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Whole Food, Plant-Based Diet Guide



Are you curious about a whole-food, plant-based diet? The T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies is here to help you get started.

Whole Food, Plant-Based Diet and Lifestyle

[T. Colin Campbell, PhD](#) and his son [Thomas Campbell, MD](#) co-authors of the

bestselling book *The China Study* have devoted their careers to spreading the word about the science and health benefits of a whole food, plant-based (WFPB) diet. This information has been around for decades and [continues to gain favorable recognition](#), which is fanning a [global explosion](#) of interest in a WFPB diet and lifestyle. In the face of skyrocketing healthcare costs, confusion about [what to eat](#) and food-related [environmental degradation](#) this is great news! So let's get started with our lesson.

First we will take a look at food groups. Second we will consider what to eat (& drink) and what to avoid. Third we will offer more information and inspiration for your continued exploration.

1) How We Define Food Groups

Let's Take a Look at How We Think about Food



Check-up

What Are the 3 Basic Food Groups?

Choose your answer.

1) Fat, gluten and protein

2) Beer, pretzels and ketchup





3) Breakfast, lunch and dinner

4) Animal-based foods, whole plants and processed plant fragments

What Are Animal-Based Foods?

Note

We will list just a few examples to illustrate each category, there are many more.








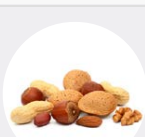
Animal-Based Foods	
	<div>Dairy</div> <div>cheese, milk, yogurt</div>
	<div>Eggs</div> <div>chicken eggs, duck eggs and egg products such as mayonnaise</div>
	<div>Fish & Seafood</div> <div>tuna, swordfish, shrimp</div>
	<div>Meat</div> <div>steak, hamburger, lard (pig fat)</div>

What Are Plant-Based Foods?

Note

Plants can fall into more than one category, for example celery is a stem and also has leaves.

Whole, Unrefined, Plant-Based Foods

	Roots beet, potato, carrot
	Bulbs onion, garlic, water chestnut
	Stems celery, rhubarb, asparagus
	Leaves lettuce, bok choy, arugula
	Flowers cauliflower, broccoli, artichoke
	Fruits tomato, orange, watermelon
	Mushrooms portobello, white button, shiitake
	Nuts pecan, cashew, walnuts
	Legumes cannellini beans, peas, lentils



Whole Grains

whole wheat, brown rice, rye



Check-up

So, what is the difference between a whole plant and a processed plant fragment?

In his book *The China Study Solution* Tom Campbell, MD encourages us to ask the following question-will I find this food item on a bush, in a tree, or in the dirt on a farm? If the answer is yes then it is likely to be a whole plant.

What Are Processed Plant Fragments?



Plant Fragments

sugar, oil, refined flour

What does it mean to process plants into fragments? Processing indicates some components of the original plant were isolated using mechanical or chemical means. Plants can be broken down to varying degrees. Take an orange for example, peeling then segmenting are simple mechanical steps taken prior to consumption and the orange segment would be considered a whole plant food. Juicing breaks it down even more, which would now be considered plant fragments. In order to isolate components of the original plant, other mechanical and or chemical processes are used to extract and treat nutritional components,

such as removing oil or specific nutrients from plants, extracting fiber from grains or bleaching.



Check-up

What differentiates veganism from a whole food, plant-based diet?

A [vegan might fill up](#) on fried foods, pastries, protein shakes, sugary candy and eat foods [loaded with vegetable oil](#). This diet may not include meat but may include collections of processed plant fragments, which someone on a [WFPB diet avoids](#) while focusing on an amazing variety of delicious, nutritious, whole and minimally processed plants.

What about a donut?

What would this popular food be considered?

Choose your answer, be careful this is a trick question.

1) Animal-based food

2) Whole plant

3) Plant fragment

4) A collection of processed plant fragments

2) What to Eat and What to Avoid

How to Start Your Whole Foods, Plant-Based Diet

Embrace Whole Plants

Eat all you want while getting lots of variety of any whole, unrefined plant-based food. View our [whole food, plant-based recipes](#) for inspiration in the kitchen.

