooms” to be treasured and planted the next year. And today, we have thousands of varieties of beautiful plants for the picking: take any vegetable—say, a tomato or bean—and you’ll find that there are hundreds or sometimes thousands of different varieties. Even if you tried, it would be impossible to taste every type of edible plant available on the planet in one lifetime.

As humans were busy collecting, cultivating, and eating these precious plants, the plants were giving back. You might say the plants were “thanking” us for ensuring that their offspring survived for years to come. Their gift in return was good health. Each plant contained compounds that protected it from sun, insects, and disease, and bestowed vibrant health on its eater. The plants nourished our vision, our skin, our brains, and our hearts.

Today, by eating plants in their whole natural form—the way they grow in nature or on a farm—you can stoke your diet with all of the good stuff: fiber, protein, healthy fats, slow-burning carbs, vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals (plant compounds with health-protective activity). Whether you are omnivorous, pescatarian, vegetarian, or vegan, you can gain benefits by making way for more whole plant foods.

As a registered dietitian and nutrition expert, I have helped thousands of people live healthier lives through diet. And as a journalist, I travel to nutrition conferences around the world, interview the leading nutrition researchers, and study published nutrition research every day in order to keep up on the body of evidence surrounding health and nutrition. This broad base of science points to one compelling fact: a whole-foods, plant-based diet is your best-odds defense against disease.

We must make a sure-footed move back toward the plants that sustained us. We must leave behind the typical American diet (or *Western diet*). This diet—laden with highly processed foods, fatty meats, saturated fat, sodium, and sugar, and pathetically deficient in whole plant foods like whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and fruits (and their star nutrients such as fiber, vitamins, and minerals)—is killing us. We struggle with a cascade of diet-related diseases: heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, premature aging, early death, poor mental and physical functioning, and the list goes on.

Even our kids now face these diseases at an unprecedented rate. When I first started practicing as a dietitian, type 2 diabetes was called adult-onset diabetes, because it rarely occurred before the age of forty. Today, it happens in children, too. In addition, modern kids have strokes and are in the early stages of atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in the arteries), all as a result of their poor diets and lack of exercise. For the first time in history, our kids are set to live shorter lives than we will live.

As kids with early risk factors for diabetes and heart disease mature, our country will be saddled with poor health, medical bills, and disability. And the entire planet is already maxed out for resources: scientists say we would need one-and-a-half Earths to keep up with our consumption of food, water, and energy. You might be surprised to find that 51 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions are produced through resource-intensive animal agriculture. It’s no longer sustainable to eat this way—for us, for our children, or for our planet.

Diet is a powerful ally that can literally save your life. You can reduce your risk of all these chronic diseases by 80 percent (yes, you read that right!) by embracing a healthy lifestyle that includes eating and drinking well, not smoking, and exercising. No drug on the market can boast those odds.

The optimal diet for a healthy life—and planet—is within our reach. It’s so sweet and simple that it often goes unnoticed amid the thunder of fad diets. It’s simply a diet that gets back to nature, to eating the simple whole foods that once nurtured us.

Since writing my first book, *The Plant-Powered Diet*, I’ve had the pleasure of hearing the success stories of so many people who made changes in their diet and reaped the rewards. Some people made huge changes by becoming vegan; other people made moderate changes, like cutting out red meat or eating a mostly plant-based diet. These changes resulted in wonderful success: weight loss; discontinuing medication for high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol; improvement in chronic disease symptoms; and beyond. Best of all, people have told me they just “feel good,” in terms of both their health and their place in our food system. They are remarkably energized and involved in their relationship with food. They don’t feel deprived or as if they were on a “diet”; instead they celebrate delicious, wholesome plant foods.

In the chapters of this new book, I hope that I inspire *you* to fall under the lure of plants—to savor and respect their nourishment, good taste, and gift of health. Start by setting a plant-powered goal of your own (see [page 1](#)), then proceed toward it step by step. You can tackle the steps in the order they’re given, or skip around and choose your own pathway. Do one a week for a year, or take it at your own pace.

I also share 100 percent plant-based recipes to try in your kitchen. Drawing on the world’s

abundance of plant-powered ingredients and flavors, these dishes will reward your efforts with vibrant health *and* vibrant meals.

