

Shopping at your local health food store



1. Smoked salmon has only 33 calories, 5 grams of protein per ounce and a healthy dose of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids (it is high in salt). It is already cooked so makes for a perfect quick meal. Fresh salmon provides similar health benefits.

2. Omega-3 rich eggs are a great protein staple and now can offer up some omega-3's in your diet (up to 225 mg/egg, depending on the brand). If you throw out the yolk, you are throwing out the omega-3's.

3. Fage Greek-style yogurt becomes thicker and richer in protein by throwing out some of the watery whey. One 5.3 oz container has 13 g protein. Just be sure to buy 0% (fat-free). Other yogurt choices: Cascade Fresh sweetens their yogurts with fruit juice (about 100 calories per container) and Stonyfield Farm plain yogurt is a quality product.



4. Soy milk is a great alternative for those who don't tolerate lactose. Silk Unsweetened (green container) has no added sugar. You can also try soy milk, almond milk or rice milk in aseptic packages in the dry goods aisle. If you do drink cow milk, buy organic.

5. Natural peanut butter and almond butter are simply ground nuts, without the added sugar and oils. Find them on the end of the bulk aisle (in some stores, you can even grind them yourself) or next to the jelly.



6. Tofu, tempeh and seitan are high protein, high fiber meat alternatives. They are found in a refrigerator next to the produce section (tofu can also be found in aseptic packages in the Asian aisle and can stay in the cabinet for months).

What is tofu? Tofu, or Soy Bean Curd, is essentially curdled soymilk minus the liquid (a parallel is the way cheese is made from dairy). Its natural flavor is quite mild, but its natural ability to absorb the flavors of other ingredients has led it to be called a culinary chameleon. It's found in several varieties, from soft (silken) to extra-firm style. Soft tofu is often used to make frostings for cakes, dips for chips and vegetables, while the firmer styles are often found in stir-fries and soups where it will hold its shape. Frozen tofu is an excellent substitute for ground beef in many recipes.



What is seitan? Seitan is a form of wheat gluten. It is a high protein, low fat, no cholesterol food and typically comes in small tubs (like margarine tubs). It is brown and sometimes comes in strips 1/4 to 1/2 inches thick. Seitan is made from whole wheat flour which is mixed with water and kneaded until the high protein gluten remains, which is seasoned by simmering in a flavored broth. Seitan can be used in sandwiches, or to make dishes such as sweet and sour seitan, seitan stir fry, Salisbury seitan, etc. similar to chicken.

What is tempeh? Tempeh is a somewhat meatlike substance made from cultured soybeans. It is used in dishes like barbeque, and has a stronger taste compared to tofu.

7. Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) is "defatted" soy flour and, when rehydrated, takes on a ground beef like texture. It is high in protein and fiber. Add it to soup, chili or spaghetti sauce or wrap in a tortilla for a high protein burrito.

8. Flax Meal or ground flax seeds provide fiber, protein and heart-healthy fats (2 Tbsp = 3 g protein, 5 g unsat fat, 4 g fiber). Add it to smoothies, oatmeal, muffin or pancake mix or soup. Whole flax seeds are not absorbed by the body. Store ground flax seeds in the refrigerator.



9. Nutritional yeast has a nutty, cheesy flavor. Sprinkle some on hot popcorn or beans, or add a generous spoonful to a stir fry or pasta sauce. Nutritional yeast is a great source of vitamin B12 and other B vitamins. 2 Tbsp also provides 8 g protein and 4 g fiber. It can be found in the bulk foods or supplement section of your health food store. You can look for either nutritional yeast flakes or powder, but be sure you don't get brewer's yeast by mistake (yuck!).

10. No sugar added tomato sauce and ketchup are hard to find. Health food stores typically don't stock products with high fructose corn syrup but that's not to say tomato products don't have other sugars added (eg: cane sugar, molasses, etc.). Colavita makes a yummy no added sugar pasta sauce and Annie's and Westbrae Natural sweeten their ketchups with fruit juice concentrate.



11. Liquid smoke can be found next to hot sauces and the like. It is literally smoke extracted into water and can be added to greens, beans, sauces, marinades, stews and soups to give your foods a smoky, meaty flavor without the fat of traditional pork parts.

12. Lentils are a high fiber way to get in protein (1/2 cup = 9 g protein, 8 g fiber) but cook faster than other dried beans. They need no presoaking and cook in 20-30 min. Bob's Red Mill Veggie soup mix is a delicious way to add a mix of lentils to your diet.

13. Low sugar cold cereals are hard to find in the regular grocery store but can be the easiest way to add some fiber to your diet. Erewhon Raisin Bran (10 g sugar) and Peace Cereal Raisin Bran (10 g sugar) get their sugar primarily from the raisins. Nature's Path Optimum Slim is a yummy high protein cereal (9 g protein, 11 g fiber, 7 g sugar).



14. Quorn is a meat substitute with a chicken like texture found in the frozen section. Just microwave for 60 seconds then eat with some steamed vegetables or dice and throw on top of a salad or stuff it in a pita with tomato, sprouts and low-fat dressing. Be sure to buy "naked cutlets" as the breaded version is high in fat.

15. Edamame are immature soy beans. 1/2 cup provides 10 g protein and 7 g fiber. Throw on a salad, in a stir-fry or eat plain as a snack. You can buy them already shelled or suck them straight out of the pods.



16. Ostrich is a very lean red meat (avoid if you don't do well with red meat). It's so lean, in fact, a little bit fills you up. Sold in the frozen section as filets, one 6 oz filet has 160 calories, 36 g protein and only 1.5 g fat. Be sure to use non-stick cookware and some cooking spray (like Pam) as this meat produces no grease.

17. Protein powders from whey, soy or hemp can be found here but watch for added sugars. Earth Fare No Carbs soy powder and Biochem whey powder are low sugar versions. Mix into milk, soy milk, or water.

18. Stevia is an herb that can be easily grown in a Charleston garden. Buy it as tabs or powder or convenient packets (like Sweet Leaf) and use as a sugar replacement in iced tea, smoothies, on cereal, etc.