Eliminate Animal-Based Foods

Diets containing animal based protein are associated with a huge disease burden, far more than most people realize. [Excess protein increases carcinogenic activity](#) and is correlated with the health risks for all chronic diseases including coronary artery diseases and diabetes epidemics. The [RDA for protein](#) is 10% of calories, though most tend to eat twice that. The only way to [over-consume protein](#) is through excess [animal food consumption](#) or the use of [isolated protein](#) in processed foods. [Animal foods have no fiber](#), while whole [plant foods are packed with fiber](#), which fill you up, keep you regular, and regulate nutrients into the body.

Eliminate All Dairy

A very popular animal-based food product [worthy of separate mention is dairy](#). Contrary to popular belief [dairy consumption is not necessary for bone health](#) and is associated with autoimmune diseases, diabetes, and [cancers of the prostate and breast](#). Dairy proteins promote growth hormones which [increase tumor growth](#). Worried about getting enough [calcium for strong bones](#)? You can get plenty [without consuming dairy](#).

Avoid Refined & Processed Foods

There is a correlation between refined foods and [disease](#) - sweets, pastries and processed pastas lack their original [fiber, vitamins and minerals](#). These processed foods convert to sugars in [the blood](#), increasing the risk for [insulin resistance, colon cancer](#) vascular disease and weight gain.

Avoid/Eliminate Oil

Oil, even the finest olive oil, is 100% fat, [calorically-dense and nutrient-poor](#). As Caldwell B. Esselstyn, Jr. MD [explains](#), oil injures the

endothelium, the innermost lining of the artery, and that injury is the gateway to vascular disease . For those with known heart disease, even adding a little oil can have a negative impact on heart health. If you decide to stop consuming oil, Tom Campbell, MD recommends cleaning with it.

Note

Go for green, use caution with orange and stay away from red. Click food categories for examples.

	Whole Plants
	Plant-Based Minimally Processed
	Plant-Based More Processed
	Salt, Oil and/or Sugar (SOS)
	Animal Products



Let Water Be Your Beverage of Choice

Water carries nutrients, oxygen and electrolytes throughout the body for all of its vital work, including nerve signaling, muscular movement and toxin removal. Signs of not drinking enough water include fatigue, fluid retention and constipation. [Drink plenty of water](#) throughout the day. By the way, if you are wondering about [drinking alcohol](#) take a look at Tom Campbell, MD's thoughts on the matter.

Start Your Day With a Healthy Meal

A healthy meal, high in fiber and complex carbohydrates will allow for steady levels of blood sugar throughout the day, a [prolonged feeling of fullness](#), optimal alertness and less desire for snacking. Many enjoy [oatmeal with fruit](#) or whole-grain cereals. If trying to lose weight or [reset tastebuds](#), consider eating vegetables for breakfast or any meal. Many people enjoy smoothies as they transition away from less healthy foods, although [some benefits are diminished](#).

Beware of Fad Diets

Don't fall for [food fads](#), such as the low-carb or [Paleo diet](#) ([recycled Atkins diet](#)), without researching the health implications.

How to Set Yourself up for Success One Meal at a Time

Living a WFPB lifestyle does not have to be time-consuming, or expensive. As a matter of fact you will save time and money once you get in the habit of eating this way. Check out our [Plant-Based Food Guide: How to Eat Well on a Budget](#) brimming with tips and delicious recipes. Have fun, be creative, do not take things too seriously, substitute when necessary, connect with others and enjoy. Use our [sample menu](#) for three days of WFPB meals.

Read Ingredient Labels Carefully

If purchasing a pre-packaged food product be sure to [carefully read what](#)

is in the package, box or can. Note that product ingredients are listed in descending order, with the greatest amount by weight listed first. Purchase products with just a few, recognizable plant-based ingredients. **The less processed the better**. Avoid added sweeteners and additives including oils and fats.

What About Vitamins and Supplements?