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Each recipe is packed with the power of essential nutrients; when a recipe provides a good source (at least 10% Daily Value [DV], the requirement for the average adult, based on a 2,000-calorie diet) of a vitamin or mineral, it is listed as a “star nutrient.” While I believe good nutrition is about *food* more than nutrients, I share this information to illustrate how plant foods can provide good sources of nutrients, like calcium, iron, and zinc. The nutrition information also includes calorie, protein, carbohydrate, fat, saturated fat, fiber, sugar (an amount that includes both added sugars and sugars that naturally occur in plant foods), and sodium content for each recipe, to help you make decisions based on your personal nutrition needs.

Every recipe also either is gluten-free or offers simple gluten-free substitutions. Certain ingredients (included but not limited to grains, flours, baking powder, and condiments, such as soy sauce) may contain gluten or be subject to cross-contamination, depending on the manufacturer. If you follow a gluten-free diet, read labels carefully and choose reliably gluten-free brands. Note that not everyone needs to follow a gluten-free diet: it can be as healthy as any other eating style, but is not necessarily better for you if you do not have celiac disease or another gluten-related disorder.

By taking each of this book’s fifty-two steps and reinforcing them over time with your actions and your cooking, you’ll steadily build new habits that will promote health throughout the year and across a lifetime. You’ll also learn just how simple and delicious plant-based eating can be.

Your plant-powered life begins today—and once you’ve tasted the benefits, you’ll never want it to end.





**Shanghai Stir-Fry with Forbidden Rice**

# 1

## Create your own plant-powered goal.

*Shanghai Stir-Fry with Forbidden Rice*

*Fettuccine with Romesco Sauce*



No two people eat precisely alike. Some of us dine out twice a day; some of us rarely visit restaurants. Some of us eat meat every day; some of us never do. But we can all achieve sustainable health and well-being by focusing more on whole plant foods, and less on animal foods.

The first step is to create a personal goal on the plant-powered spectrum. You won't be "going on diet," but committing to make concrete, lasting changes that work for you. If your goal changes over time, that's fine.



Take a look at how you eat every day, and ask yourself:

- How many servings of animal foods do you eat every day?
- How many servings of whole plant foods do you eat every day?
- When in the day do you tend to eat these foods?
- Which eating behaviors do you most want to change? (Perhaps you plan to give up processed meats, like bacon, sausage, and ham, which have been linked to an even higher risk of cancer, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes than other animal foods.)

Next, set your own plant-powered goal. Say it out loud! For example, depending on your personal goals, it might go something like:

- I will cut out red meat and eat a whole-foods, meatless meal once a week.
- I will eat dairy, eggs, fish, and whole plant foods.

🌱 I will eat an entirely vegan plant-powered diet.

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Now that you've set a goal, use this book to achieve it!

# shanghai stir-fry with forbidden rice



See photo on [page xvi](#)

**ACTIVE PREPARATION TIME: 21 minutes • TOTAL PREPARATION TIME: 33 minutes**

*One of the best ways to move to a plant-powered diet is to focus on dishes that showcase vegetables such as this stir-fry, which includes a mix of traditional Chinese plant foods—bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, baby corn, carrots, Chinese cabbage, and bean sprouts. Add tofu, tempeh, or seitan for a punch of plant protein; omnivores may opt to stir in a small amount of lean meat or seafood as “seasoning.” Loaded with flavor and texture, the colors of this stir-fry really pop when juxtaposed with jet-black “forbidden” rice—so precious that it was reserved for Chinese emperors.*

## MAKES 8 SERVINGS

(about 1¼ cups stir-fry with ½ cup rice each)

- 1⅓ cups (240 g) uncooked forbidden (black) rice
- 2⅓ cups (552 ml) water
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 medium carrot, sliced (see Note)
- 1 medium onion, coarsely sliced
- 3 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 1½ teaspoons minced fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon black sesame seeds
- 1 medium green bell pepper, coarsely sliced
- One 15-ounce (425 g) can baby corn, drained (1¾ cups)
- One 8-ounce (227 g) can water chestnuts, drained
- One 8-ounce (227 g) can bamboo shoots, drained
- 3 cups (210 g) sliced Chinese (Napa) cabbage
- 1 cup (70 g) sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup (104 g) fresh bean sprouts
- ¼ cup (4 g) chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon agave nectar
- ¼ cup (59 ml) reduced sodium vegetable broth (see [page 346](#))