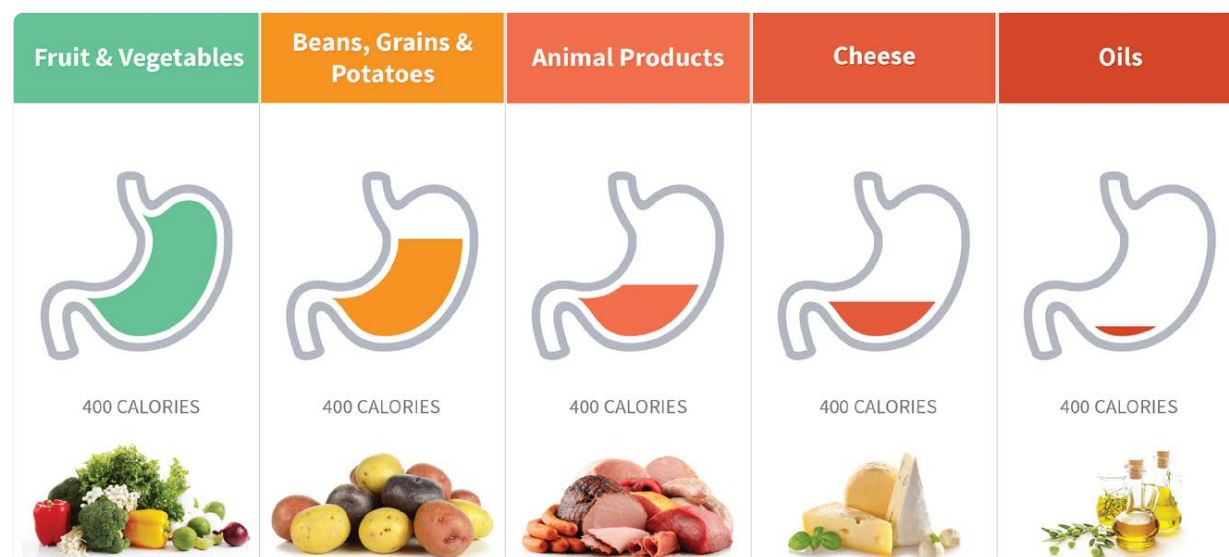
Tom Campbell, MD suggests that **Vitamin B12 is an exception** and that a WFPB eater can **monitor Vitamin D** with his or her personal doctor. T. Colin Campbell explains that the **word vitamin is deeply embedded** in our brains. In the past, children were forced to take cod liver oil and more recently colorful, sugary cartoon shaped supplements. T. Colin Campbell maintains that individual vitamin **supplements do not work for long term health**, and that to insist they do diverts attention away from the truly important message of consuming whole, plant-based foods.



Check-up

What if I am trying to put on or lose some weight?

Whether trying to gain or lose weight **keep caloric density in mind**. For example avocados, **nuts and nut butters** are packed full of energy and also calories. **Oils are more concentrated**.



□ Click image to expand

Don't Expect Overnight "Perfection"

We realize that change is not necessarily easy. It can be emotionally and socially challenging to break free from what Dr's Doug Lisle and Alan Goldhamer have named, the dietary pleasure trap. More and more doctors are discovering the health benefits of a WFPB diet, Doctor James Loomis changed his life after watching Forks Over Knives. Like other plant-based doctors he now helps his patients to overcome their fears and reminds us the most powerful medication is the food you put in your mouth!

3) Continue the Exploration

Launch a WFPB Lifestyle & Live a Whole Life

Free Resources

Enjoy [articles](#) and [recipes](#) on our website.

Learn More

Check out recommended [books](#) and [videos](#).