1 tablespoon cornstarch

2 green onions, white and green parts, sliced

½ cup (69 g) coarsely chopped cashews

1. Place the rice and water in a small pot, cover, and simmer over medium-low heat for about 30 minutes, until tender, with all of the water absorbed.
2. Meanwhile, heat the sesame oil in a large sauté pan or wok over medium heat.
3. Add the carrot and onion and sauté for 3 minutes.
4. Add the garlic, ginger, and sesame seeds and sauté for an additional 5 minutes.
5. Add the bell pepper, corn, water chestnuts, and bamboo shoots and sauté for an additional 3 minutes.
6. Add the cabbage, mushrooms, sprouts, and cilantro and sauté for an additional 3 minutes.
7. Mix the soy sauce, vinegar, agave, broth, and cornstarch in a small dish until smooth. Add to the pan with the vegetables and continue to sauté for about 3 minutes, until the sauce has thickened and the vegetables are crisp-tender. Garnish the stir-fry with the green onions and cashews and serve with the rice.

**note:** A food processor may come in handy for slicing the fresh vegetables in this recipe.

**variation:** Add 12 ounces of sliced extra firm tofu (pressed for best results—see [page 103](#)) with cabbage.

**PER SERVING:** 272 calories, 10 g protein, 44 g carbohydrate, 9 g fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 6 g fiber, 9 g sugar, 279 mg sodium

**STAR NUTRIENTS:** folate (27% DV), niacin (18% DV), riboflavin (13% DV), thiamin (19% DV), vitamin A (107% DV), vitamin B6 (27% DV), vitamin C (96% DV), vitamin K (68% DV), calcium (14% DV), copper (50% DV), iron (14% DV), magnesium (26% DV), manganese (70% DV), phosphorus (25% DV), potassium (18% DV), selenium (15% DV), zinc (14% DV)

# fettuccine with romesco sauce

ACTIVE PREPARATION TIME: 8 minutes • TOTAL PREPARATION TIME: 11 minutes

*Romesco sauce was created in northeastern Spain as a flavorful accompaniment for local seafood and vegetable dishes. This rich red sauce is powered by tangy roasted red peppers—packed with disease-fighting lycopene—and served with fresh pasta, which may be found in the refrigerator section of many supermarkets. It's a great dish to launch your plant-powered diet, though you can serve it with a small amount of animal protein, if you're so inclined. Save leftover sauce as a dip for toasted bread.*

## MAKES 8 SERVINGS

(about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup pasta with  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup Romesco Sauce each)

### Romesco Sauce

- 1 small chile pepper, with seeds, destemmed and sliced into quarters
- 3 medium garlic cloves
- One 15.5-ounce (439 g) jar roasted red bell peppers, with liquid
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (46 g) toasted sliced almonds
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Pinch of sea salt, optional
- 1 pound (454 g) fresh fettuccine (whole grain if available; see Notes)

### Optional garnishes

- Additional toasted almonds
- Fresh herb leaves, such as basil, rosemary, or oregano

1. To make the Romesco Sauce: Place the chile pepper, garlic, roasted bell peppers, almonds, tomato paste, paprika, cayenne, vinegar, and olive oil into a food processor or blender and blend until smooth, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides halfway through blending if necessary. Taste and mix in a pinch of sea salt, if desired.
2. Transfer the Romesco Sauce to a serving bowl and leave at room temperature unless serving it later (see Notes).

**3.** Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add the fettuccine. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, just until tender. Drain off the water. Place the fettuccine on a serving platter and serve immediately, topping individual portions with the Romesco Sauce. Garnish with the additional almonds and fresh herb leaves, if desired.

**notes:** If you cannot find fresh whole grain fettuccine, you may substitute an equal amount of dried pasta and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, according to the package directions. This recipe is gluten-free if you use gluten-free fettuccine.

Store leftover Romesco Sauce in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. It is excellent as a sauce or spread for breads and as an accompaniment to grain salads and vegetables.

**variation:** Stir 8 ounces of diced baked tofu or seitan into the prepared Romesco Sauce before serving.

**PER SERVING:** 297 calories, 11 g protein, 51 g carbohydrate, 7 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 9 g fiber, 2 g sugar, 144 mg sodium

**STAR NUTRIENTS:** folate (10% DV), niacin (17% DV), riboflavin (11% DV), thiamin (20% DV), vitamin A (19% DV), vitamin B6 (10% DV), vitamin C (35% DV), vitamin E (14% DV), copper (18% DV), iron (20% DV), magnesium (27% DV), manganese (99% DV), phosphorus (20% DV), zinc (11% DV)



**Arugula Salad Pizza**



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