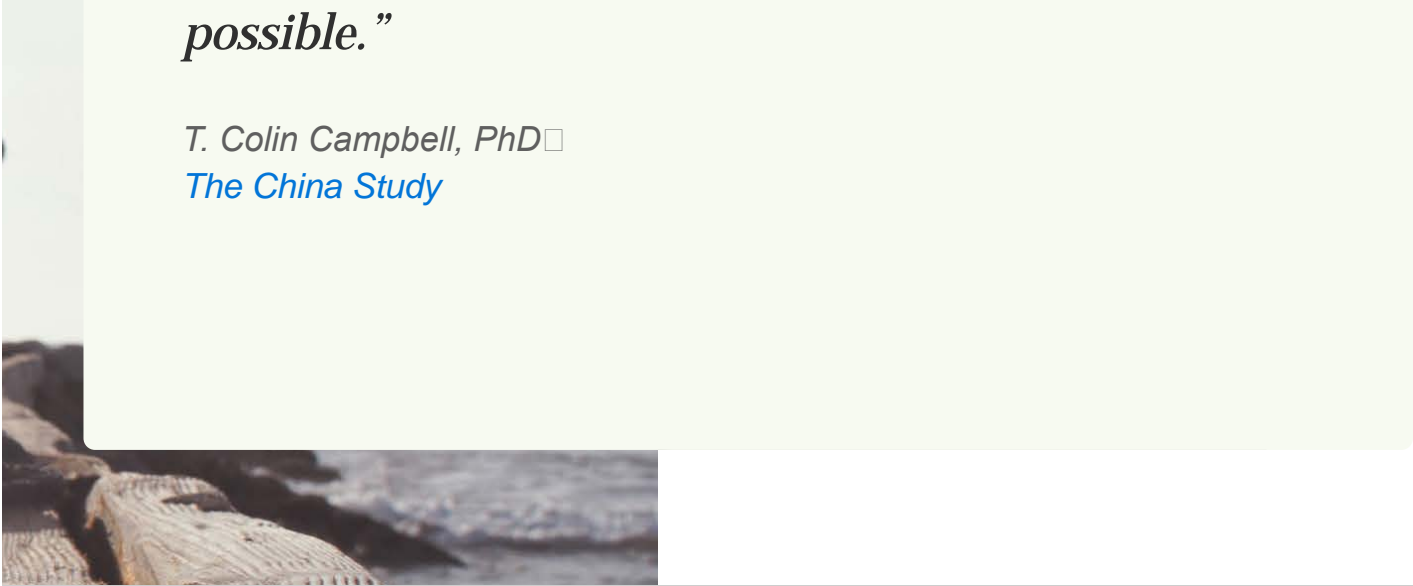
Online Course

Good health is closer than you think. Check out our online [Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate](#), it's just a click away.



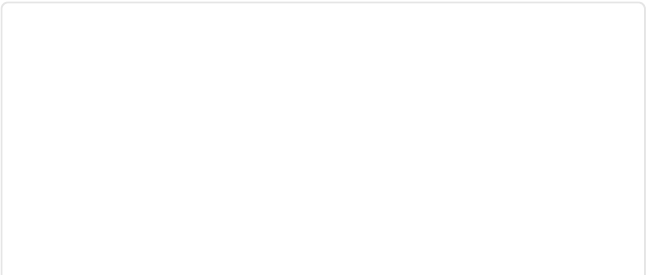
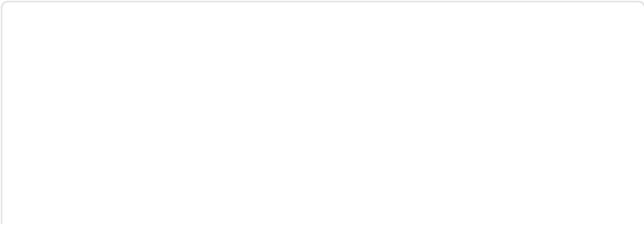
This video is from our [Plant Based Nutrition Certificate](#).

“Since my family and I changed our eating habits, I’ve come to enjoy thinking of food as either plants or animals. It fits well into my philosophy of keeping the information on food and health as simple as



Get Inspired

We get inspired by our graduate success stories and hope you will too!



Nurse Loses Over 100 Pounds and Overcomes Food & Sugar Addiction

Amanda, a critical care nurse with swollen feet, PCOS and hypothyroidism turned her life around after reading *The China Study* & watching Forks Over Knives.

How *The China Study* Gave Me Children (and Hope)

Katherine was diagnosed with endometriosis which prevented pregnancy, then her plant-based diet reversed it.

We hope you enjoyed learning more about a whole food, plant-based diet. We looked at food groups, touched on what to consume and what to avoid then offered further information and resources to help you live a whole life.

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Monthly, plant-based articles and recipes in your inbox.

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Mission

Our mission is to promote optimal nutrition through science-based education, advocacy, and research. By empowering individuals and health professionals, we aim to improve personal, public, and environmental health.

About Us

T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Ithaca, NY.

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